

# Bottesford Parish Council **objects**

Bottesford Parish Neighbourhood Plan  
2020-2036



Is in contravention of...

## Neighbourhood Plan

Policy 2 'Protecting Landscape Character'  
& Policy 9 'Renewable Energy and Low  
Carbon Technologies'

## MBC Local Plan

Policies inc: EN1, EN13

**To be read in addition to BPC's  
Statement of Case**

**Bottesford Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan is supportive of solar farms in the right location, however Policy 9, Part 4** requires us to consider the impact on Loss of Amenity and Character of Landscape, and states:

*Development that delivers renewable energy will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it;*

- a) does not have an unacceptably adverse impact on the amenity of residents and visitors (including: noise, vibration, views and vistas, shadow flicker, water pollution, odour, air quality, emissions, sensitivity and character of landscape) and*
- b) does not have a significant adverse effect on any designated site (including SSSI, regionally or locally important geological sites, sites of ecological value, Local Green Spaces, Significant Green Gaps); and*
- c) does not result in an unacceptably adverse effect on protected species, including migration routes and sites of biodiversity value; and*
- d) does not result in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land in grades 1,2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification; and*
- e) transmission lines should be located below ground wherever possible to reduce the impact on the open countryside.*

**Bottesford Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan.**

Despite recent minor adjustments this proposal significantly impacts on Part 4a, 4b and 4d of Policy 9, overlapping as it does with our 'Ecological Setting and 'ecological networks' and butting up against the adjacent National Nature Reserve and Muston Meadows SSSI (see map 11 on Page 42 of the NP).

## First may we address any changes that RWE have made since the 2023 application.

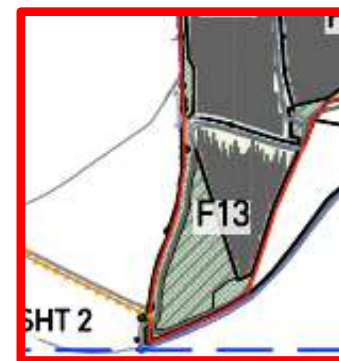
The changes since the application, in preparation for the appeal, have seen little improvement of any substance. The changes make no material difference to our objection.

*'The proposed amendments to the original application are unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal.'*

Julian Clarke Natural England. 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2024.



Application map



Appeal map

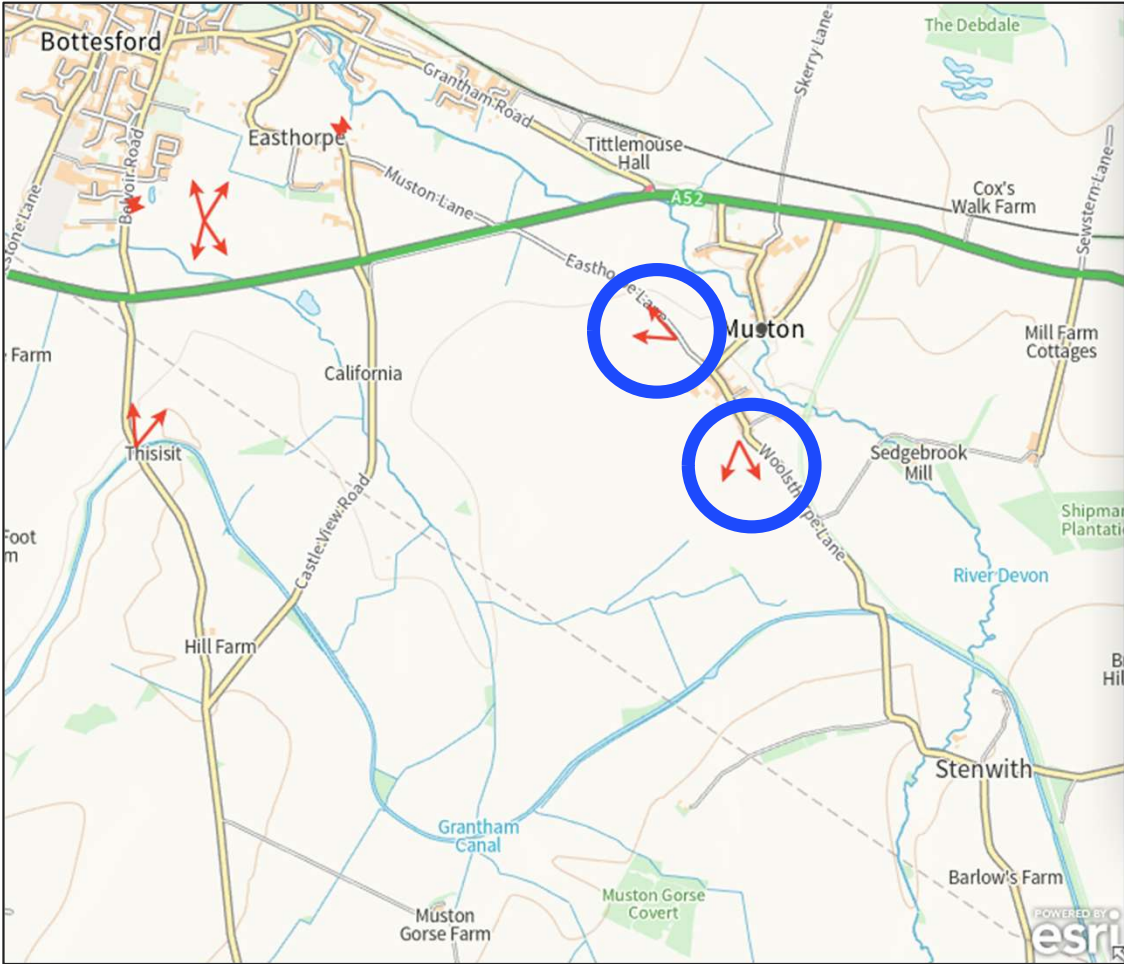
This is the area of the site that has been removed since the application. A small part of the site.

Bottesford Parish Council **objects**

# **Landscape Sensitivity**

# Neighbourhood Plan: 'Significant Views and Vistas'

## View Points 6 & 7



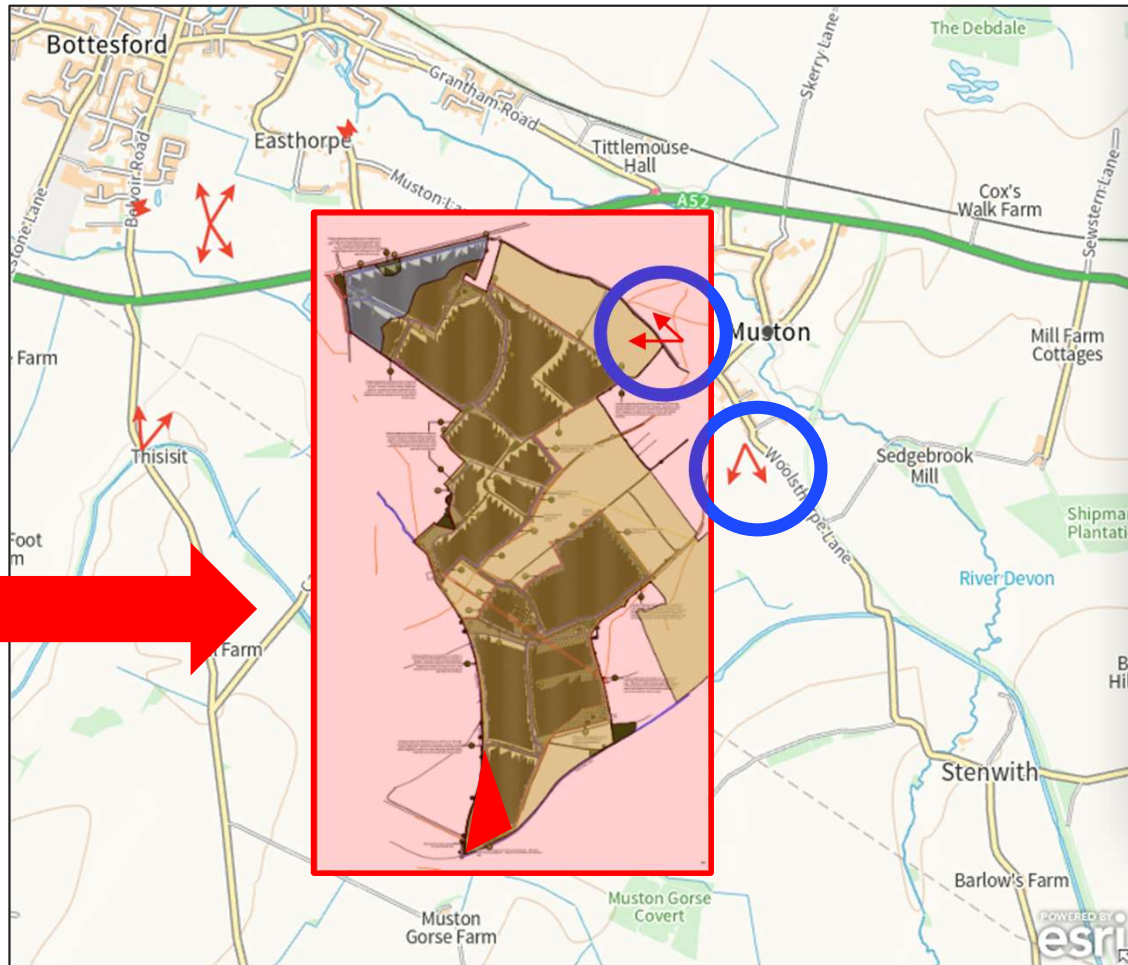
# Neighbourhood Plan: 'Significant Views and Vistas'

View Points 6 & 7

Low regard shown for the importance of these views



Mitigation suggests growing hedgerows which will take 15 years to mature and then will block views across open countryside



# Neighbourhood Plan: 'Significant Views and Vistas'

## View Points 6 & 7

*"It would be inaccurate and even disingenuous to suggest that these arrows at viewpoints 6 and 7 were not also referring to the view to the west of Muston between points 6 and 7.*

*It was clearly the intention of the NP to protect the full view, not just a tunneled view directly in front of each arrow."*

**Bob Bayman**

Chair of the Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Such views would be blocked by either...

**The solar  
panel  
array**

OR

**The  
proposed  
hedge**

The proposed hedge **does not mitigate or ameliorate** the problem – it just creates a further blockage.



The proposed **hedging does not mitigate or ameliorate** the problem – the hedging creates a further blockage.



Current view of Belvoir Castle



View spoiled by solar array



View blocked by proposed hedge

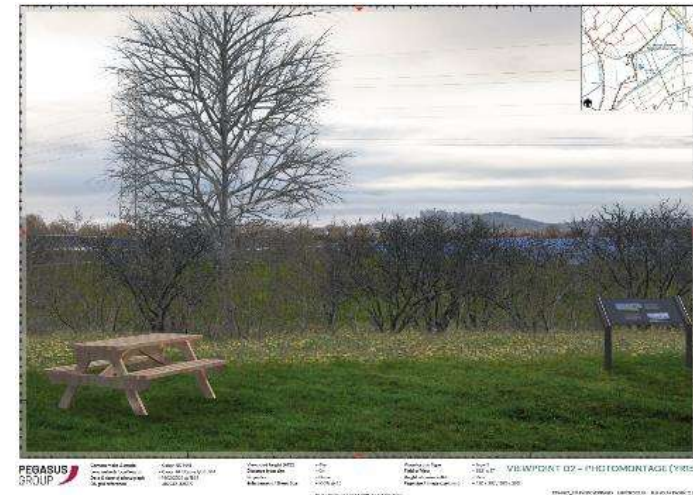
The proposed **hedging does not mitigate or ameliorate** the problem – the hedging creates a further blockage.



Current view of Belvoir Castle

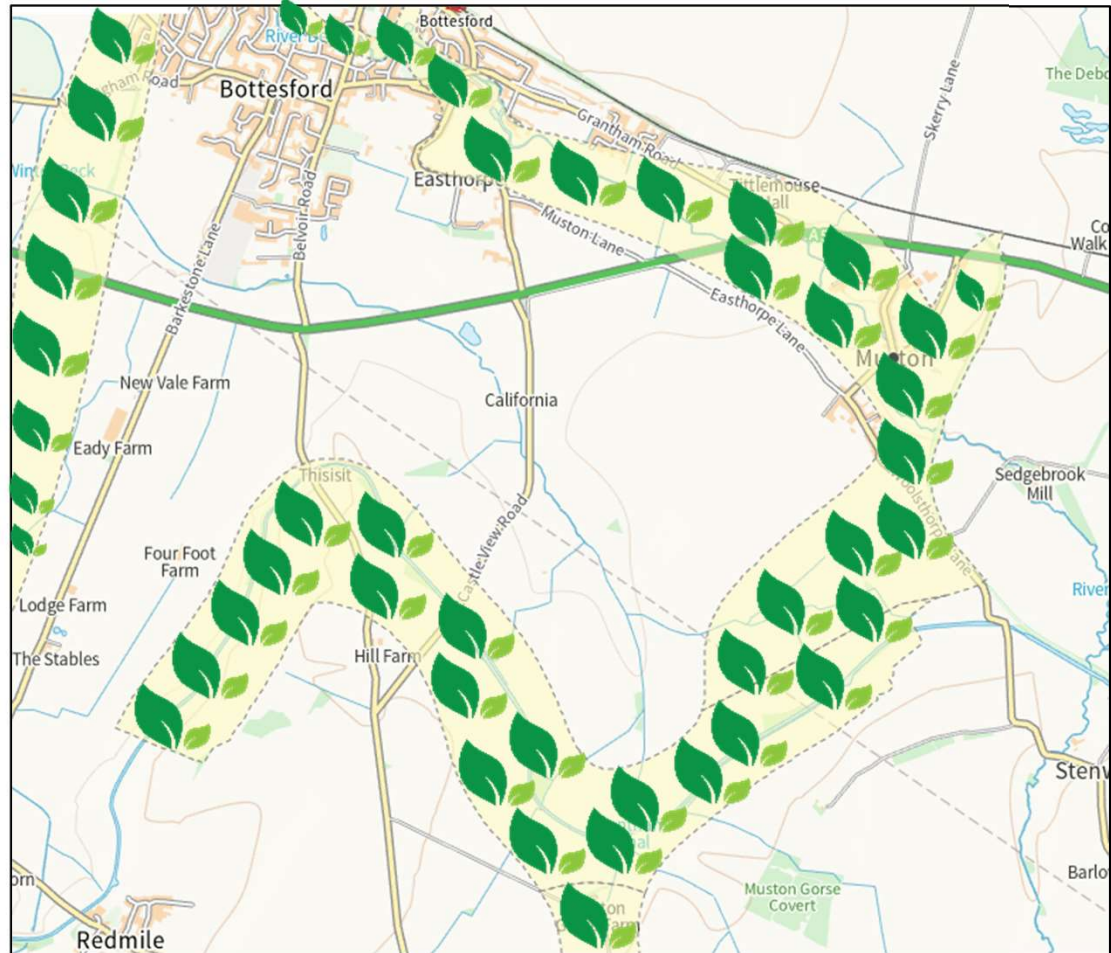


View spoiled by solar array



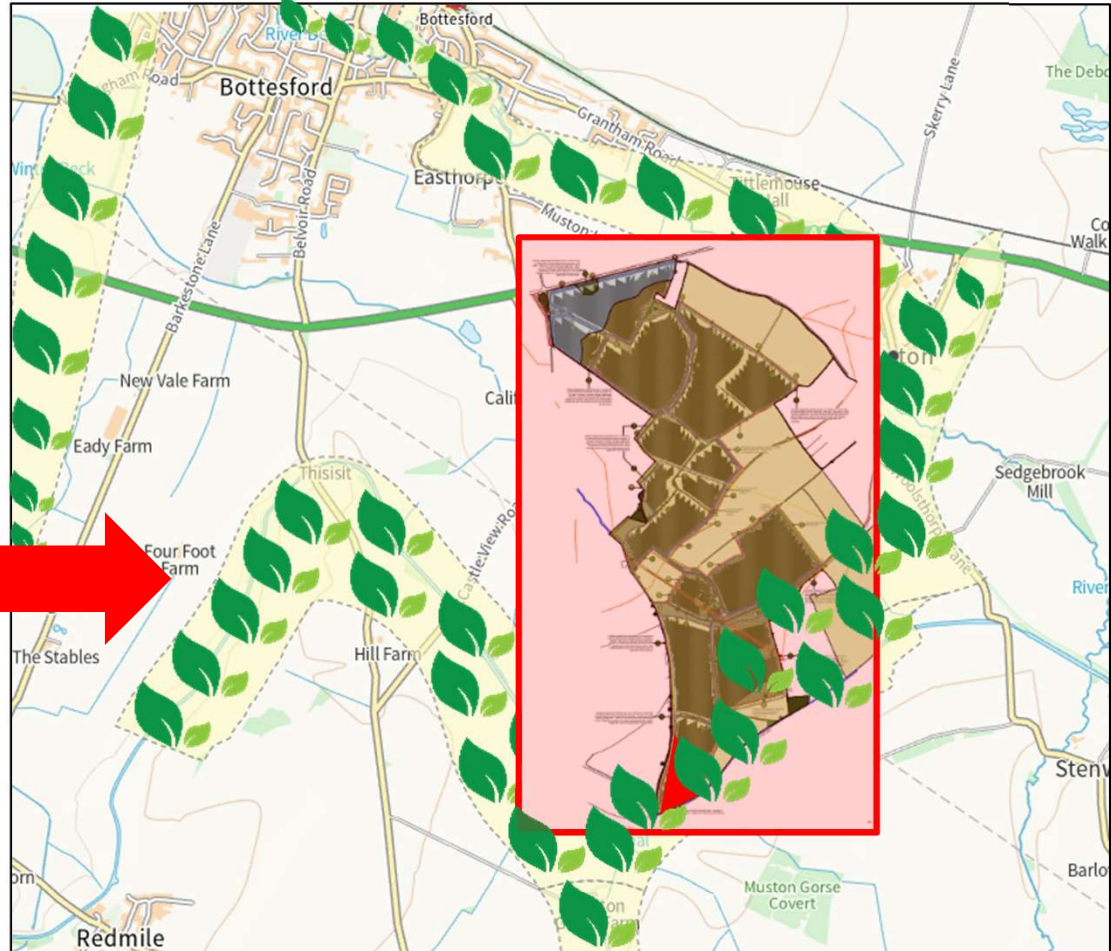
View blocked by proposed hedge

# Neighbourhood Plan: The 'Ecological Setting'



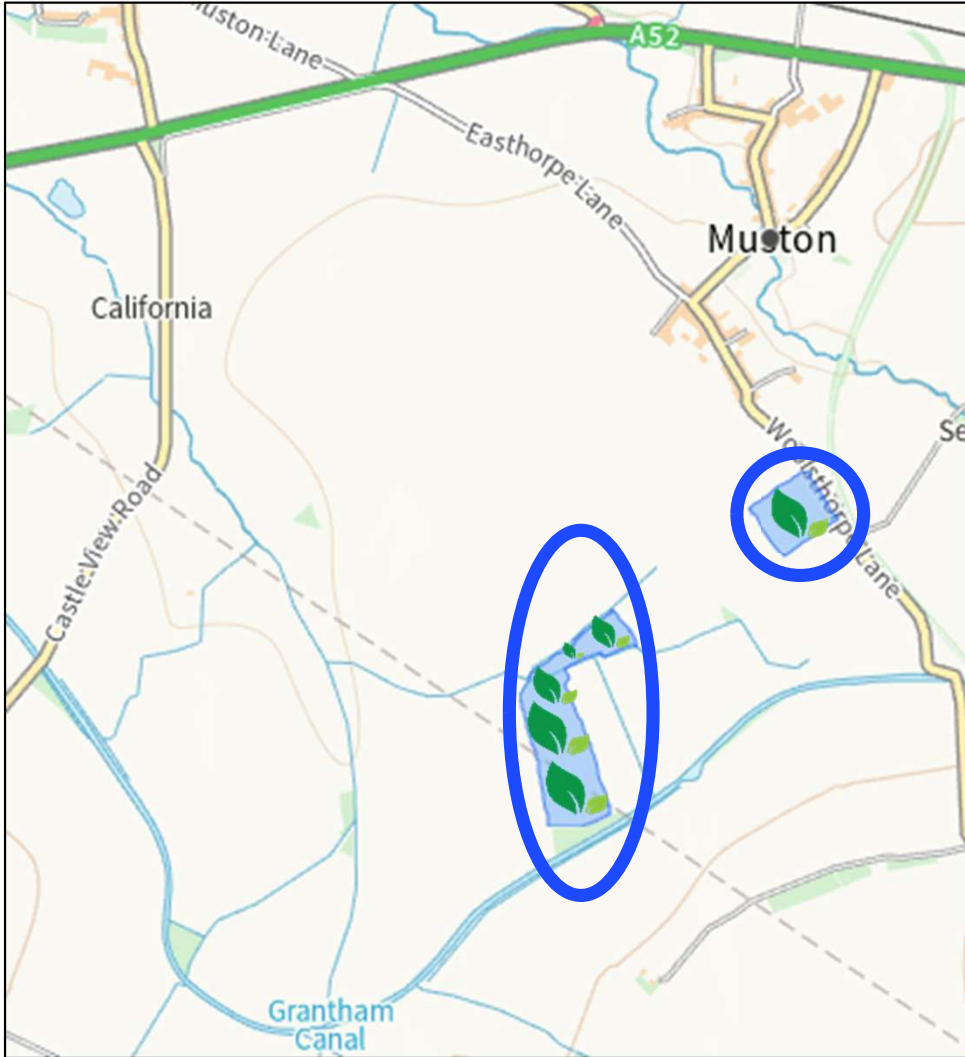
# Neighbourhood Plan: The 'Ecological Setting'

Application clearly brings  
metal hardware and  
urbanises  
this important  
Ecological Setting



# Muston Meadows SSSI

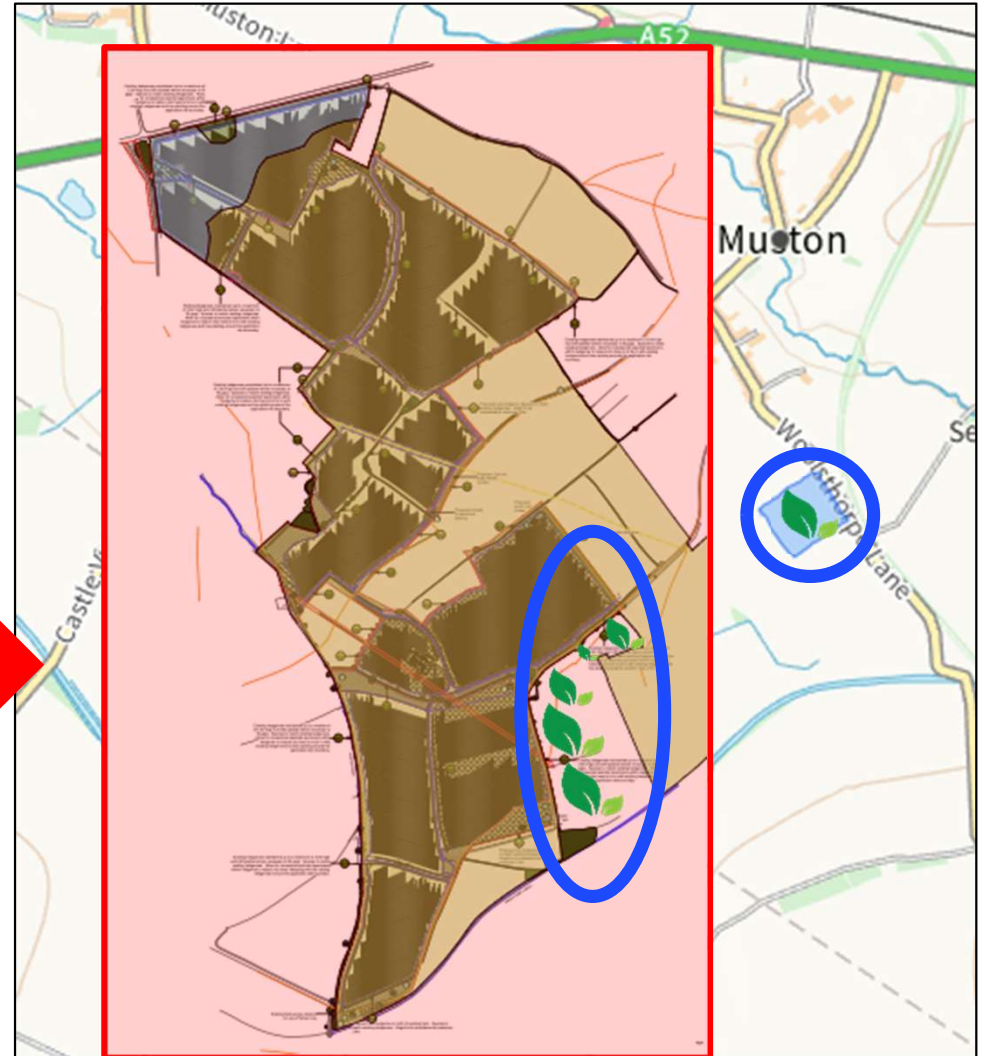
## Site of Special Scientific Interest



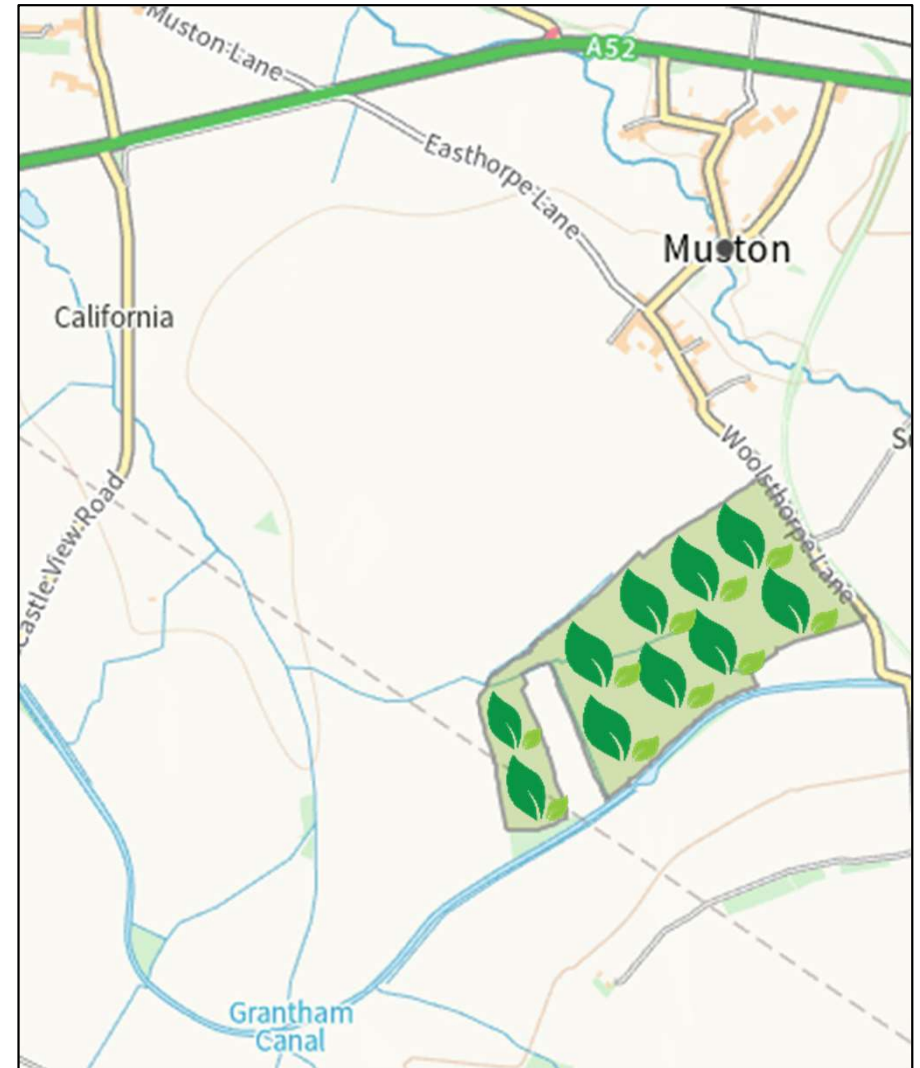
# Muston Meadows SSSI

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Surrounded and squeezed - not an appropriate way to respect an SSSI



# National Nature Reserve in Muston

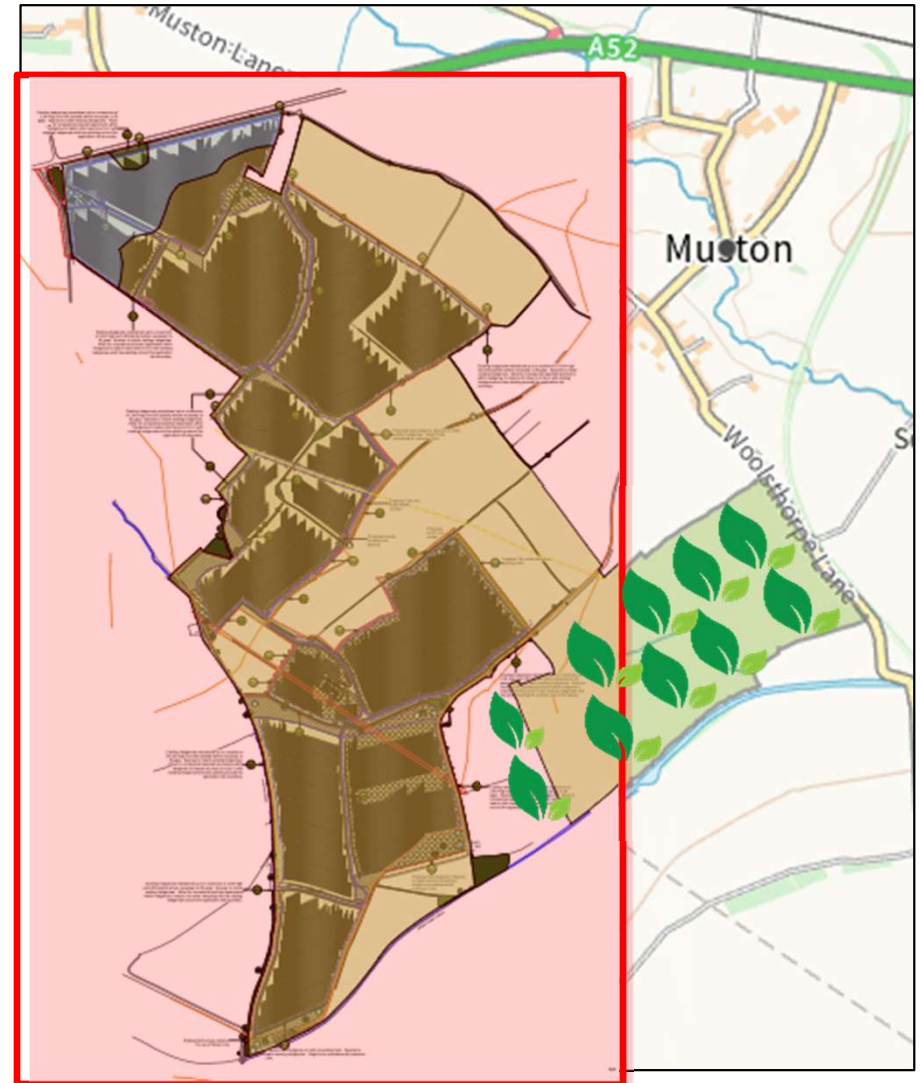


# National Nature Reserve in Muston

This is not an appropriate  
way to look after a  
National Nature Reserve



and is against policy  
within the  
Neighbourhood Plan





## The reality of 3m arrays, fences and hedges

3m is the highest point of the proposed tracking panels

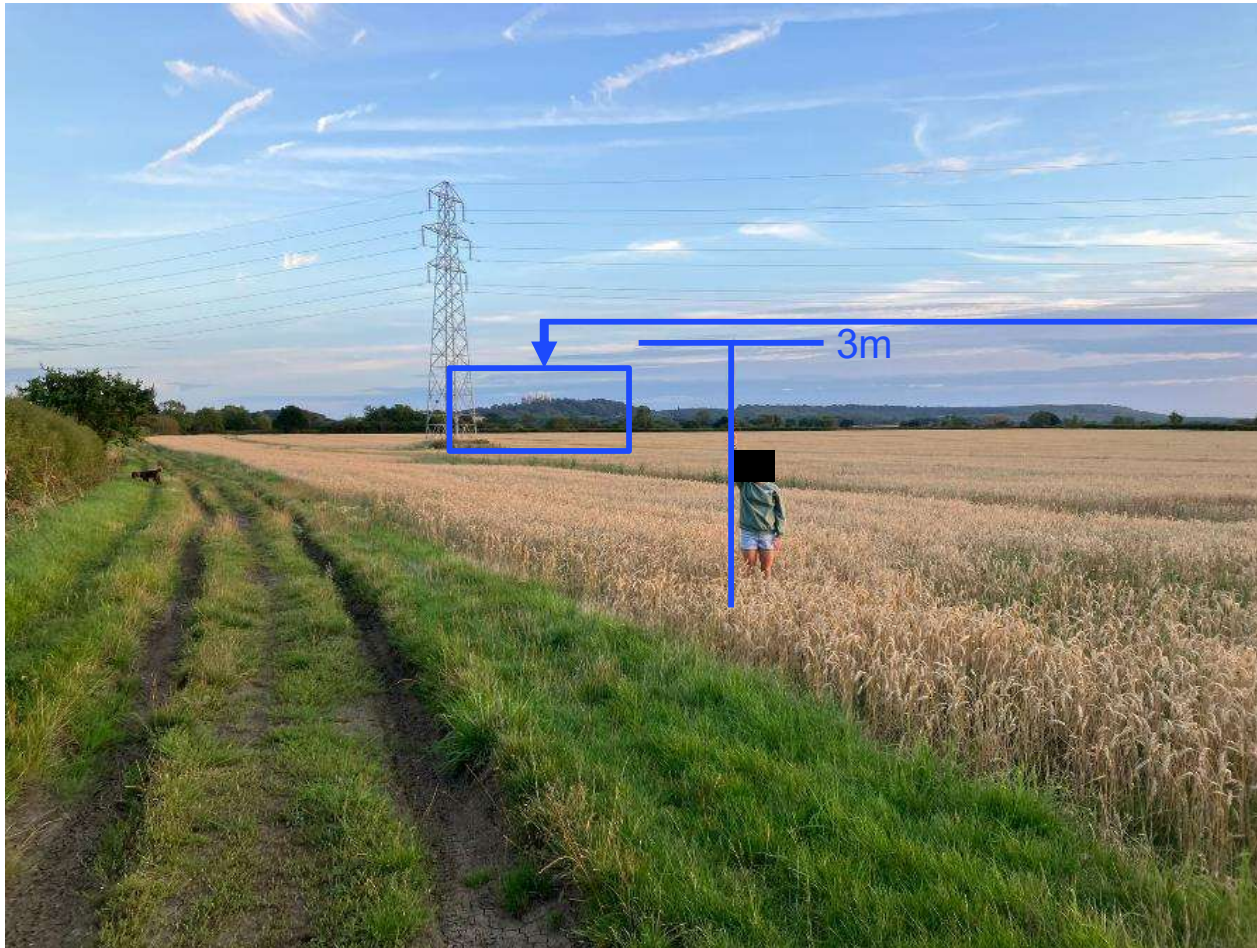


Photo location

### Belvoir Castle

Listed Building

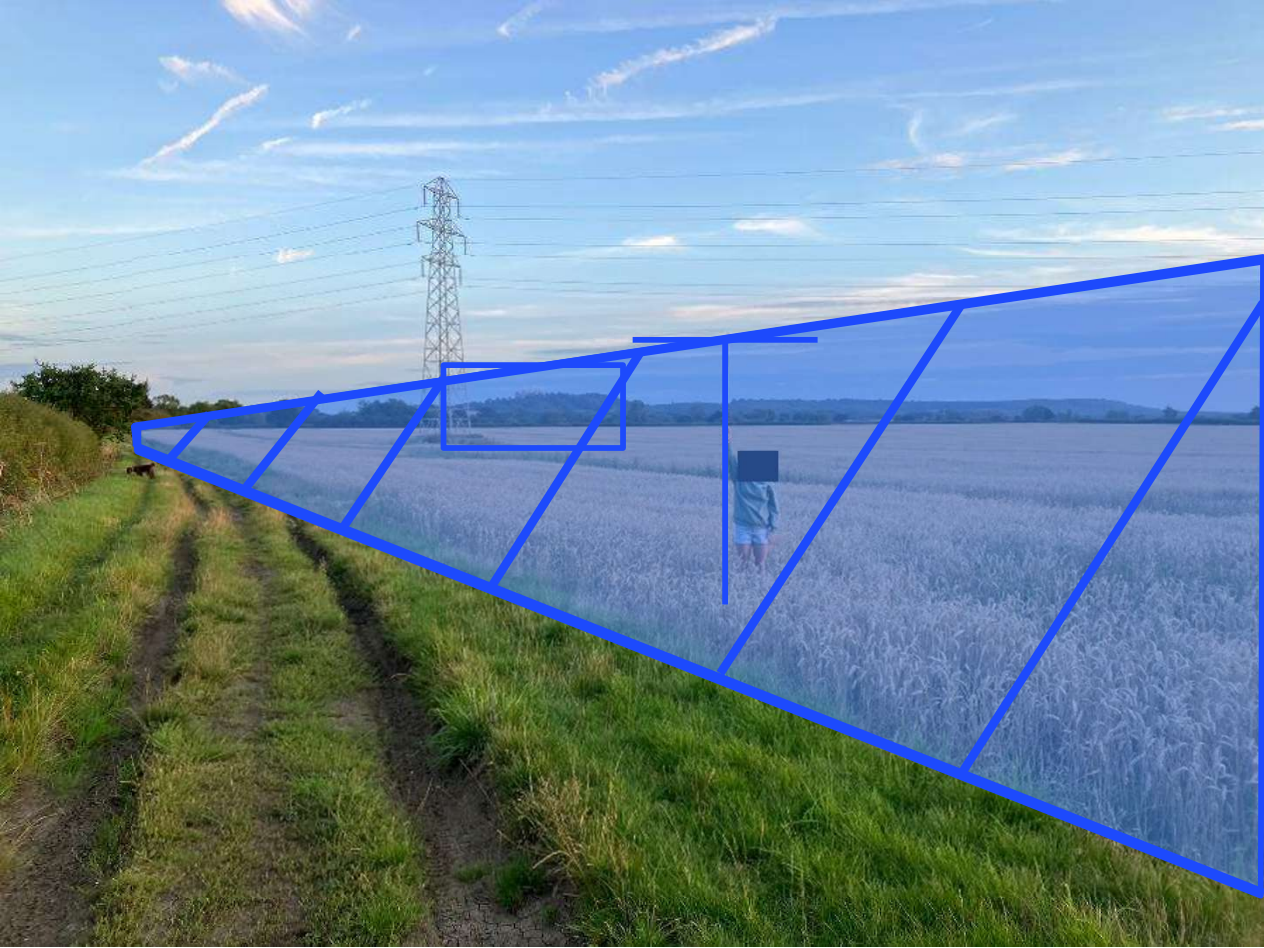
Scheduled

Ancient Monument

#### ***MBC Local Plan: Landscape and Sensitivity Study***

- Views towards Belvoir Castle and the Belvoir scarp where the **Castle forms an important landmark feature** (including the good views from Beacon Hill).
- Choice of location and size/scale of development **does not diminish the perceived scale of Belvoir Castle** and the escarpment on which it sits.
- The overall aim... developments **do not become a key characteristic of the landscape** or have a defining influence on the overall experience of the landscape of the Vale of Belvoir

# The reality of 3m arrays, fences and hedges



**3m height**  
of proposed panels and  
mitigation hedge

## The reality of 3m arrays, fences and hedges



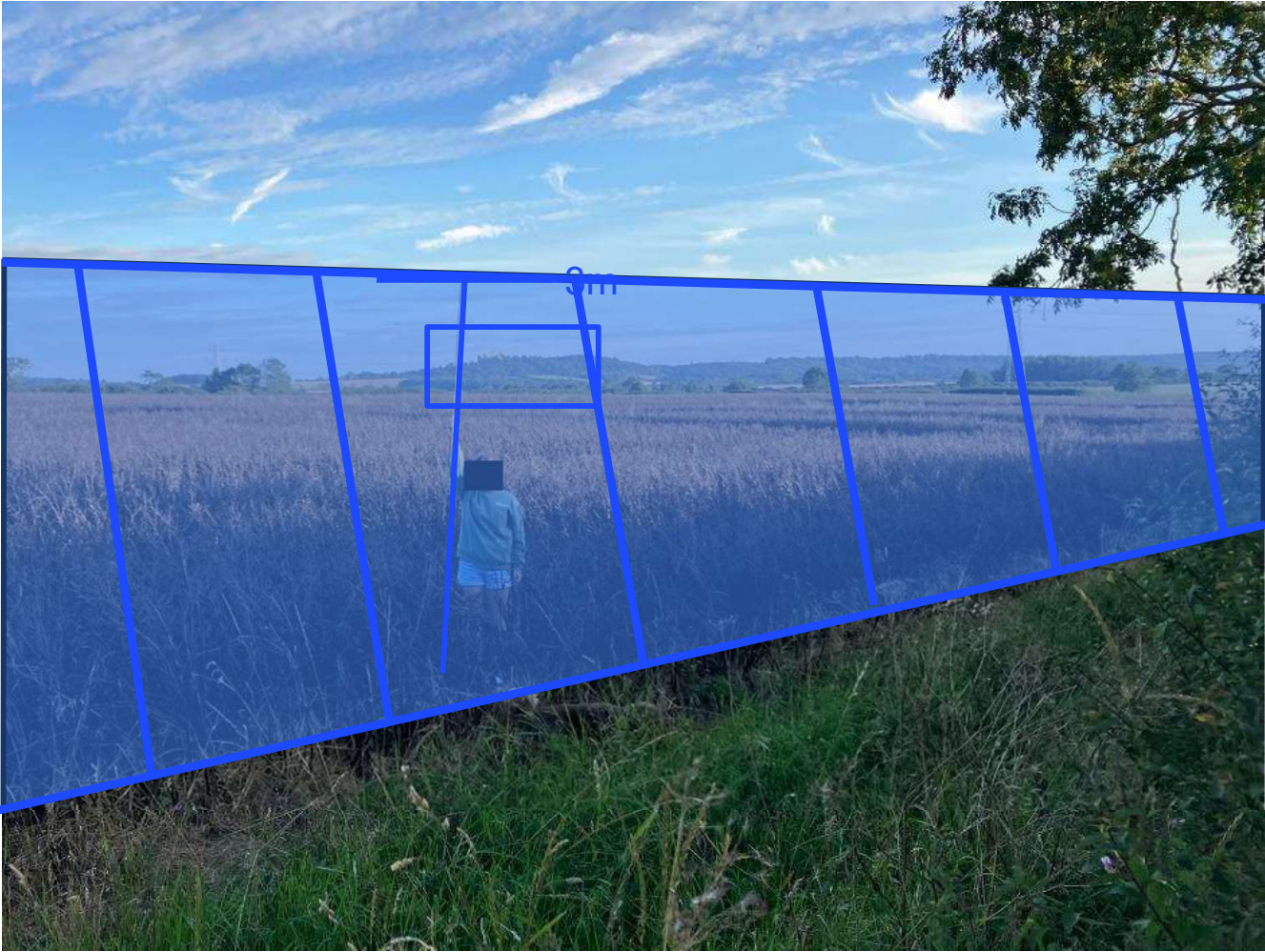
**Belvoir Castle**  
Listed Building

Scheduled  
Ancient Monument



Photo location

# The reality of 3m arrays, fences and fences



**3m height**  
of proposed panels and  
mitigation hedge

## Tunneling Effect of arrays, high hedges and fences



Photo location

## Tunneling Effect of arrays, high hedges and fences



There are now new concerns with the change made to the proposal between the Application and the Appeal **that the fences and hedges may close off areas of permissive access** – paths that have long been used by local walkers with permission of the farmers.

It is perhaps cheaper for the applicant to fence off larger areas but this directly effects access to the countryside for the locals.

## The reality of 3m arrays, fences and hedges



**3m height**  
of proposed  
panels and  
mitigation  
hedge



Photo location

## The reality of 3m arrays, fences and hedges



**3m height**  
of proposed  
panels and  
mitigation  
hedge

### **Nick Carter**

Inspector of Ancient  
Monuments  
Sept 2022

**'Historic England has concerns** with the application on heritage grounds.

It is our view that the impacts of the proposals upon the settings of the designated **heritage assets would result in harm to their significance. We consider the impacts to be higher than indicated in the EIA.**"



## Val's Bench – looking west towards setting from central Public Footpath

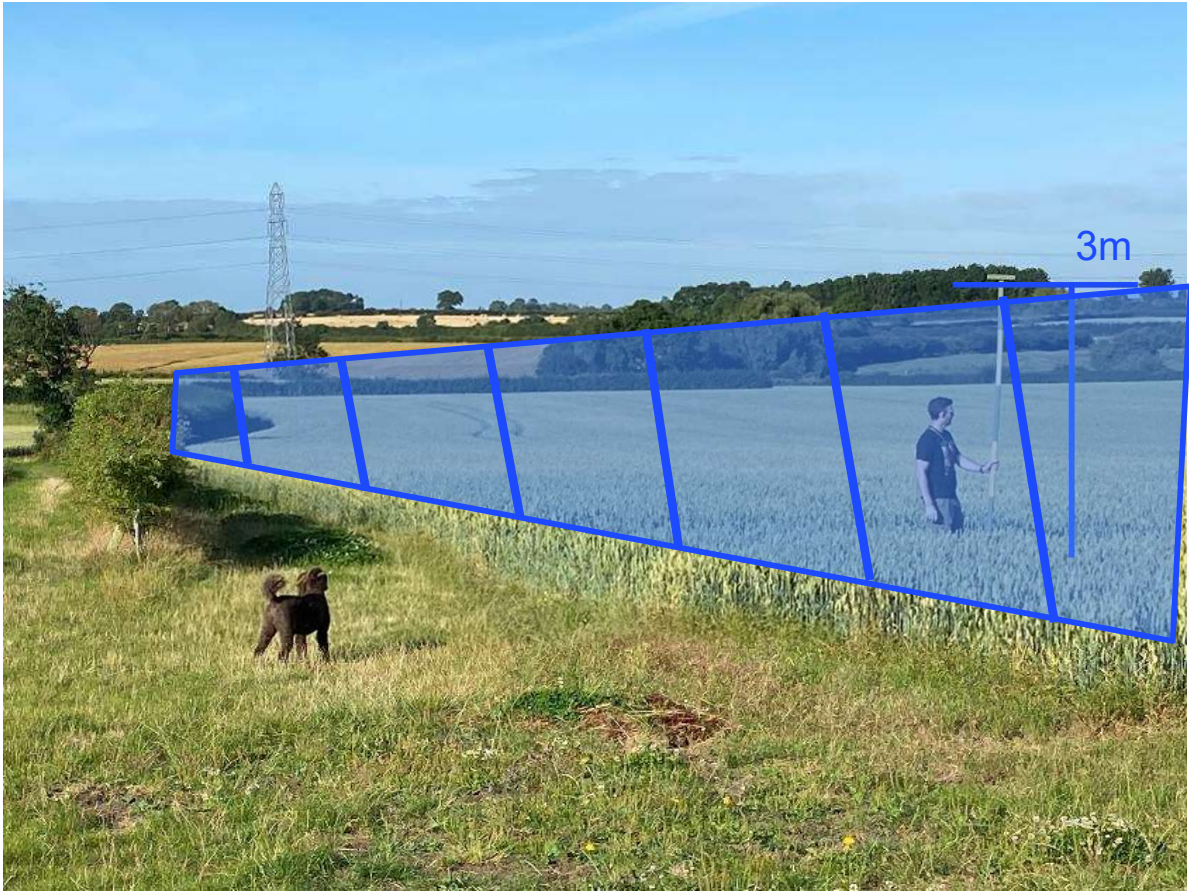


An important path for walkers, dog walkers would be surrounded to north, south and west by arrays.



Photo location

**Val's Bench – looking west towards setting from central Public Footpath**



**3m height**  
of proposed  
panels and  
mitigation  
hedge

**Val's Bench is alongside the central Public Footpath**



Photo location



**Val's Bench is alongside the central Public Footpath**



**JBM's Consultation in Dec 2020 highlighted the important of permissive / commonly used paths to the local community.**

**They were annotated on this map.**

- Site Boundary (from original consultation)
- Public right of way
- Commonly used access



**Site plan has since been modified, but key paths have been closed or 'corridorred'. Site will effectively not be accessible in winter months.**

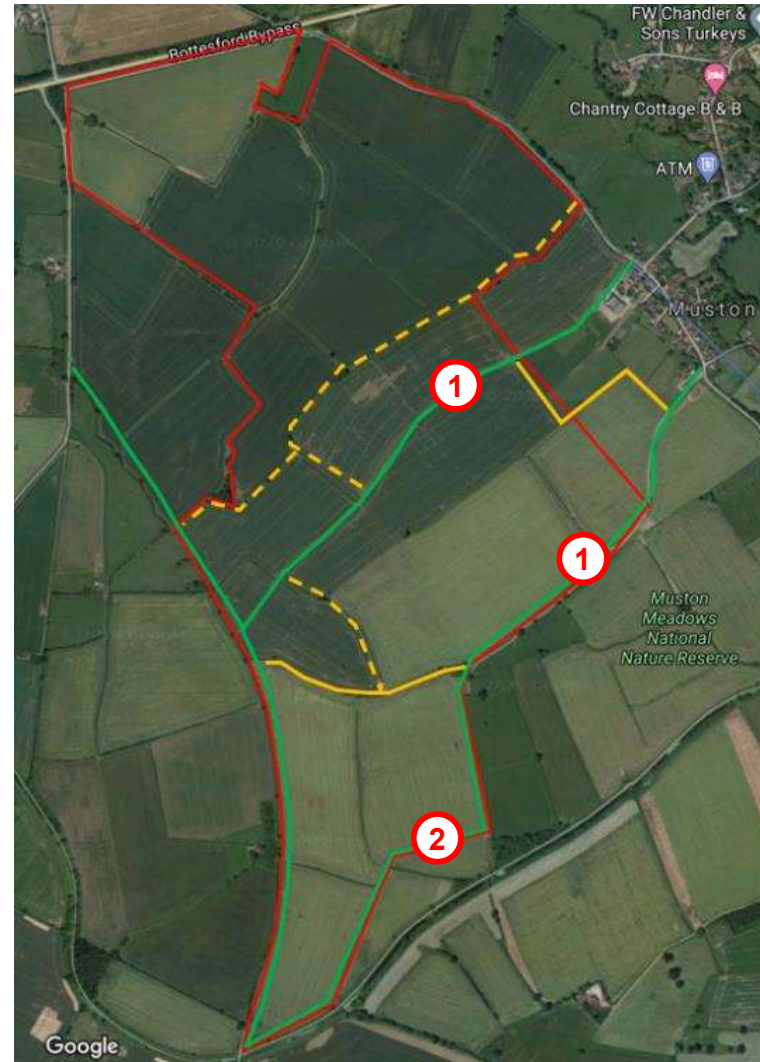
— Site Boundary

— Public right of way

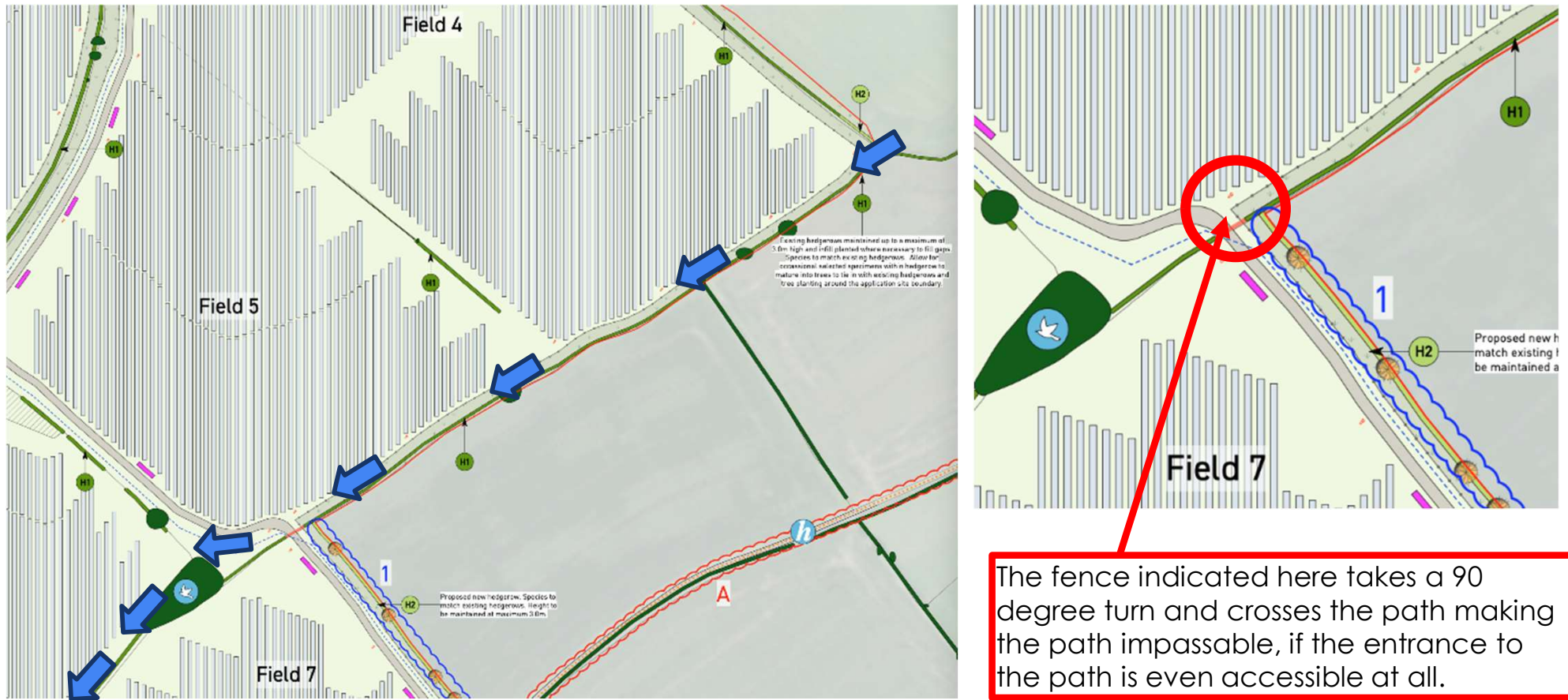
— Commonly used access

- - Blocked commonly used access

- ① PRowWs are waterlogged in winter months and typically not usable. Local walkers commonly use path to the north (now blocked) which is clear.
- ② Example of 'Green Corridor'. In practice will create tunnel effect blocking views of heritage assets and countryside

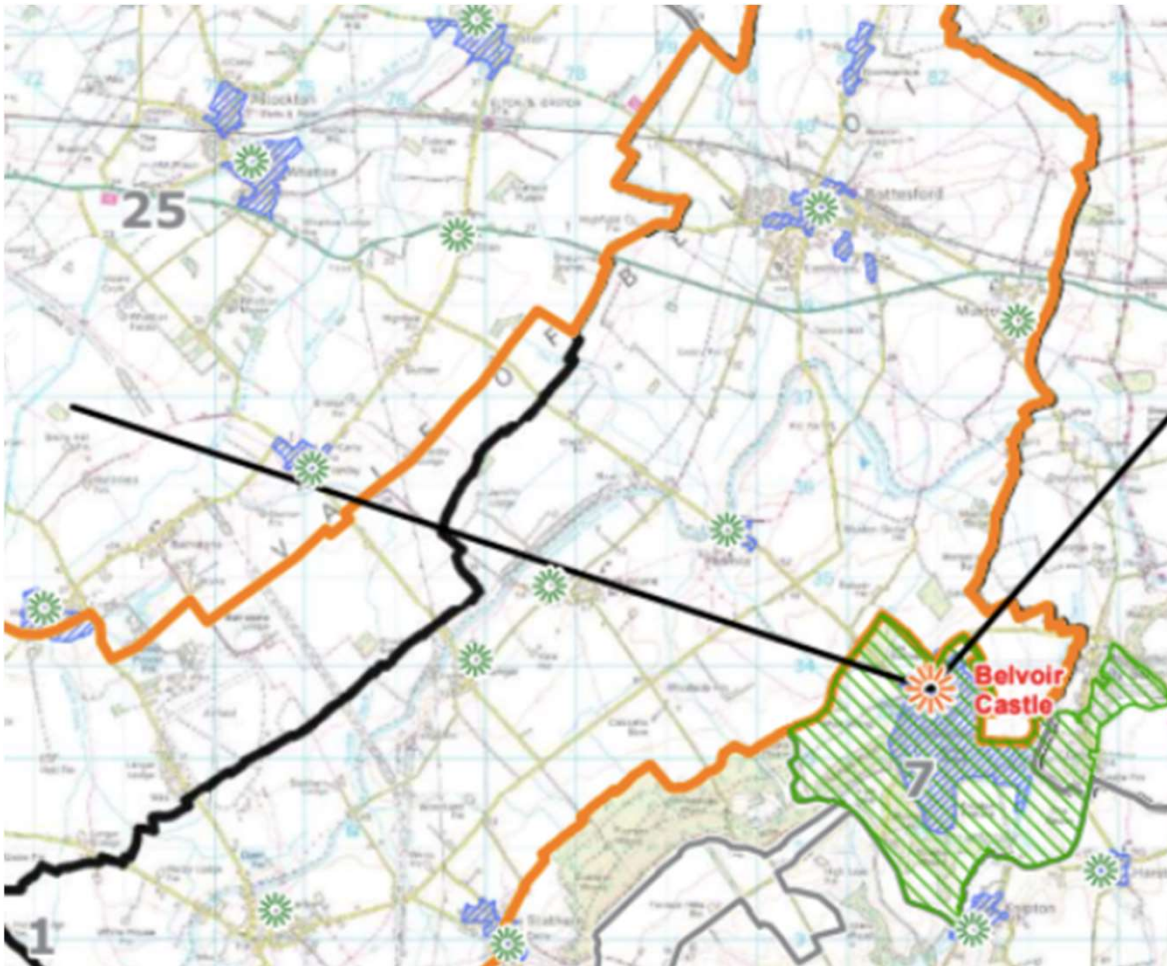


## Key Example of Loss of Access – an important route is lost



**The current route between field 5 and 6 is not a formal public footpath but is a long-held route that has been enjoyed for many years by walkers and dog-walkers.**

## Melton BC Local plan: Protecting views from Belvoir Castle



**'It is desirable to preserve the expansive and rural patchwork character of this view.'**

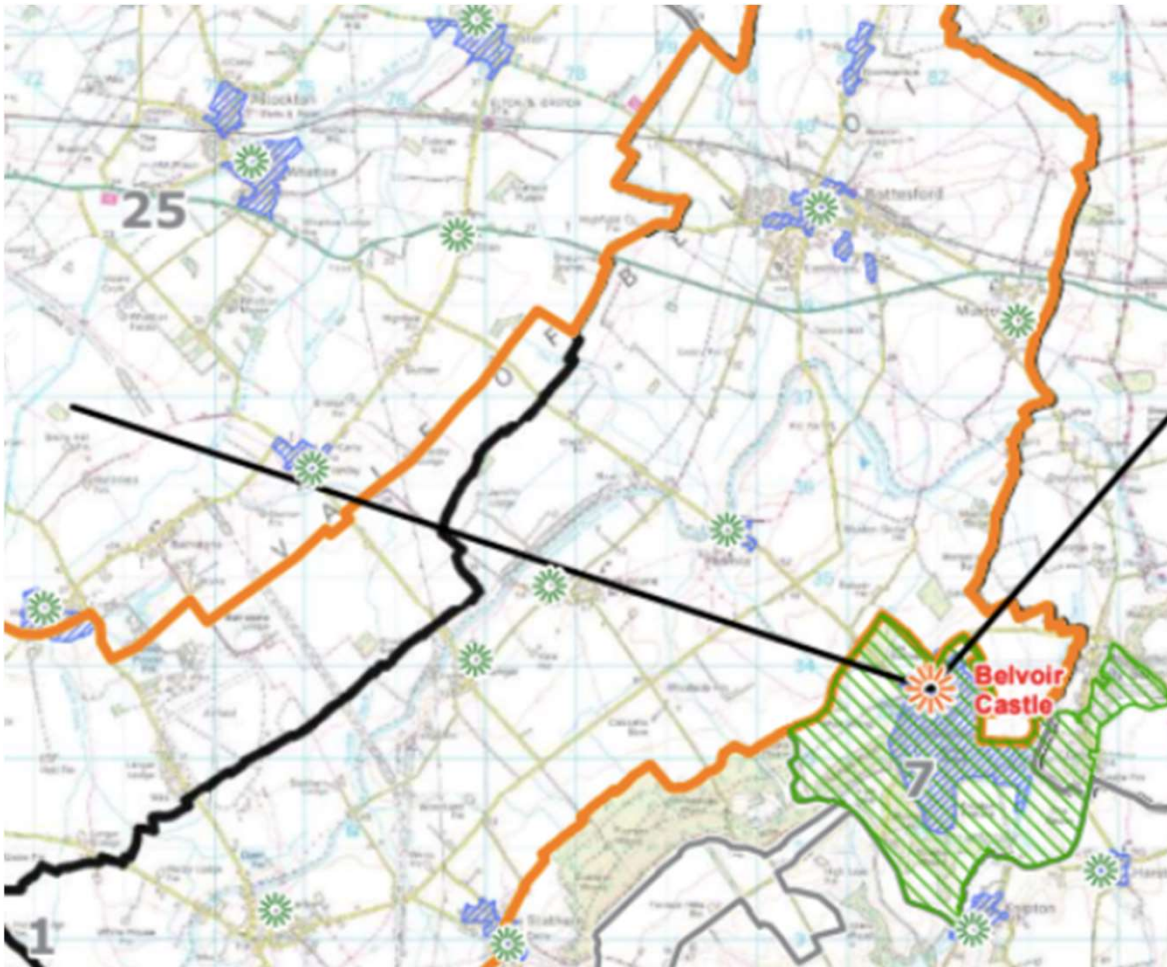
'there are close historic links between Belvoir Castle and St Mary's Church, Bottesford' ..

..."and it is desirable to **maintain uninterrupted views** of the spire of St Mary's from the Castle".

Source: **Melton & Rushcliffe Landscape and Sensitivity Study**

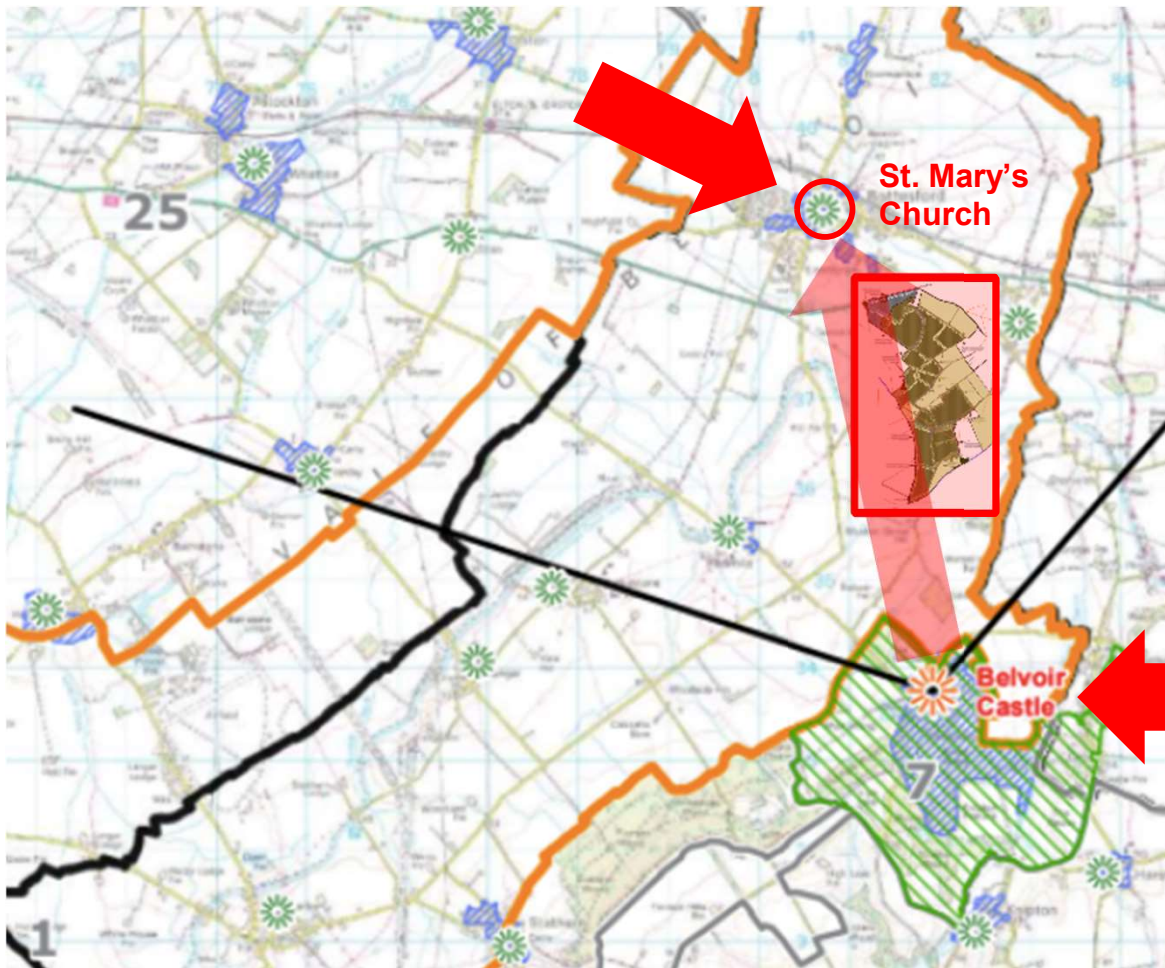


## Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan - Policy 2:



Part 4. As appropriate to the scale, nature and location, development proposals **should take account of the cultural sensitivity and historical link and viewpoint between St Mary's Church from Belvoir Castle.** Where it is both necessary and practicable to do so, the layout and design of the proposed development **should safeguard the existing viewpoint.**

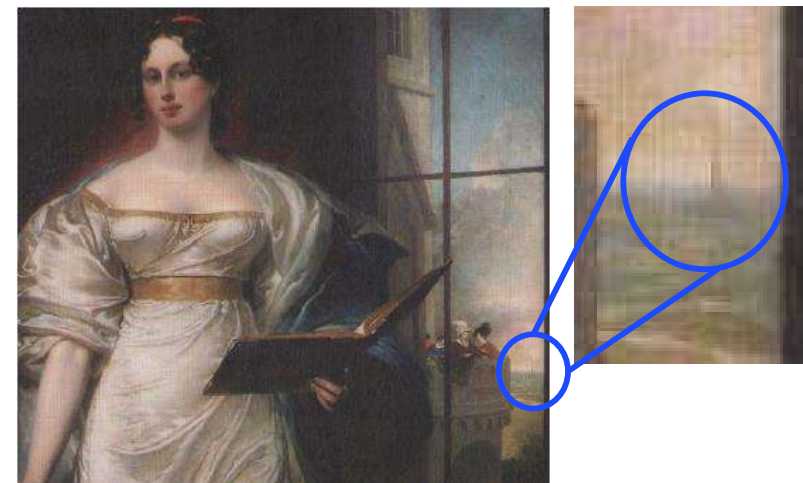
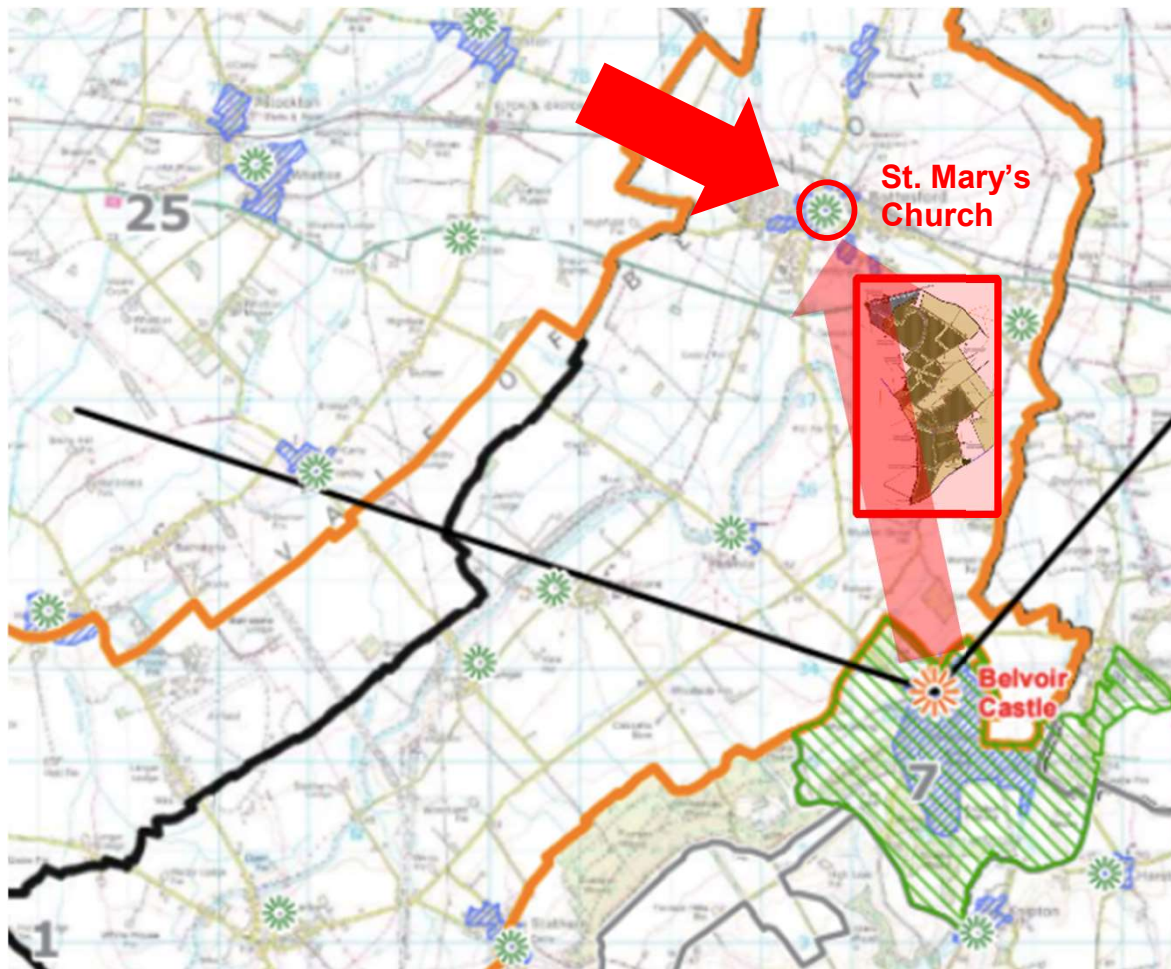
## Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan - Policy 2:



This proposal does not sufficiently take into account the cultural sensitivity and historical link and viewpoint between St Mary's Church and Belvoir Castle.

It is, in fact, **directly positioned between the two.**

## Bottesford Neighbourhood Plan - Policy 2:




**The view of St Mary's, Bottesford,  
Duchess of Rutland painting 1780 – 1825**

(Bel voir = 'beautiful view' in French)

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# **Cumulative Impact**


# Cumulative Assessment across the Vale of Belvoir

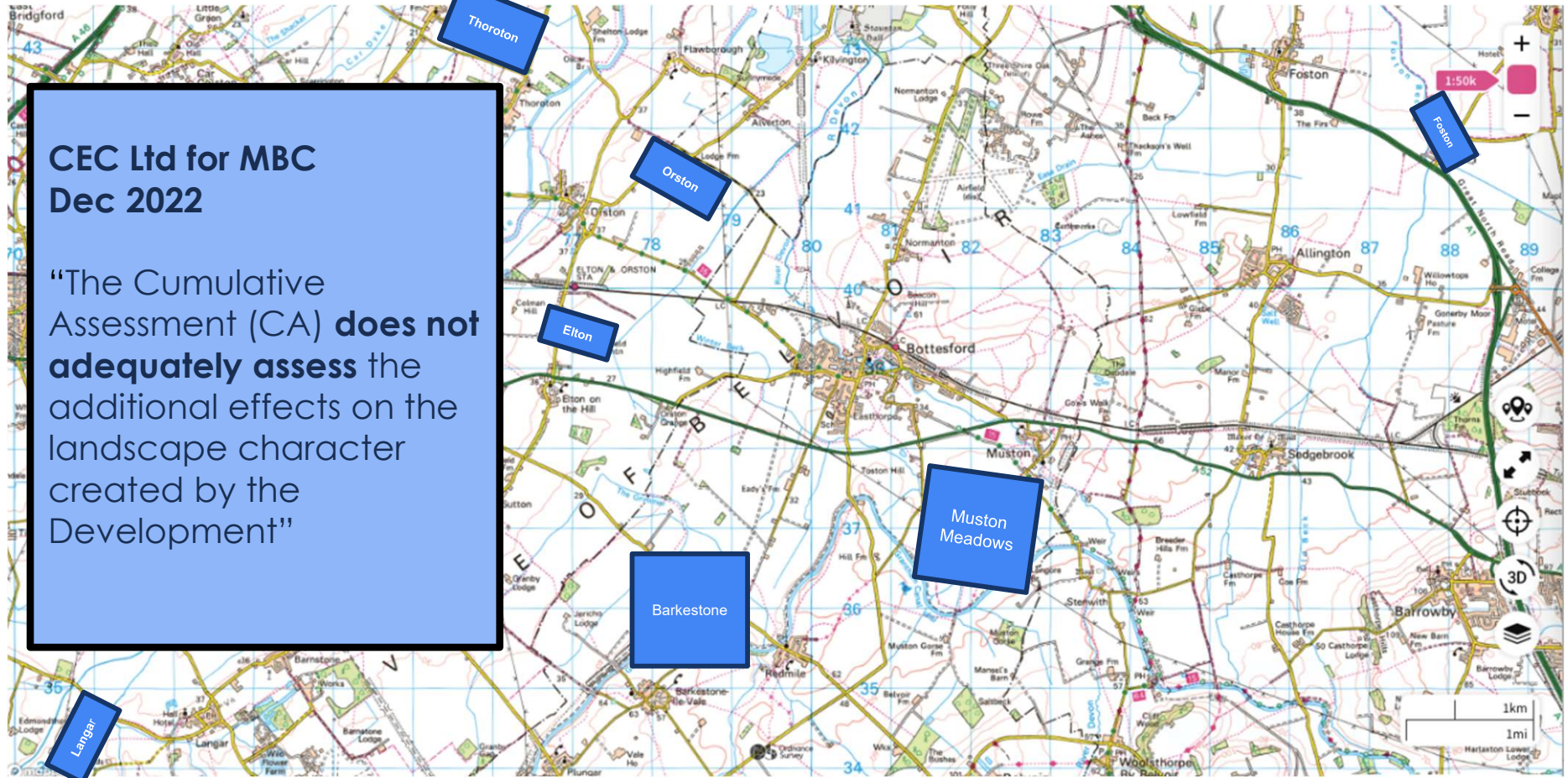
 = Solar Farm




 = Solar Farm


# Cumulative Assessment across the Vale of Belvoir

 = Solar Farm



 = Solar Farm


# Cumulative Assessment across the Vale of Belvoir

 = Solar Farm



**Alicia Kearns MP,  
in the House of Commons  
19<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**"It is unacceptable that  
we are seeing this assault  
on our local planning  
infrastructure."**

 = Solar Farm

## Cumulative Assessment across the Vale of Belvoir

Hansard: Planning and Solar Farms debate 19 July 2023.

Alicia Kearns, then MP for Melton and Rutland, makes, *inter alia*, the following points:

*“It is no coincidence, as I said earlier, that many of us speaking in this Chamber today represent Rutland, Leicestershire or Lincolnshire, which have historically been known as the breadbasket of England. They have fed our nation for centuries, yet we are **seeing a concentration of solar developments in those areas**, with more than 50% of all land nationally proposed for solar plants being in Lincolnshire and bordering counties. Colleagues might wish to adopt the term “solar plants”, because that is what they are. I worry that it does not bode well for our national food security when the heartlands of our agriculture are being assaulted.*

*At my last count, there were **77 solar plants** currently proposed in Lincolnshire and bordering counties, totalling over 38,000 acres of land in just our corner of this great country. In Rutland and Melton alone, we have solar plants proposed or in place in **Exton, Ryhall, Essendine, Ragdale, Barkestone, Plungar, Ketton, Ranksborough, Pilton, Muston, Uppingham and Belmesthorpe**, let alone in nearby Stamford villages such as **Carlby, Braceborough and Casewick**. It is unacceptable that we are seeing this assault on our local planning infrastructure.”*



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**Inefficient use of land**

## Inefficient site

The latest figures from the applicant indicate that the site is amongst the least efficient in the country creating only 0.5 MW per hectare across the site at peak output. This may be an inefficient use of land, or may be an under-estimate to avoid more intense scrutiny.

<b>Example Sites</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Hectares</b>	<b>MW</b>	<b>MW per acre</b>	<b>MW per Hectare</b>
Lyneham Solar Farm (Bradenstoke, Wiltshire)	213	86	69.8	0.3	0.81
Wroughton Airfield (Wiltshire)	165	67	50.0	0.3	0.75
Shotwick Solar Park (Flintshire, Wales)	250	101	72.2	0.3	0.71
Owl's Hatch Solar Park (Herne Bay, Kent)	212	86	51.9	0.2	0.60
West Raynham Solar Farm (Norfolk)	225	91	49.9	0.2	0.55

<i>Appeal</i>	<b>Muston Meadows solar panels area v2</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>99.95</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.50</b>
<i>Original</i>	<b>Muston Meadows solar panels area v1</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>103.00</b>	<b>49.9</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.48</b>
	Muston Meadows entire site	334	135	49.9	0.1	0.37

Hansard: Planning and Solar Farms debate 19 July 2023. Alicia Kearns, then MP for Melton and Rutland, makes, *inter alia*, the following points:

*I want to touch briefly...on solar developers essentially making a mockery of our planning process by putting in proposals for plants producing 49.9 MW to avoid the scrutiny of being over 50 MW as a nationally significant infrastructure project.*

*From my research, I have discovered that one developer, Econergy, which has two applications for solar plants in the UK - one is in Rutland - is claiming to the planning authorities that those plants will produce just 49.9 MW. However, in internal presentations that are apparently only for shareholders but have been put on the company's website, those developments are listed as generating 80 MW and 53 MW.*

*Essentially, these applications are going into the local planning system under the pretext that the plants will produce 49.9 MW, when they are not and have no intention of doing so. This suggests foul play.”*

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2020-2036



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