

O8 VISUAL BASELINE / EFFECTS

- 7.1
- The assessment of visual effects identifies the main changes in views and visual amenity as a result of the development. The aim is to establish the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the change in nature and visual amenity of the views that would be affected. Seven representative viewpoints have been selected which are considered to be a proportional reflection of the visual context of the site. These viewpoints provide a summary illustration of locations where key effects of the proposals are likely to be visible.
- 7.2
- A site visit undertaken in November 2018 and a further review in 2023, demonstrated that the visibility of the site in the local area was limited by a combination of landform, vegetation and intervening built form. The photos in the following section illustrate the nature of existing views from publicly accessible locations within the landscape surrounding the site.

Effects on visual receptors

- 7.3
- The potential visual effects of the Proposed Development following construction are assessed from the seven viewpoints as shown on the adjacent Figure 8 For each of the assessment viewpoints, a short description is given of the baseline view followed by a description of the features of the Proposed Development which would be visible from that viewpoint.
- 7.4
- For each viewpoint the commentary includes details of any vegetation, buildings or topography would affect the visibility of the Proposed Development. A comment on the sensitivity of the viewpoint, the magnitude of change experienced and the significance of visual impacts is given for each viewpoint. All effects during the operational phase of the Proposed Development are long term and permanent.
- 7.5
- During the construction phase of the proposed development there would be additional visual effects in relation to construction activities including the movement of plant on site. The construction activity on site would be visible for a brief period, and as such these effects would all be short term and non-permanent. At all of the viewpoints listed below there would be no greater than a minor additional effect, tending towards no additional effect during the construction phase.

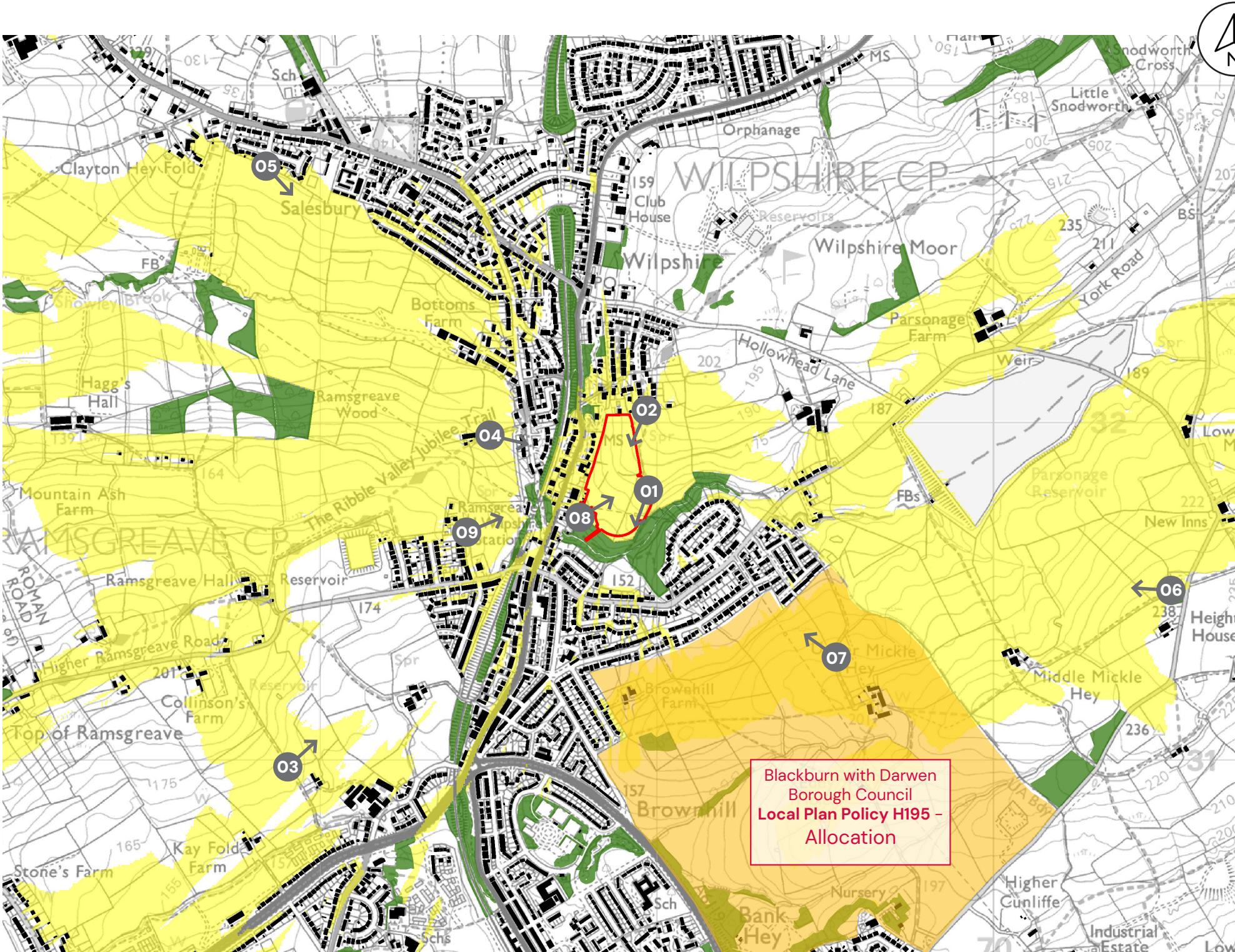


Figure 8: Screened ZTV with Viewpoints

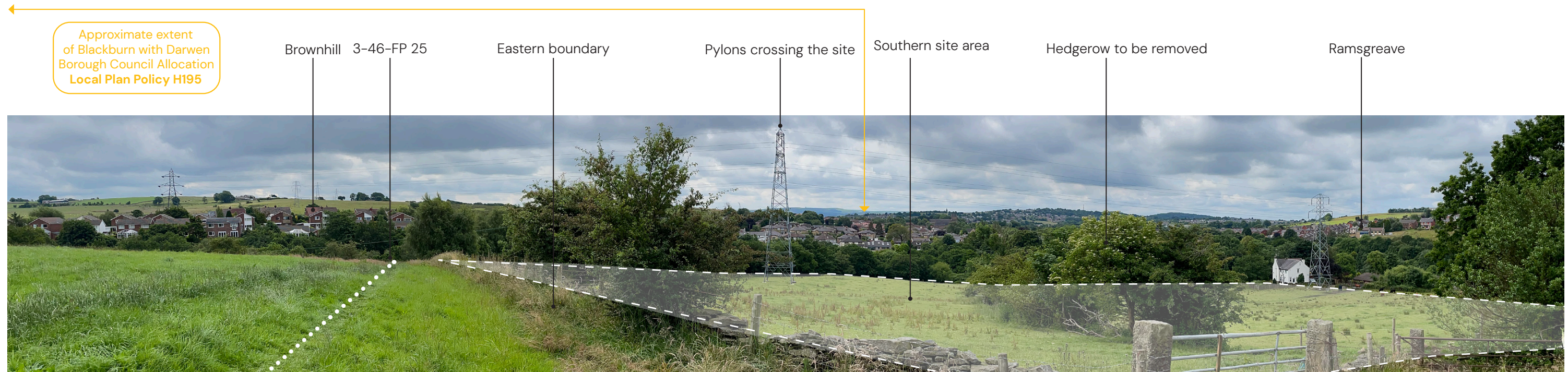
KEY

- Site Boundary
- OS Open Map Local Buildings
- OS Open Map Local Woodland
- Blackburn H195 Allocation
- ZTV - 9m High Development Visible
- Viewpoint locations

Screened ZTV Production Information -

- DTM data used in calculations is OS Terrain 5 that has been combined with OS Open Map Local data for woodland and buildings to create a Digital Surface Model (DSM).
- Indicative woodland and building heights are modelled at 15m and 8m respectively.
- Viewer height set at 1.7m (in accordance with para 6.11 of GLVIA Third Edition)
- Calculations include earth curvature and light refraction

N.B. This Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) image illustrates the theoretical extent of where the development may be visible from, assuming 100% atmospheric visibility, and includes the screening effect from vegetation and buildings, based on the assumptions stated above.



Viewpoint 01: View from 3-46-FP 25 adjacent to the eastern site boundary looking south

VPI Viewpoint representation

- 7.6 This viewpoint considers receptors using 3-46-FP 25. This footpath runs alongside the eastern site boundary. Users of this right of way are considered to be of high sensitivity.

Existing conditions

- 7.7 This footpath is accessed from Walden Road, south of the site, where it passes through Knotts Brook, climbing up along the eastern site boundary, through farmland, before connecting to Hollowhead Avenue. This viewpoint is taken at approximately 171m AOD, the lower section of the footpath near Knotts Brook. It shows the southern area of the site comprising pasture and the adjacent field to the east through which the footpath travels. The existing residential areas of Ramsgreave and Brownhill can be seen rising above Knotts Brook in the middle distance. Overhead pylons cross the site and continue southwards in to the distance. Wooded hills interspersed by residential areas are visible beyond the site. Moorland can be seen in the far distance. The skyline is generally defined by farmland hill tops and trees as a backdrop to residential areas, occasionally broken by overhead pylons. It is noted that the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 site is visible on the skyline in the left hand side of the viewpoint image.

Anticipated changes to views

- 7.8 Changes in the view would be to the site area identified on the viewpoint photograph. A landscape buffer would be retained along the eastern boundary with residential development set beyond this. As shown in the proposed layout, the buffer will be planted with structural woodland planting, a native shrub mix and trees to filter views of the development. A mix of rear and side elevations would face this boundary, with the topography of the built form falling away from the boundary. Where garden fences form boundaries these would be softened with hedgerow and tree planting. Proposed properties in close proximity may alter the existing skyline from wooded hilltops, as proposed properties are likely form in part intervening features. The existing internal hedgerow will be removed as identified on the above photograph and replaced elsewhere in the site.

Mitigation

- 7.9 Mitigation to the proposed development encompasses the retention of approximately an even depth landscape buffer / offset to the eastern boundary, additional interventions as set out in Section 5 include individual tree planting alongside woodland planting, to this eastern buffer that will eventually heavily filter if not screen views of the majority of the development. Recommendations also include reinstatement of the existing drystone boundary wall and retention of the trees

along the internal east-west boundary, breaking up the mass of development along with street and garden trees and new hedgerow planting.

Overall impact effect

- 7.10 In Year 01, it is judged that there will be a **high** magnitude of change for visual receptors using this proportion of the route. Whilst existing residential properties are a feature in the middle distance of the view, new housing development will occupy over half of the foreground view from this location, possibly altering the skyline as mentioned above. Mitigation planting to the eastern boundary will be young and offer little to no filtering. This would result in a **major** visual effect on receptors using this footpath. Effects would be adverse.
- 7.11 In Year 15, tree planting to the eastern boundary will have matured sufficiently to provide a good level of filtering to the development in winter and possibly screen during summer months, if planted at higher densities as recommended, the magnitude of change is judged to be **medium to low**. New trees and structural woodland planting along the eastern boundary would form a continuation of trees from Knotts Brook. This would result in a **major / moderate** to **moderate** level of effect that is considered to be adverse.



Viewpoint O2: View from 3-46-FP 25 looking south at the end of Hollyhead Avenue

VP2 Viewpoint representation

- 7.12 This viewpoint also considers receptors using 3-46-FP 25. This footpath runs alongside the eastern site boundary. Users of this right of way are considered to be of **high** sensitivity. The viewpoint also considers residential receptors at the southern end of Hollowhead Avenue. Residential receptors have **high** sensitivity (see Appendix D for a photomontage visualisation of this viewpoint).

Existing conditions

- 7.13 This footpath is accessed from Walden Road, south of the site, where it passes through Knotts Brook, climbing up along the eastern site boundary, through farmland, before connecting to Hollowhead Avenue. This viewpoint is taken at approximately 185m AOD adjacent to Hollowhead Avenue. It shows the northern area of the site comprising pasture, the southern area of the site is filtered by internal boundary trees. The footpath passes through the field east of the site. The existing residential areas of Ramsgreave, Brownhill and the outskirts of northern Blackburn can be seen in the middle to longer distance, rising above the site. Overhead pylons cross the site and continue southwards in to the distance. Wooded hills interspersed by residential areas are visible beyond the site. The skyline is generally defined by farmland hill tops and trees as a backdrop to residential areas, with Darwen Moor visible in the far distance, including the tower

on Darwen Hill. It is noted that the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 site is visible on the skyline in the left hand side of the viewpoint image.

Anticipated changes to views

- 7.14 Changes in the view would be to the site area identified approximately on the viewpoint photograph above. A landscape buffer would be retained along the eastern boundary with residential development sited beyond this. As shown in the proposed layout, this will be planted with woodland and tree planting to filter views of the development. Generally, rear elevations and garden boundaries would be visible from this location, but softened by split level designs of the properties and landscape mitigation proposals. Proposed properties are expected to screen parts of the residential areas on the distant hills, and will introduce built form in a larger scale. The existing internal boundary comprising trees identified will largely be retained.

Mitigation

- 7.15 Mitigation to the proposed development encompasses the retention of a landscape buffer to the eastern boundary, additional interventions in Section 5 suggest a higher density of trees to this eastern buffer that will eventually heavily filter if not screen views of the majority of the development. This

planting includes tree and hedgerow planting to screen boundary fences in addition to structural woodland planting on the boundaries. Recommendations also include reinstatement of the existing drystone boundary wall and retention of the trees along the internal east-west boundary, breaking up the mass of development along with street and garden trees.

Overall impact effect

- 7.16 In Year 01, it is judged that there will be a **high** magnitude of change for visual receptors using this proportion of the route. Whilst existing residential properties are a feature in the middle distance of the view, new housing development will occupy over half of the foreground view from this location, and will be larger in scale. Mitigation planting to the eastern boundary will be young and offer little to no filtering. This would result in a **major** visual effect on receptors using this footpath. Effects would be adverse.
- 7.17 In Year 15, tree planting to the eastern boundary will have matured sufficiently to provide a good level of filtering to the development, if planted at higher densities as recommended, the magnitude of change is judged to be **medium to low**. New trees along the eastern boundary would form a continuation of trees from Knotts Brook. This would result in a **major / moderate to moderate** level of effect that is considered to be adverse.



Viewpoint 03: View from 3-33-FP 4 looking north-east

VP3 Viewpoint representation

6.50 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using footpath 3-33 FP 4, north of Brook Farm. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is just over 1km from the western site boundary.

Existing conditions

7.18 This section of the route lies north of Brook Farm, running on the western side of a hedgerow that filters and in parts screens views towards the site. The residential area of Ramsgreave and the covered reservoir can be seen in the middle distance. Hollowhead Avenue (north of the site) and the eastern site boundary can be made out beyond the existing residential area. From this location the skyline is defined by a mixture of farmed and wooded hilltops and residential areas along with the covered reservoir.

Anticipated changes to views

7.19 Due to the intervening landform and housing area west of the site, there will be minimal changes to the view for receptors on this section of the route. At worst an additional row of rooftops, possibly sitting slightly higher than those in front of the site, will be visible. Any additional area of built form will be seen in the

context of the existing residential area of Ramsgreave sitting in front of the site, when viewed from this location.

Mitigation

7.20 Proposed mitigation tree planting both within the site and along the eastern boundary are likely to reduce the perception of additional rooftops beyond an existing residential area in the view.

Overall impact effect

7.21 The magnitude of change for both Year 01 and Year 15 is considered to be **very low**. This will result in a **minor** effect on receptors using this section of the route. Effects will be adverse.



Viewpoint 04: View from 3-33-FP 12 looking east

VP4 Viewpoint representation

7.22 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using footpath 3-33-FP 12, west of the site on elevated ground as it rises up from Knowsley Road. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is just over 340m from the western site boundary (closest point). See Appendix D for a photomontage visualisation of this viewpoint.

Existing conditions

7.23 This footpath leads west from Knowsley Road towards the covered reservoir and connects in to 3-33 FP 30 and 3-33-FP 11. The path rises up from approximately +125m AOD at Knowsley Road to +170m AOD near to the reservoir. Views towards the site comprise the existing residential area of Wilpshire located either side of Whalley Road. Properties are set amongst mature trees. The skyline is defined by trees and farmland along the eastern site boundary, occasionally punctuated by pylons.

Anticipated changes to views

7.24 Views in the direction of the site would see the addition of new residential properties to the hillside emerging above existing housing.

Mitigation

7.25 Whilst built form will dominate the skyline from this lower section of the route. Mitigation proposed to the eastern boundary in the form of a well planted landscape buffer would ensure a continuation of the wooded skyline from the upper sections of the route as elevation is gained and act as a backdrop to the proposed new properties. This is in keeping with the character of the surrounding residential area.

Overall impact effect

7.26 The magnitude of change to views from this section of the footpath is judged to be **medium** in Year 01, reducing to **low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **moderate** effect in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **minor / moderate** effect in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 05: View from the southern end of Ryder Road, off St Peter’s Close, north-west of the site

VP5 Viewpoint representation

7.27 This viewpoint assessment considers residential receptors on St Peter’s Close. Residential receptors are considered to be of **high** sensitivity. This viewpoint is approximately 1.2km north-west of the site (closest point).

Existing conditions

7.28 Small parts of the site are visible beyond trees in the middle distance. The route of the overhead pylons that pass through the site can be seen on the horizon. Generally, the skyline is formed of farmland or wooded hills, with the exception of the occasional farmstead such as Eddy Holes, dwellings in Ramsgreave and the covered reservoir.

Anticipated changes to views

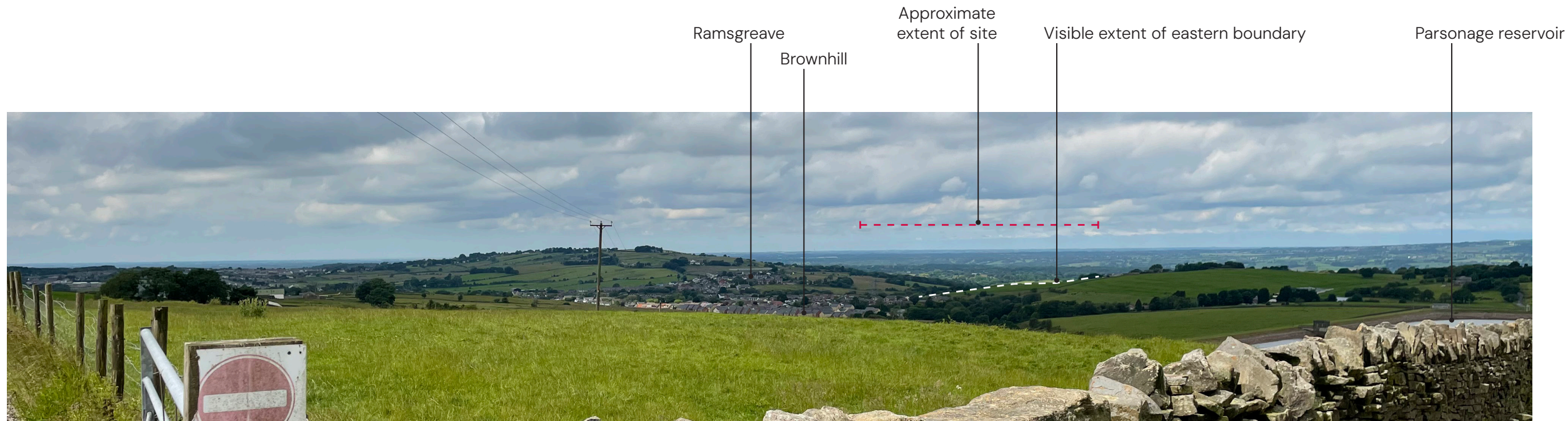
7.29 Development of the site would introduce glimpses of new housing to a small proportion of views, generally from properties on the southern side of St Peter’s Close. The site is at sufficient distance away for the changes to form a minor element of panoramic view. The proposals would not alter the skyline from this location.

Mitigation

7.30 Tree planting proposed to streets and within gardens may provide an additional level of filtering to the proposed built form once it has reached maturity.

Overall impact effect

7.31 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **low** in Year 01, reducing to **very low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **minor effect** in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **no effect / minor effect** in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 06: View from 11-6-FP 15, north of Height House Farm, looking north-west

VP6 Viewpoint representation

- 7.32 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using footpath 11-6-FP 15, south-west of the site. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is approximately 1.5km from the western site boundary (closest point).

Existing conditions

- 7.33 Views from this section of the footpath have far reaching views in almost every direction. When looking in the direction of the site, Ramsgreave, Brownhill and northern parts of Blackburn are notable residential areas. Parsonage reservoir is a notable feature. The eastern boundary of the site can be seen, however, the remainder of the site is not visible due to the nature of the topography on the site. The skyline is formed by a combination of the distant lowland horizon and occasional rounded ridges topped with wooded areas or farmland.

Anticipated changes to views

- 7.34 Changes to the view will be fairly minimal as proposed dwellings are located away from the eastern boundary on lower ground. A landscape buffer will be located along the eastern boundary planted with structural woodland planting and trees. Following

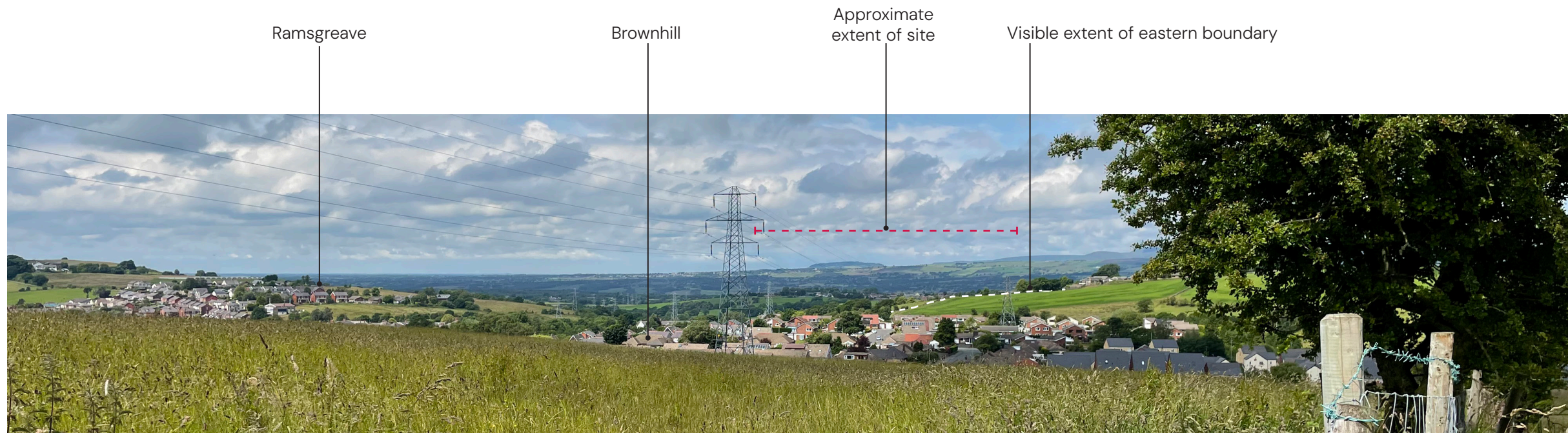
construction, trees will be young and offer little screening or filtering, therefore, in the worst case rooftops and possibly some first floor windows may be visible as a continuation of the building mass associated with Brownhill. The development will not alter the skyline from this location. Any elements of the development that are visible, will form a very small proportion of the view that is in the context of the surrounding residential area.

Mitigation

- 7.35 If mitigation recommendations are implemented, by year 15, when vegetation has matured, this is anticipated to offer a good level of screening and will introduce a landscape feature that is typical of the surroundings, as a continuation of the trees surrounding Knotts Brook south of the site.

Overall impact effect

- 7.36 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **low** in Year 01, reducing to **very low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **minor effect** in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **no effect / minor effect** in Year 15 that is considered adverse.



Viewpoint 07: View from public right of way north west of Upper Mickle Hey looking north-west

VP7 Viewpoint representation

7.37 This viewpoint assessment considers receptors using the public right of way that leads south from Parsonage Road past Upper Mickle Hey. Users of this footpath are considered to be of **high** sensitivity as it is a sign posted recreational route which provides access to the countryside. This viewpoint is approximately 750m from the southern site boundary (closest point). See Appendix D for a photomontage visualisation of this viewpoint.

Existing conditions

7.38 Views from this section of the footpath have far reaching views in a northerly direction. When looking in the direction of the site, Ramsgreave and Brownhill are notable residential areas. The eastern boundary of the site can be seen, however, there is limited visibility of the remainder of the site due to the nature of the landform sloping away from the eastern boundary westwards. The skyline is formed by a combination of the distant lowland horizon and moorland and occasional rounded ridges topped with wooded areas or farmland. Overhead pylons occasionally cross the skyline. It is noted that this viewpoint is taken from within the Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Allocation H195 and therefore will be subject to significant future change.

Anticipated changes to views

7.39 The proposed development will form a minor part of the view. Changes to the view will be fairly minimal as proposed dwellings are located away from the eastern boundary on lower ground. A landscape buffer will be located along the eastern boundary planted with structural woodland planting and trees. Following construction, trees will be young and offer little screening or filtering, therefore in the worst case rooftops and possibly some first floor windows may be visible as a continuation of the building mass associated with Brownhill. The proposed development will not add any new features to the view and will be smaller in scale than the existing residential areas seen in the viewpoint. The proposals will not alter the skyline.

Mitigation

7.40 If mitigation recommendations are implemented, by year 15, when vegetation has matured, this is anticipated to offer a good level of screening and will introduce a landscape feature that is typical of the surroundings, as a continuation of the trees surrounding Knotts Brook south of the site, noting that this viewpoint is located within Allocation H195 and will be subject to significant change to the baseline of this view.

Overall impact effect

7.41 The magnitude of change to views from these properties is judged to be **low** in Year 01, reducing to **very low** in Year 15 with the maturation of mitigation planting to the eastern boundary. This is considered to result in a **minor effect** in Year 01 that is adverse, reducing to a **no effect / minor effect** in Year 15 that is considered adverse.