

# LANDSCAPE AND VILLAGE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

## Eaton Parish | March 2018



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## INTRODUCTION

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This review of the landscape and settlement form of Eaton has been conducted as part of the development of the Eaton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) during the course of 2018. The study covers the Neighbourhood Plan area ~~within~~<sup>of</sup> the parish boundary of the village of Eaton and is clearly demarcated in Drawing 017-028-P001.

The intention and purpose of this document is to understand the existing landscape character of Eaton, and to identify the combination of elements and features that contribute to the village character of Eaton.

A localised baseline appraisal has been undertaken in a number of stages:

- A desk-based study, reviewing the material available on the internet from Cheshire East, from [www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk) and from Natural England.
- A series of walks around the parish, recorded with photographs and written up with assistance from local residents.
- Classifying and mapping the landscape's character areas, including
  - Topographical features
  - A snapshot of the flora and fauna living in the area
  - An outline of the land use
- An indication of the cultural associations with the landscape.
- Additional professional advice offered by e\*SCAPE urbanists & PGLA Landscape Architecture.

The intention of this document is to describe the landscape and settlement of Eaton, and to identify the combination of elements and features that are unique to the parish.



## POLICY CONTEXT

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At a national level, the landscape is recognised to be an important asset, and this is promoted by public bodies such as Natural England and English Heritage as well as being set out in planning policy. The government signed up to the European Landscape Convention in 2007. This convention defines landscape as “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors” (Council of Europe, 2000). The Localism Act says that local communities can develop Neighbourhood Plans with a view to determining locally based guidance on where development can go and what it should look like. This landscape character assessment will be used to inform the developing Eaton Neighbourhood Plan and will form part of the evidence base for the Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans are required to be in line with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Cheshire East Local Plan.

The NPPF states that:

- Decision making should “be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area”
- Decision making should “always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings”
- Decision making should “take account of the different roles and character of different areas [...] recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it”
- “Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks”
- Policy and planning decisions should take account of “opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place”.

Eaton is a rural, agricultural village, where the landscape has been influenced over many hundreds of years by the work of the agricultural community. It contains historic listed buildings and a church.

The landscape character of Eaton is clearly the result of the interaction of people with the natural landscape over centuries. The following pages summarise the character of the landscape of Eaton as identified in the National Character Areas (NCA) and the Local Landscape Character Areas (LCA). The Cheshire East Neighbourhood Plan Toolkit states that the Neighbourhood Plans should directly refer to the character as set out in the published 2008 document and not attempt to rewrite the landscape characteristics for the Parish. However, it is acceptable to emphasise characteristics that are evident within the Parish. Localised features that are not present in the LCA can also be highlighted where appropriate as long as they are not at odds or contradict that which is set out in the parent document. This is summarised in Section 2.05 of the document, *“It is important to recognise that where small scale local landscape areas or features are identified, they do sit within a larger context and form a small part of an extensive landscape unit, the boundaries of which are likely to extend over significant distances beyond the parish itself.”*

## EXISTING PUBLISHED LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENTS

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### National Character Areas

Natural England provides character assessments at a national level. The National Character Areas NCAs divide England into 159, each defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, and cultural and economic activity. The parish of Eaton falls within national character area 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain:

“The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area (NCA) comprises most of the county of Cheshire, the northern half of Shropshire and a large part of north-west Staffordshire. This is an expanse of flat or gently undulating, lush, pastoral farmland, which is bounded by the Mersey Valley NCA in the north, with its urban and industrial development, and extending to the rural Shropshire Hills NCA in the south. To the west, it is bounded by the hills of the Welsh borders and to the east and south-east by the urban areas within the Potteries and Churnet Valley, Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, and Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCAs.

A series of small sandstone ridges cut across the plain and are very prominent features within this open landscape. The Mid-Cheshire Ridge, the Maer and the Hanchurch Hills are the most significant. They are characterised by steep sides and woodland is often ancient semi-natural woodland which is notably absent from the plain, except around Northwich.”

“The landscape character of the plain owes much to its glacial origins. A thick layer of glacial till covers the lower slopes of the ridge and the surrounding plain and is punctuated by numerous ponds and meres.”

“Throughout the plain, the water retention and fertility of the clay soils support lush pastures for grazing dairy cattle.”

### Local Landscape Character Assessments

As the NCAs character descriptions tend to be very broad as it addresses the characteristics over a regional level, a focus on local landscape studies by the former Cheshire County Council therefore provide a greater representation of the characteristics of Eaton at a more localised level. The parish of Eaton falls within 2 landscape character areas as shown in Drawing 017-028-P10 Local Character Assessment Map in the supporting figures.

### Landscape Character Type 16: HIGHER FARMS & WOODS

#### Key characteristics:

- *Gentle rolling and moderate undulating topography*
- *A mix of medieval and post-medieval reorganised fields (irregular, semi-regular and regular up to 8ha)*
- *Hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees*
- *High density of woodland – blocks, coverts and riparian*
- *Predominantly low density dispersed settlement*
- *Ponds*
- *Small mossland areas.*

#### General Description

This undulating character type has a rural nature, which is defined by a higher than average density

of woodland compared with much of Cheshire. It acts as an intermediate zone between the flatter expanses of the *East Lowland Plain*, the *Lower Farms & Woods* and the higher ground of the *Upland Fringe* and *Upland Foothills*. It extends from Poynton in the north to Alsager.

*Land use is a mix of arable and pasture, while settlement largely retains its dispersed low density pattern. Intensive reorganisation during the post-medieval period saw the break up of medieval field patterns. Small surviving mosses are typical in most areas, as are ponds.*

*There are some historic estates in this area e.g. Gawsworth, and the area has witnessed some industrial activity in the form of sand and salt production.*

### **Visual Character**

*This type is characterised by a medium-scale landscape, where views are generally limited by the strong presence of woodland and high hedgerows. Local increases in vegetation are often associated with streams, field drains and ponds. However there are areas of obvious hedgerow loss, often linked to an increased emphasis upon arable farming, where the landscape is of a much larger scale. At its most extreme the remaining hedgerow trees can appear as isolated elements in an open, rolling landscape. Where vegetation is sparse the higher ground in the pronounced rolling topography can offer more extensive views. To the east the Peak District hills provide very prominent and distinctive land marks such as Kerridge Ridge, Teggs Nose and the Cloud, with these high ridges dominating many views. The location of this type, at the transition between the Cheshire lowlands and Peak District uplands, is further emphasised by the gradual appearance of dry-stone field boundaries and stone buildings as one progresses eastwards.*

*Many areas have a very rural character with small, winding country lanes rising and falling over the undulating ground. This provides a strong contrast with those locations where the landscape exhibits the influence of nearby urban areas such as golf courses, garden centres, horse paddocks and shelters, changes in land use linked to farming diversification and the refurbishment of traditional buildings.*

### **Physical Influences**

*The topography of this type varies from c 80 -180m AOD. It is gently to moderately undulating, with steeper slopes around streams and rivers and approaching the Pennine Fringe. The solid geology is predominantly made up of one or more types of mudstone e.g. Bollin and Eldersfield, and in some areas this is combined with halite (rock salt) e.g. Northwich and Wilkesley. Superficial deposits are a mix of Devensian till, glacio-fluvial sand and gravel, glacio-lacustrine clay and silt and peat deposits. Soils mainly comprise typical argillic stagnogleys, the finest of which are suited to grass and were a major factor in the development of the Cheshire dairy farming industry.*

*Field boundaries are delineated predominantly by hawthorn hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The majority of fields are grass leys for pasture, although increasing areas are cultivated for silage or feed crops including cereals and maize.*

*Woodland levels are high compared with most of the county and are much greater than in the Rolling Farmland type. It occurs on estates of which there are a small number in this landscape type, in blocks, in plantations and along the banks of water courses. A large proportion of this is made up of broadleaves and is ancient woodland. A number are designated as SBIs.*

*The deposition of glacial sands and gravels and the accumulation of peat in the hummocky topography mean that features such as small mosses, ponds of varying sizes and occasionally meres occur in this type. Rivers and streams are common.*



## Cultural Influence

*With the exception of a small number of nucleated settlements – varying in scale from Warren village to Buerton hamlet, there is a low density of dispersed farms and houses. This character type has not undergone a great deal of change in modern times. Overall it retains its rural nature, despite its proximity to large urban areas i.e. Macclesfield and Congleton.*

*Field patterns are a mix of medieval enclosure with post medieval improvements and modern adaptation. The overall pattern is therefore a combination of regular, irregular and semi-regular form, varying from small to medium (up to 8ha) in size, with some larger fields (over 8ha). The survival of medieval field systems is fragmentary, resulting from the extensive post medieval agricultural changes and programmes of enhancement that occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The loss of hedgerow boundaries and use of fencing is increasingly common in this landscape type. Heathland and mosses were also enclosed and drained at this time to maximise productivity. Today land is used for arable and pastoral farming.*

*Accidental or deliberate deposition of objects in wetland areas is typical of prehistory and finds have been recovered from the mosses in this character type e.g. a Bronze Age axe from Marton Moss. Other known prehistoric features include Bronze Age burial mounds. There are some historic estates such as Little Morton and Gawsorth but far fewer than in the Estate Woodland & Mere type which otherwise shares a small number of characteristics e.g. parkland and water features adapted for ornamental purposes.*

*The geology of the character type has led to limited localised exploitation of certain resources – e.g. sand extraction to the north of Congleton and salt production at Malkins Bank.*

*Key arterial routes such as the A34 and A50 pass through the character areas but more typical are the network of minor roads and in some places footpaths. The Shropshire Union Canal (main branch) and the Macclesfield Canal utilise stretches of more consistent topography, as do railway lines. The Cheshire Ring Canal Walk passes through a number of the character areas.*

*Key Issues affecting Higher Farms and Woods landscape character type*

1. **Increase in demand for equestrian facilities** riding schools etc. including enclosed exercise areas and associated large-scale buildings.
2. **Continued pressure for mineral extraction:** current and future operations can present a threat to habitats but also provide opportunities for habitat creation
3. **Changes in farming** including pressure to diversify and changing patterns of land ownership. The purchase of agricultural holdings by non-farmers is becoming a significant force for change, resulting in conversion of farm houses and farm buildings and changes in farm use.
4. **Changes in farm crops.** Increase in areas under arable or fodder crops and a trend towards silage production. Possible move towards bio-energy crops such as miscanthus.
5. **On-going decline in traditional woodland management practices** leading to under management of farm woodlands, coverts and copses leading to general deterioration. Many hedgerow trees over-mature and in decline.
6. **Reduction, fragmentation and deterioration of habitats:** Loss of ponds through drainage and in-fill plus nutrient run-off from surrounding farmland. Decline in species-rich hedgerows at some locations. Intensification of grassland management leading to loss of species-rich acid

*grassland. Loss of ancient woodland through inappropriate management, grazing, encroachment and erosion through informal recreation.*

- 7. **Loss of historic field pattern** due to decline in hedgerow management and disrepair of stone walls, with resulting increase in use of fencing.*
- 8. **Loss of historic parkland** to agriculture and recreational use e.g. golf courses.*
- 9. **Erosion of built environment character through incremental development:** This may lead to loss of historic buildings and vernacular character; the suburbanisation of rural properties and their curtilage; pressure for expansion of existing settlement, ribbon development and in-fill.*
- 10. **Standardisation of roads:** Upgrading of lanes and minor roads leading to increasingly suburban character of the countryside.*

#### **HFW1: Gawsworth Character Area. Including Rodeheath, Marton & North Rode.**

*The landform in this character area gently undulates in the vicinity of Marton in the west (c. 90m AOD), becoming steeper as it approaches the Upland Footslopes type (up to 180m AOD) in the east. This is a medium-large scale landscape where the adjacent high ground is visually dominant, and the distinctive landmarks of the Croker Hill telecommunication mast and The Cloud feature in most eastern views.*

*Fields are mainly post-medieval in date and are typical of agricultural improvement. Small areas were also enclosed at a later stage e.g. parkland at Gawsworth and former areas of heath and moss. The fields are small (up to 8ha) with some medium and large (4-8, over 8ha). The larger and more regular fields are typical of modern changes to the field pattern.*

*Although many areas retain an intact field pattern there is widespread evidence of hedgerow loss. There are areas of more open landscape, with large arable fields bound by wire fences, where trees form isolated elements within the field pattern. In such areas woodland can take the form of isolated blocks that have an important local effect upon the surrounding landscape. Some blocks are very large and can fill the local horizon if they occupy the high ground within the undulating landform.*

*Major roads in the area include the A34 and the A536 – arterial routes from Congleton, but away from the major highways, and the urban influence of Macclesfield and Congleton, the character is very rural and even remote. The greatest impact from urban development is experienced on the edge of Macclesfield e.g. proximity to the Danes Moss landfill site and the modern expansion of the villages of Warren and Henbury. Beyond these, settlement has a low density and mainly comprises dispersed farms connected by narrow country roads which rise and fall with the rolling landform.*

*Leisure use in the landscape includes a golf course, visiting opportunities at Gawsworth and the Cheshire Ring Canal Walk which runs along the Macclesfield Canal. There is a railway line linking Macclesfield and Congleton and also in this vicinity is the Macclesfield Canal. To the north of Congleton at Eaton hall Quarry is a large sand pit and water-filled extraction site.*

*Overall this area has one of the highest concentrations of woodland in the county, including some of the largest blocks – Tidnocks, Marton Heath and Cocksmoss are all SBIs and comprise mainly broadleaves with some conifers located on drained mossland. Typical species are birch with rowan and occasional aspen and alder buckthorn. Ancient woodland associated with streams and watercourses include those along the tributaries of the Dane and Heskey Wood on Snape Brook.*

*The accumulation of peat in hollows created by the glacial process is demonstrated by the usual pattern of peat in basins or valley mires surrounded by pasture. Cocks Moss for example measures c. 30 ha, it has been severely drained and is now planted with trees, while many others measure just 10m across.*

*Sandy Lane Pit is a derelict landfill site to the west of Macclesfield with ponds and terrestrial habitats that support a large number of amphibians including great crested newts. Grassy banks support Devil's-bit Scabious and Glaucous Sedge. West of this is an old sand quarry containing a small lake – Whirley Mere, which is surrounded by rough unimproved grassland.*

*Evidence of early human activity can be traced back to the prehistoric period following the discovery of a range of implements commonly in the moss and former moss areas e.g. a Bronze Age axe from Marton Moss. Sites include a Bronze Age barrow at Woodhouse End.*

*There are a number of historic estates in this area – Gawsworth, which has a Grade II\* park and garden on the English Heritage Register. Gawsworth Old Hall is listed Grade I and in its present form dates from the 15th and 16th centuries with 19th and 20th century alterations. To the north are 5 rectangular ponds which were part of the garden design as well as being used as fish ponds. Other estates include Somerford Booths Hall, a moated house built in 1612 but altered in the 18th century; the moated Henshaw Hall; and Rode Manor House which is a Grade II 19th century building. A local increase in woodland cover is normally associated with such estates.*

*A small patch of woodland called Maggoty Johnson's Wood to the south of Warren is managed by the National Trust. Buried in 1773 this is the resting place of Samuel Johnson, who has been described as the last English jester.*

A small part of the parish, in the south eastern corner, falls into Landscape Character Area HFW4: Buglawton. This character area also runs along the southern eastern boundary of the parish.

#### **HFW4: Buglawton Character Area. Including Crossley, Dane-in-Shaw woods & canal**

This is a small character area to the east of Congleton, overlooked from the east by The Cloud, which is situated in the adjoining *Upland Footslopes* landscape type. This adjacent high ground dominates the character area. It has gentle to moderate undulation across the area (c 90-150m AOD) with the greatest slopes in the vicinity of watercourses.

Field size is small to medium and there is mainly a semi-regular pattern (some irregular and regular). This is typically medieval enclosure with post-medieval reorganisation and improvement. There was some enclosure by Act of Parliament in the vicinity of Buglawton School.

Settlement is limited and mainly consists of dispersed farms and a small number of houses in the vicinity of Key Green.

There is a high level of woodland cover associated with lines of drainage and in many locations this creates a strong sense of enclosure and a small-scale verdant landscape with remnants of ancient woodland on steeper ground. The Dane Valley in particular appears as a solid line of woodland which curtails views in a northerly direction. Where views to the east are available these extend to the high ground of the *Peak Footslopes* and the telecommunication mast at Croker Hill is visible.

The A54 runs through the area, with remaining roads being of a minor nature. Where the railway crosses the Macclesfield Canal and the River Dane the structures form points of interest in the



landscape and the impressive Dane viaduct is a local landmark. A number of designated footpaths follow both the canal and the Dane Valley, e.g. The Dane Valley Way.

Steep sided, wooded watercourses include Timbers Brook and Dane-in- Shaw Brook. Timbersbrook and Bath Vale Woods are both SBIs that contain areas of unimproved grassland in addition to ancient woodland. Here there is a rich ground flora and a varied fauna and the valley sides support species rich neutral unimproved pasture. Dane-in-Shaw Pasture is designated a SSSI, for its species rich neutral and acidic pastures with ponds, stream, marsh, mature hedge and scrub alder. Mute swans breed on the millpond and water avens, fleabane, meadow saxifrage and common centaury occur. The nearby Dane-in-Shaw Brook Meadows are an SBI with further patches of unimproved grassland.

A number of mills were once located in this area associated with cotton and silk spinning. Of these the Dane-in-Shaw Mill, built in 1784, was Congleton's first cotton mill.

## SUMMARY OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES AND AREAS

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Drawing 017-028-P10 in the supporting figures and the accompanying narrative above illustrates that the former Cheshire County Council identified the settlement core of Eaton to be enclosed by the Higher Farms and Wood (HFW) character type and HFW1: Gawsworth Character Area.

A very small portion of HFW4: Buglawton Character Area covers some of the countryside in the southeast of the parish but generally the landscape character in these locations can be considered as within a transition zone of the adjacent character areas in the vicinity and possesses features from each description.

Drawings 017-028-006 – 008 demonstrate key features within the Parish, such as settlements, tree cover and water features.

## DESIGNATIONS

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There are no areas of green belt with the parish boundary. The only designations within the parish boundary are a number of listed buildings. The locations of these are on Drawing 017-028-P004 and some are referenced in the text in the Eaton Settlement Appraisal below.

Drawing 017-028-005 highlights the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

## VISUAL AMENITY

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Drawing 017-028-P09 identifies the location of key views that can be found within the village and in the surrounding landscape. The supporting photographs show that the village has a number of locations which capture long range views to important landscape features.

Important views can be found within the village core and are also experienced in the surrounding countryside. The following is a general overview of the visual amenity. Many of the views demonstrate the key characteristics of the descriptions within the Higher Farms and Woods Landscape Type described above confirming that the Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment 2008 accurately reflects the broad landscape character found around the settlement of Eaton. Below is a general synopsis of the key views and special mention of localised landscape features are included where appropriate.

**Viewpoint 1** – At the junction where the PRoW [Eaton FP3] meets Crauford Road, looking in a north easterly direction.

**Viewpoint 2** – Looking in south westerly direction from PRoW [Eaton FP3] down towards Crauford Road and the settlement edge of Eaton.

**Viewpoint 3** – Looking in a north easterly direction from PRoW [Eaton FP4/Dane Valley Way] with views out towards Bell Farm and Sutton Common in the distance with The Cloud visible to the right of the photograph.

**Viewpoint 4** – Looking in a south westerly direction from PRoW [Eaton FP4/Dane Valley Way] towards Christ Church and the settlement edge of Eaton.

**Viewpoint 5** – Further along PRoW [Eaton FP4/Dane Valley Way] looking in a south easterly direction towards Hillmoor Farm with clear views out to The Cloud in the distance.

**Viewpoint 6** – Looking in a southerly direction from the Christ Church with views out towards The Cloud and Mow Cop and the settlement edge of Congleton.

**Viewpoint 7** – Looking in a north easterly direction from the A536 towards Christ Church.

**Viewpoint 8** – Within Millennium Park looking in a southerly direction at views out towards Mow Cop.

**Viewpoint 9** – From Millennium Park looking in an easterly direction over the playground towards the A536 and Christ Church with glimpses towards The Cloud partially screened by vegetation

**Viewpoint 10** – From Millennium Park looking in a north westerly direction towards Diamond Oaks.



**Viewpoint 11** – Looking in a south westerly direction from the A536 towards the village green in front of The Plough.

**Viewpoint 12** – Looking in a north easterly direction between two properties on School Lane towards an agricultural field.

**Viewpoint 13** – On School Lane looking in a north westerly direction out of the village settlement towards the quarry.

**Viewpoint 14** – Looking in a south easterly direction on School Lane at the approach to the village.

**Viewpoint 15** – Along Fords Lane looking in a southerly direction towards Big Plantation Wood.

**Viewpoint 16** – On Bebbington Road looking in a south westerly direction towards the quarry site with Fields Farm to the left of the view.

**Viewpoint 16a** – From the same point on Bebbington Road as viewpoint 13 but looking in a south easterly direction towards Big Plantation Wood and White House Farm with views out towards Sutton Common Tower and The Cloud.

**Viewpoint 17** – Looking in a westerly direction along School Lane with views towards the Tarmac quarry site.

**Viewpoint 18** – On School Lane looking in a north easterly direction towards the Tarmac quarry site.

## Eaton Settlement Appraisal

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### Overview

Eaton is a small village which straddles the busy A536, Macclesfield Road just 2 miles north of Congleton town centre.

The Parish of Eaton is relatively small, covers roughly 480 hectares, contains around 110 homes and has a population of circa 300 residents.

The village lies roughly in the centre of the Parish, as illustrated in Drawing Number 017-028-P001. The village has within it Christ Church, The Plough Inn, but no primary school. The school has previously closed (1967) and is now a private dwelling located on School Lane.

In addition to the above the village has community facilities in the form of a Church Hall (located behind the church) and The Millennium Green which contains a Play Area and Sports Pitch opposite the church.

Though small in size Eaton has existed since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. This history is physically presented in the older buildings in the heart of the village.

### Village History & Evolution

As stated above the village of Eaton lies roughly in the centre of the Parish of the same name. The settlement appears to have grown up around the main Macclesfield Road and School Lane junction.

The village has been occupied since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, initially by the Praer Family and then by the Brereton, Rode and Antrobus Families, the latter building Eaton Hall. The Hall was remodelled or re-built several times over its life, before being demolished in the 1980's to make way for the ever-expanding sand quarry.

During the industrial revolution, development in the Parish of Eaton moved away from the historic heart of the village, towards the River Dane and exploitation of the water power by textile mills at Havannah, now a neighbourhood more closely related to Congleton.

As can be seen from the historic Ordnance Survey map of 1873 (Drawing Number 017-028-P011) the village was small, with just a handful of farmsteads and cottages scattered around the Church, Plough Inn and along School Lane.

The current form of the village has been created by the development two small estates in the 1950's and 60's straddling School Lane and creating Crauford Road and Beechwood Drive. Besides these infill development areas, the original historic core of the village is identifiable today.

4 properties are listed as being of historical or architectural importance, including Christ Church, Church House, The Plough Inn and Yew Tree Farm, as illustrated in Drawing Number 017-028-P012.

### Village Layout & Structure

Drawing Number 017-028-P012 illustrates the analysis undertaken of the village in terms of its form, interaction and relationship with the rural hinterland which surrounds it. The following narrative should be read in conjunction with this figure.

From the north one approaches the village along Macclesfield Road (A536) from Gawsworth. The first signs of the village are the clustered cottages and smallholdings located to the east of the road.

Macclesfield Road is serpentine in form as it sweeps round towards the village, dropping down the hill into the village centre before rising again towards the Church, then leaving the village and dropping down the hill and heading south towards Congleton. The Church thus signifies the southern gateway into the village from the A536 as one travels towards Macclesfield.

This main road is fast and heavily used as it is the main artery between Macclesfield, Congleton and the M6 southbound. As the description above suggests visibility is somewhat limited along the main road and causes difficulty for pedestrians crossing between the main residential body of the village (west of the main road) and the Church and Church Hall (east of the main road).

The church occupies a high peninsula on the valley crest overlooking the Dane Valley. These views to the east and south appear to have been considered on the construction of the Church through the development of Ha Ha's to the graveyard boundaries. These 'hidden' boundaries create seamless and unbroken views between the church and wider landscape out towards the Bosley Cloud (to the east) and Havannah and Buglawton to the south east. The land drops steeply away to the east and south into the Dane Valley.

At the heart of the village lies The Plough Inn, a former coaching inn which sits at the junction of Macclesfield Road and School Lane and fronts onto a small village green which buffers the public house from the worst of the traffic noise. This green is in essence at the heart of the historic village and is edged by the Inn, a series of Georgian terraces, the partially half-timbered Church House, as well as some more modern bungalows set above the green on the valley slope to the east. This group of buildings (excluding the bungalows) make up the heritage zone at the heart of the village, as illustrated in Drawing 017-028-P012.

The Plough looks to have originally been a Tudor, timber framed building, but as with many buildings was 're-faced' with a Georgian façade, as was the trend in the 1700's. The business itself has been much developed with the addition of accommodation in the form of a standalone stable block style development to the north of the pub and the relocation and erection of a Tithe Barn to the rear of the pub, used for events and functions. The former Smithy, once little more than a scrap yard has also been brought into the Inn's curtilage, with the building refurbished as additional accommodation and yard incorporated into the car park.

Branching off from the main road onto School Lane the more historic properties are scattered along its length in the form of the old school, school house, the former Quaker Burial Ground and associated former Quaker schoolmaster's house (Pear Tree Cottage) opposite, the original Quaker school was demolished in the 1980's. A farmstead on the junction of Back Lane and School Lane is the last historic property as one leaves the village. All the buildings mentioned above can clearly be seen in the Historic Ordnance Survey Map of 1873 (Drawing 017-028-P011).

These older properties are now joined by two mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century developments, the first, a 1950's social housing development on Crauford Road and the second a 1960's style private housing development on Beechwood Drive. Whilst various properties have been modernised or re-elevated in a more modern vernacular, there have been no more major developments in the village itself since the 1960's. The more recent developments front School Lane and don't detract from the lanes semi-rural character.

A secondary arrival into the village can be had from the north west via School Lane or Back Lane at their junction. This approach provides a strong introduction to the village, framed and enclosed as it is by a number of properties.



However, it should be noted that more recently consent has been granted for new housing developments within and beyond the southern edge of the Parish, adjoining Congleton, although these are not within the Neighbourhood Plan Boundary.

The villages form, and layout is primarily linear with development spread along School Lane and out southwards towards Congleton, along Macclesfield Road. Complimenting this linear form are a series of focal elements which include the Christ Church tower, the large Oak tree within the Millennium Park, the black and white gable end of Church House, the Plough Inn frontage and the former School frontage. The linear form of these 'incidents' in the streetscape could indeed be described as a 'string of pearls' at this local heritage level.

Whilst the primary residential areas are located to the north of the village, around School Lane the village's open spaces are mainly located to the south, close to the church. The green in front of The Plough is primarily an area of visual amenity space due to the proximity to the A536 and associated traffic noise. The Millennium Green is the key community green space and includes a formal play area and kickabout space.

Two other areas of incidental greenspace exist, the first is located around the Church Hall on the site of the now demolished (in the 1950's) vicarage and the second, a small green on Beechwood Drive. Both have no formal uses, although the Church Hall green space is used for Garden Parties and festivals etc. The Beechwood Drive green primarily has a visual amenity role; however, it could be developed to have greater community use potential.

As can clearly be seen the village sits in a pastoral landscape. Much of the historic field pattern is present around the southern half of the village, whilst the area to the north contains slightly larger field compartments related to agricultural intensification in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, the pastoral landscape creates a strong setting for the village in its entirety with the field boundaries dominated by native trees and hedgerows.

In addition to the hedgerows a series of woodland belts, remains perhaps of the larger Eaton Hall Estate, can be seen around the village and wider parish. These woodlands add further the green backdrop of the village.

Hand in hand with the wooded character is an area of landscape to the west of the Plough Inn which has a parkland feel and includes a number of TPO'd (Tree Preservation Order) trees; including the 'Diamond Oaks'. Again, it is assumed that this specific landscape compartment is a remnant of the wider Eaton Hall setting.

Two rural views add interest along School Lane as one moves along this route from the south. Just north of The Plough a field gate allows views west into the parkland landscape, as described above, which brings the rural landscape into the heart of the village. The second view is located just to the north of the former school where a wide section of street frontage is taken up by a field compartment, providing local views across the rising topography of the field towards the next hedged field boundary. These green connections are part of the village character and ensure a strong interrelationship between the village and rural setting.

A Public Right of Way or PRoW runs in a north easterly direction from School Lane, just south of the former school house, along the rear of the Crauford Road housing area, then running north and parallel with Macclesfield Road before crossing it and passing through a yard to a property and finally running through open fields down in to the Dane Valley. A strong view back from this ProW can be

had as it crosses the first field back to the tower of Eaton Church, framed by ~~it's~~sits wooded setting on top of the ridge.

A second long-distance leisure route also runs through the village from the south. The Dane Valley Way follows the Macclesfield Road into the village, through the centre before joining the above PRoW and following it over the open fields, as described above.

A Society of Friends or Quaker Cemetery can be seen from School Lane which was in use in the 1650's, the location illustrated in Drawing Number 017-028-P012, the cemetery is indicated as disused on the 1873 Ordnance Survey Mapping. It is understood that a Quaker School used to be located across the road from the Cemetery, next to the Quaker schoolmasters' house which is now known as Pear Tree Cottage.

The 1950's and 60's developments turn their back onto the countryside, which is now at odds with accepted best practice. The village boundaries in these locations are made up of close boarded fences or other 'hard' boundary treatments, which is at odds with the typical boundaries of the wider rural hinterland. There is perhaps an opportunity to encourage villagers to plant up native hedgerows and trees along these boundaries to further strengthen the villages green setting, enhance the views of the village from the surrounding landscape and provide ecological benefits and thus add to the villages biodiversity.

### Vernacular Detailing

As stated earlier in this chapter the village has been in existence for a long time and that is born out in the range of architectural forms found in the village from the half-timbered and remodelled Church House and Plough Inn, Georgian terraced cottages and farmsteads to Victorian School and 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> Century archetypes.

The Tudor properties appear to have had new facades or new extensions added to the original Tudor frontages in the Georgian period, which was typical in this era, rather than demolishing the original property.

The current church was designed by Raffles Brown and consecrated in 1857. The church is in the 'Early Decorated style' as was the fashion during the Victorian Gothic Revival. One of the main benefactors of the church's construction was the Antrobus Family of Eaton Hall.

The Georgian buildings are typical of Cheshire with a warm brindle multi 'Cheshire brick', usually in either Flemish Bond or English bond with headers every 5<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> course.

Many older properties have stone heads and cills to their windows.

Some have a 'cock and hen' brick banded course at eaves which can be found on many buildings.

The 'Cheshire brick' gives way to a lighter brindle and buff bricks within the 1950's and 60's housing areas, which is somewhat of a contrast with the vernacular material. The layout of these developments is very much in the style of small housing estates and the homes are of 'anywhere designs' which can be found in any part of the UK.

The above existing non-vernacular approaches to housing in the village, in terms of layout, detailing and materiality should not be highlighted as a vernacular trait of the village, to ensure that such an approach is not accepted in the future. This approach is highlighted in the CEC Residential Design Guide to ensure new developments are of a locally led design response.

In summary the village has evolved and grown over the centuries with the layers of evolution evident in the archetypes, especially in the heritage zone. The average gross density of the existing homes in the village is typical for a village at between 15 to 20 dwellings per hectare (gross), with the sense of place formed as much around the spaces between the buildings as the buildings themselves.

## Recommendations

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The landscape, as it is, is a highly valued local resource, and the character of the parish should be retained. Key aspects of the character across all areas relate to the open and rural nature of the parish. The views to and from the parish are of importance, with the most significant features being the church, the various listed buildings, the rural landscape and trees and hedgerows.

**Appendix A**

**EATON PARISH**

**Supporting Figures**  
**Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment**

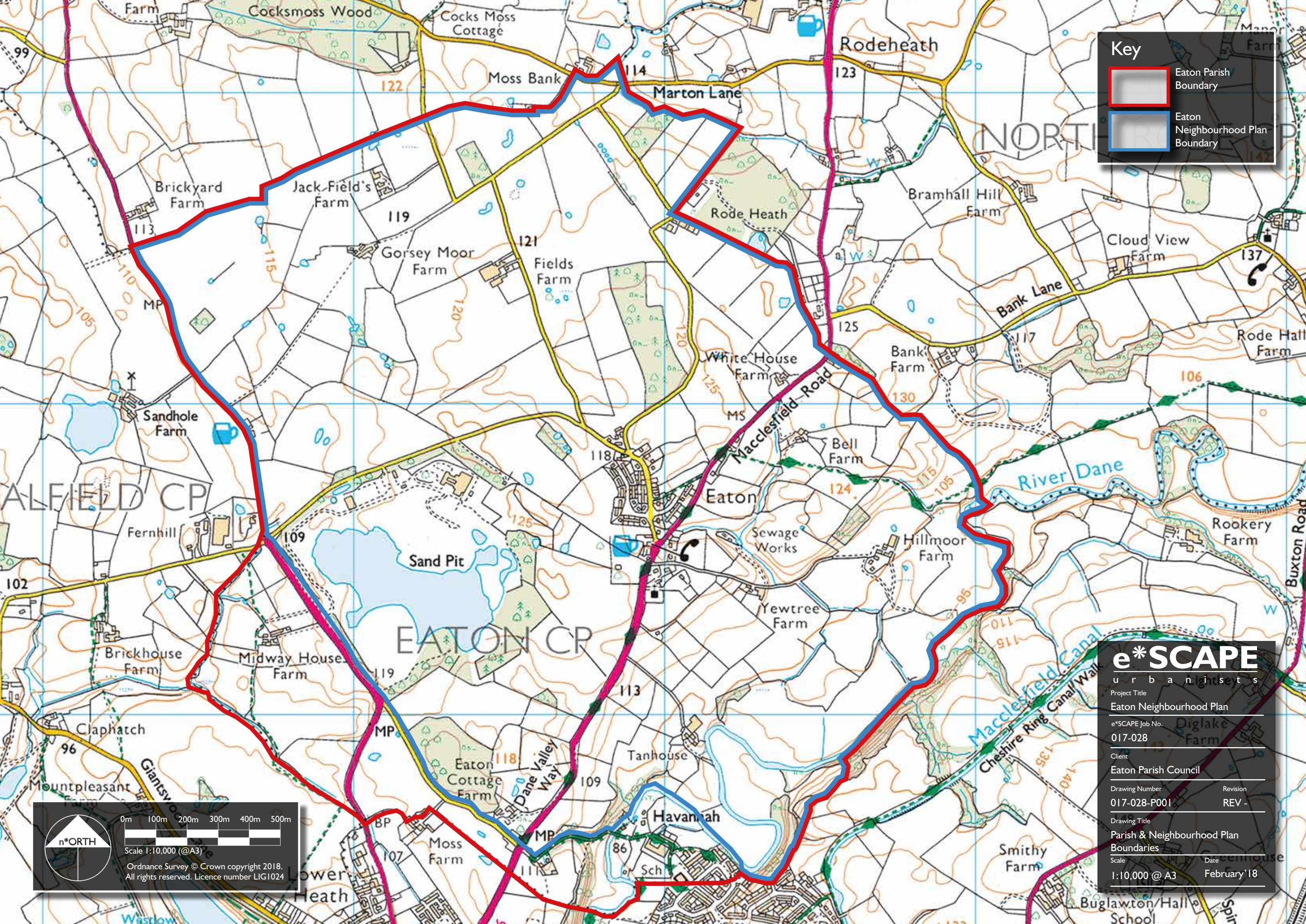
**March 2018**



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| Drawing <b>017-028-P001:</b> | Eaton Parish and Neighbourhood Plan Boundaries                              |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P002:</b> | North Congleton Masterplan  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P003:</b> | Extractive Industries and other major developments in and around the Parish |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P004:</b> | Listed Buildings Designations Map   |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P005:</b> | Public Rights of Way  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P006:</b> | Water Features  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P007:</b> | Tree Cover  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P008:</b> | Settlements and Farmsteads  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P009:</b> | Viewpoint Locations   |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P010:</b> | Landscape Character Areas   |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P011:</b> | Historic Mapping  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P012:</b> | Village Analysis  |
| Drawing <b>017-028-P013:</b> | Village Spatial Policies  |
| Viewpoint photographs 1 - 18 |   |





**Key**

- Eaton Parish Boundary
- Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

**n\*ORTH**

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Scale 1:10,000 (@A3)

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**e\*SCAPE**  
urban insights

Project Title  
Eaton Neighbourhood Plan

e\*SCAPE Job No.  
017-028

Client  
Eaton Parish Council

Drawing Number  
017-028-P001

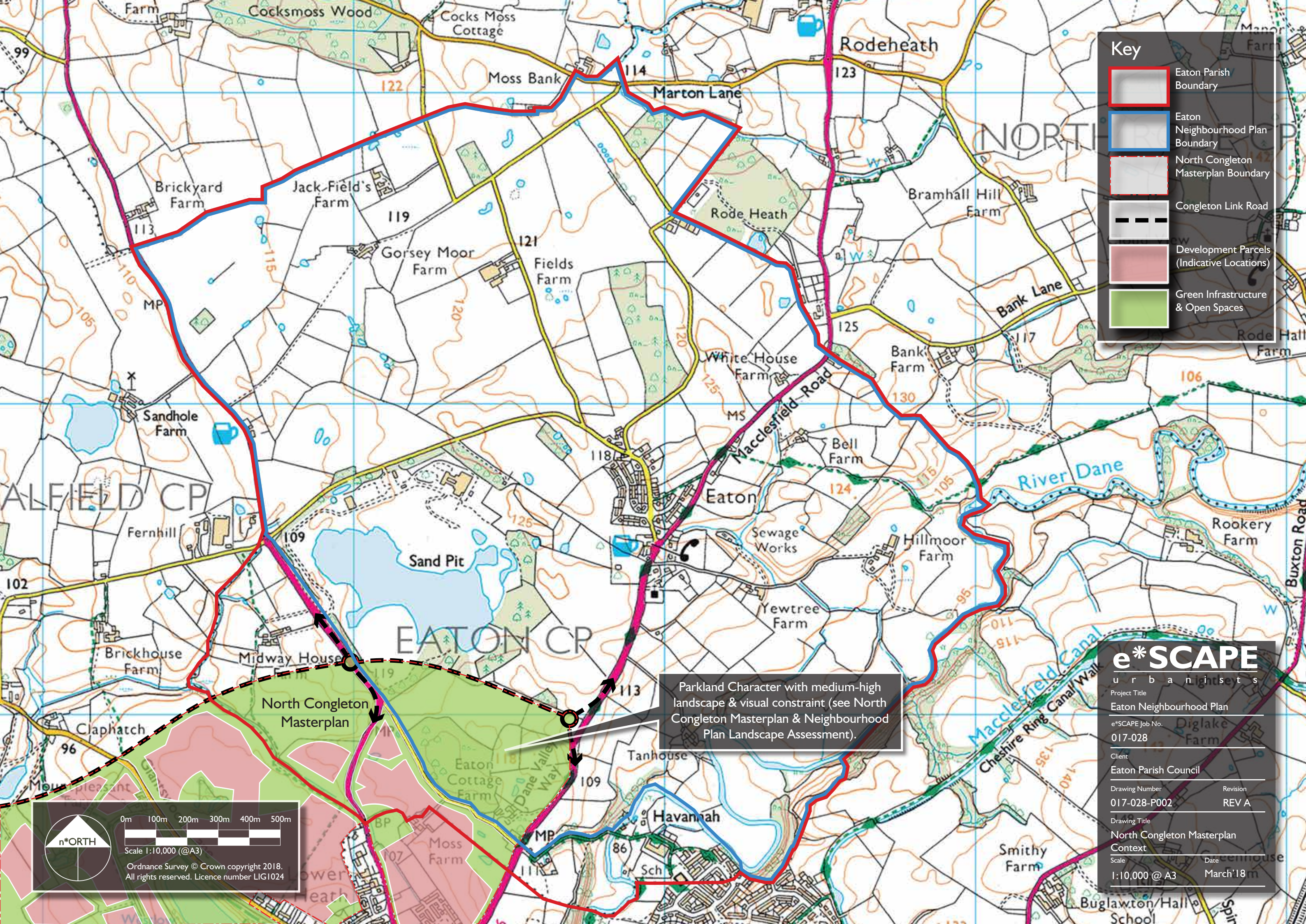
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Parish & Neighbourhood Plan Boundaries

Scale  
1:10,000 @ A3

Revision  
REV -

Date  
February '18





**Key**

- Eaton Parish Boundary
- Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- North Congleton Masterplan Boundary
- Congleton Link Road
- Development Parcels (Indicative Locations)
- Green Infrastructure & Open Spaces

Parkland Character with medium-high landscape & visual constraint (see North Congleton Masterplan & Neighbourhood Plan Landscape Assessment).

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Scale 1:10,000 (@A3)

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urban nightsets

Project Title  
Eaton Neighbourhood Plan

e\*SCAPE Job No.  
017-028

Client  
Eaton Parish Council

Drawing Number  
017-028-P002

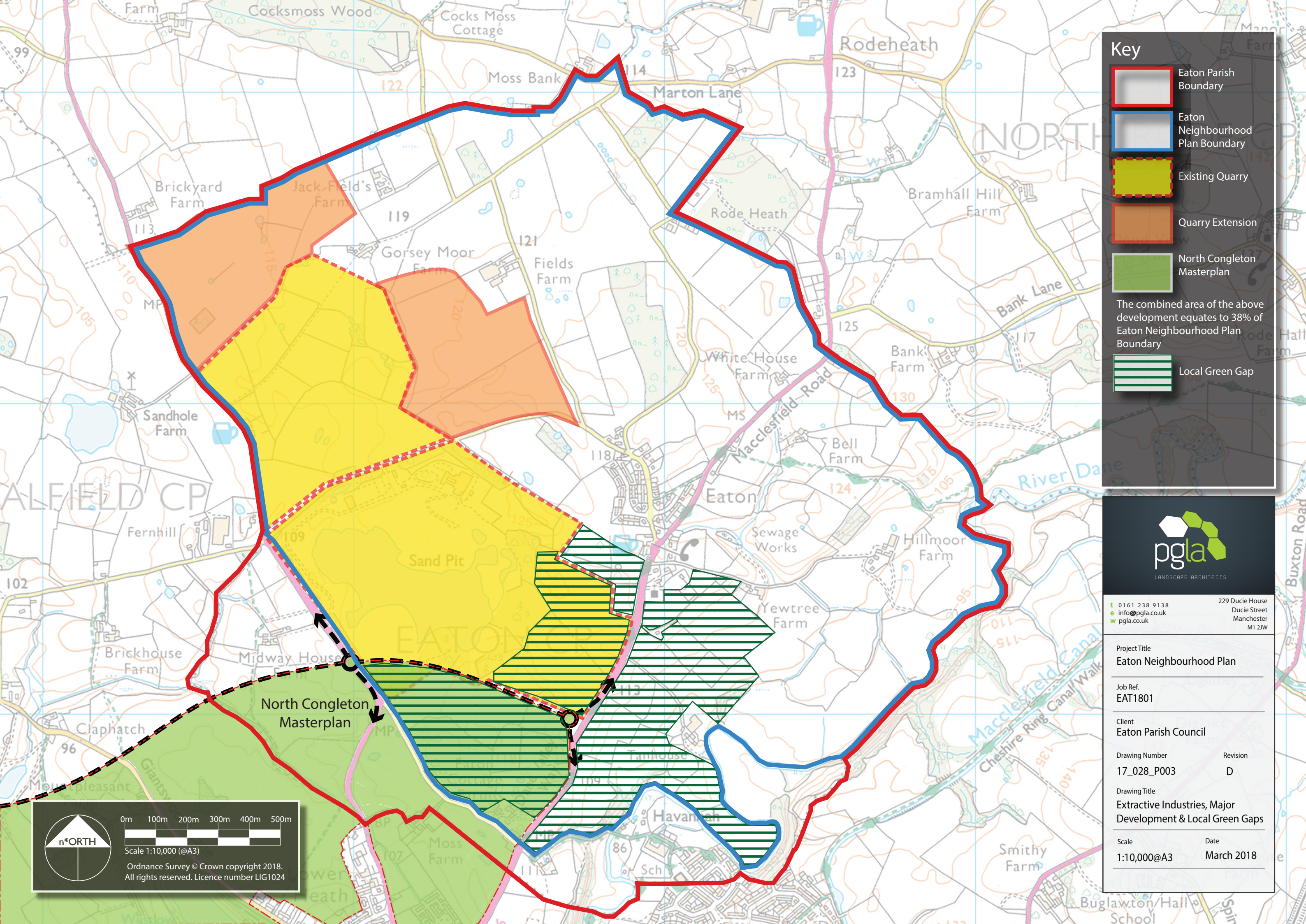
Revision  
REV A

Drawing Title  
North Congleton Masterplan Context

Scale  
1:10,000 @ A3

Date  
March '18





### Key

- Eaton Parish Boundary
- Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Existing Quarry
- Quarry Extension
- North Congleton Masterplan

The combined area of the above development equates to 38% of Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

- Local Green Gap



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Project Title  
**Eaton Neighbourhood Plan**

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Job Ref.  
**EAT1801**

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|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Drawing Number | Revision |
| 17_028_P003    | D        |

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Drawing Title  
**Extractive Industries, Major Development & Local Green Gaps**

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|             |            |
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| 1:10,000@A3 | March 2018 |



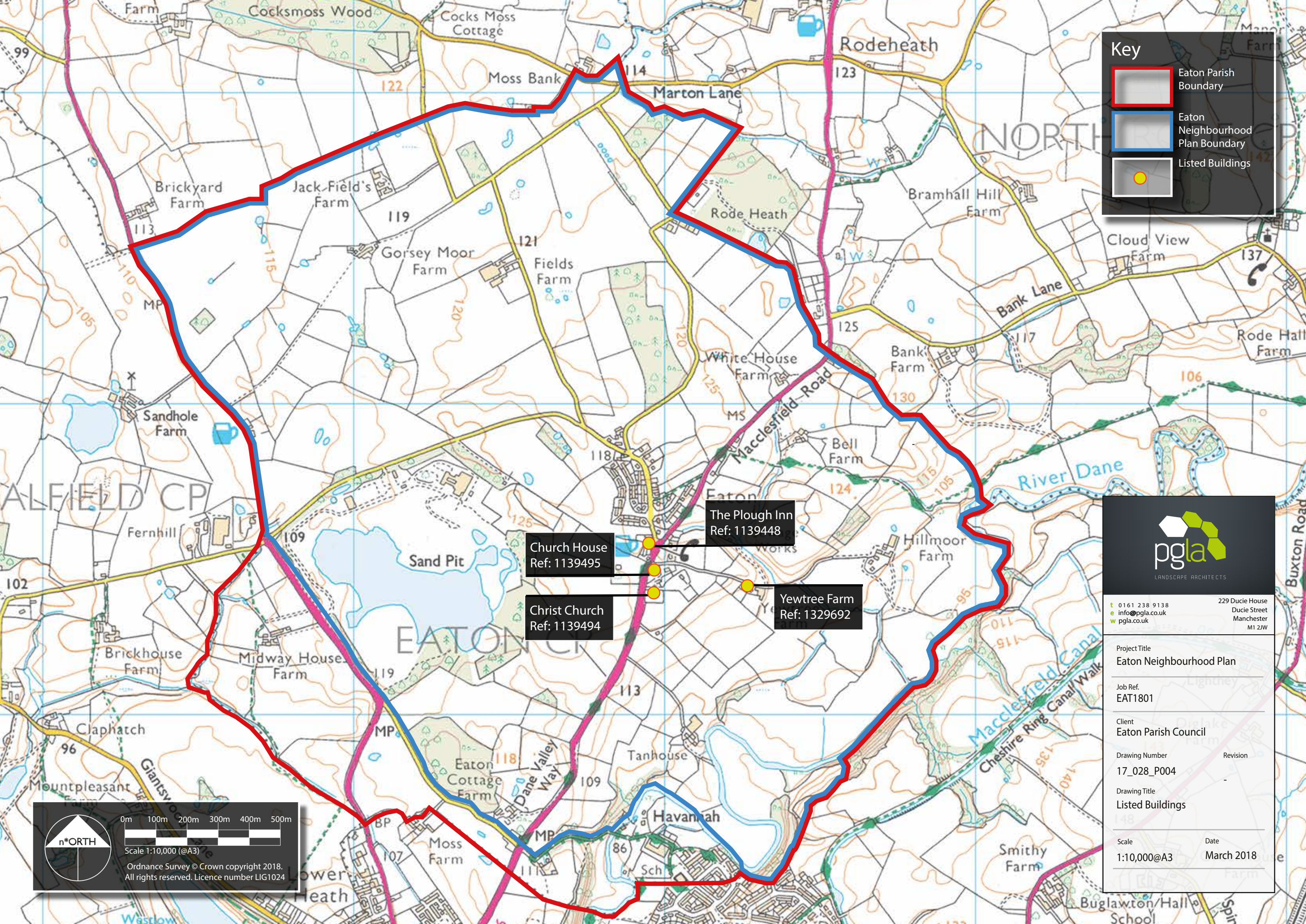
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**Key**


-  Eaton Parish Boundary
-  Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
-  Listed Buildings

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**Eaton Neighbourhood Plan**

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Eaton Parish Council

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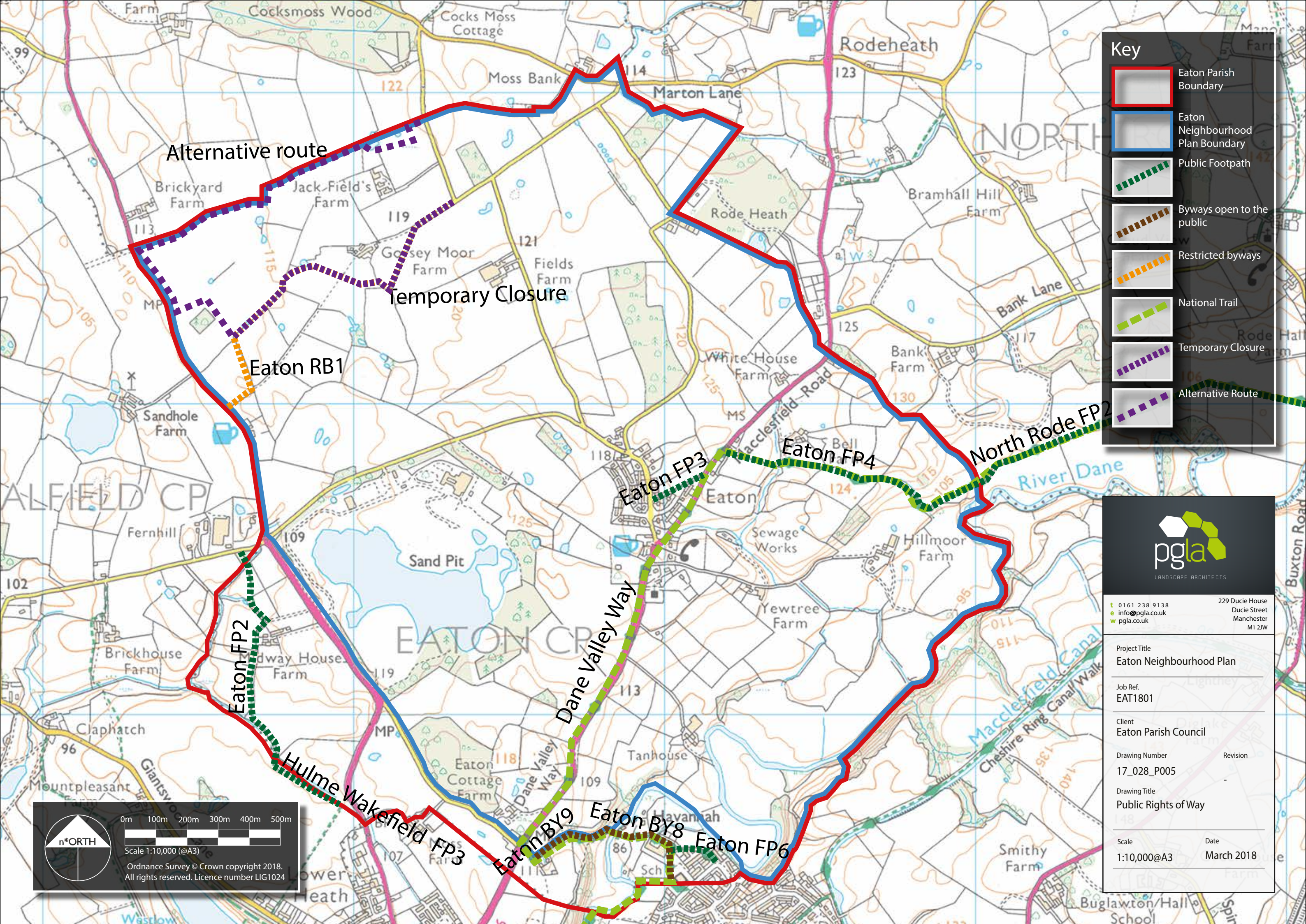
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Drawing Title  
Listed Buildings

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|-------------|------------|
| Scale       | Date       |
| 1:10,000@A3 | March 2018 |





**Key**

- Eaton Parish Boundary
- Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Public Footpath
- Byways open to the public
- Restricted byways
- National Trail
- Temporary Closure
- Alternative Route

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

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Project Title  
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Job Ref.  
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Client  
Eaton Parish Council

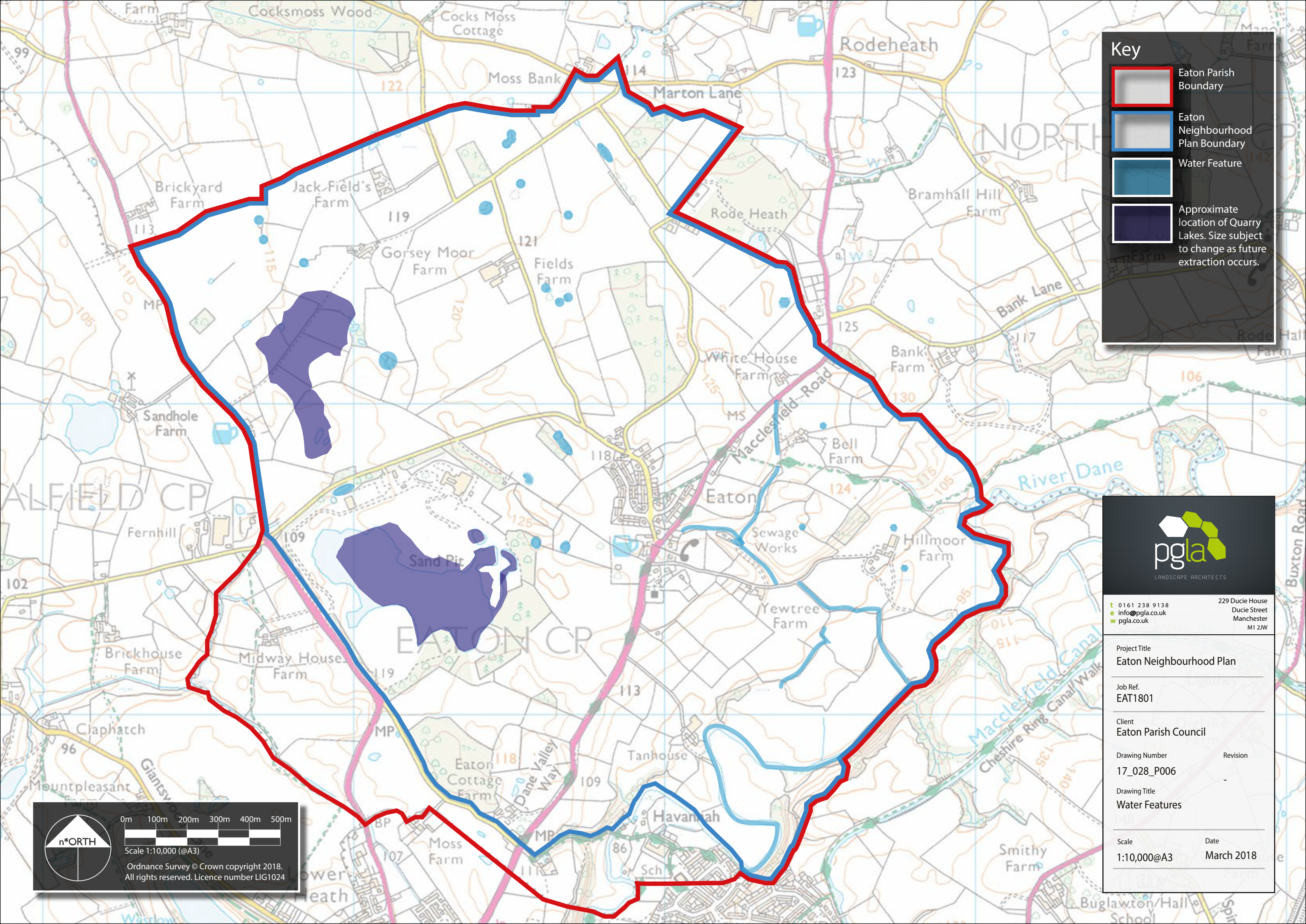
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Drawing Title  
Public Rights of Way

Scale  
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Date  
March 2018





**Key**

- Eaton Parish Boundary
- Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Water Feature
- Approximate location of Quarry Lakes. Size subject to change as future extraction occurs.

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m

Scale 1:10,000 (@A3)

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**Eaton Neighbourhood Plan**

Job Ref.  
**EAT1801**

Client  
**Eaton Parish Council**

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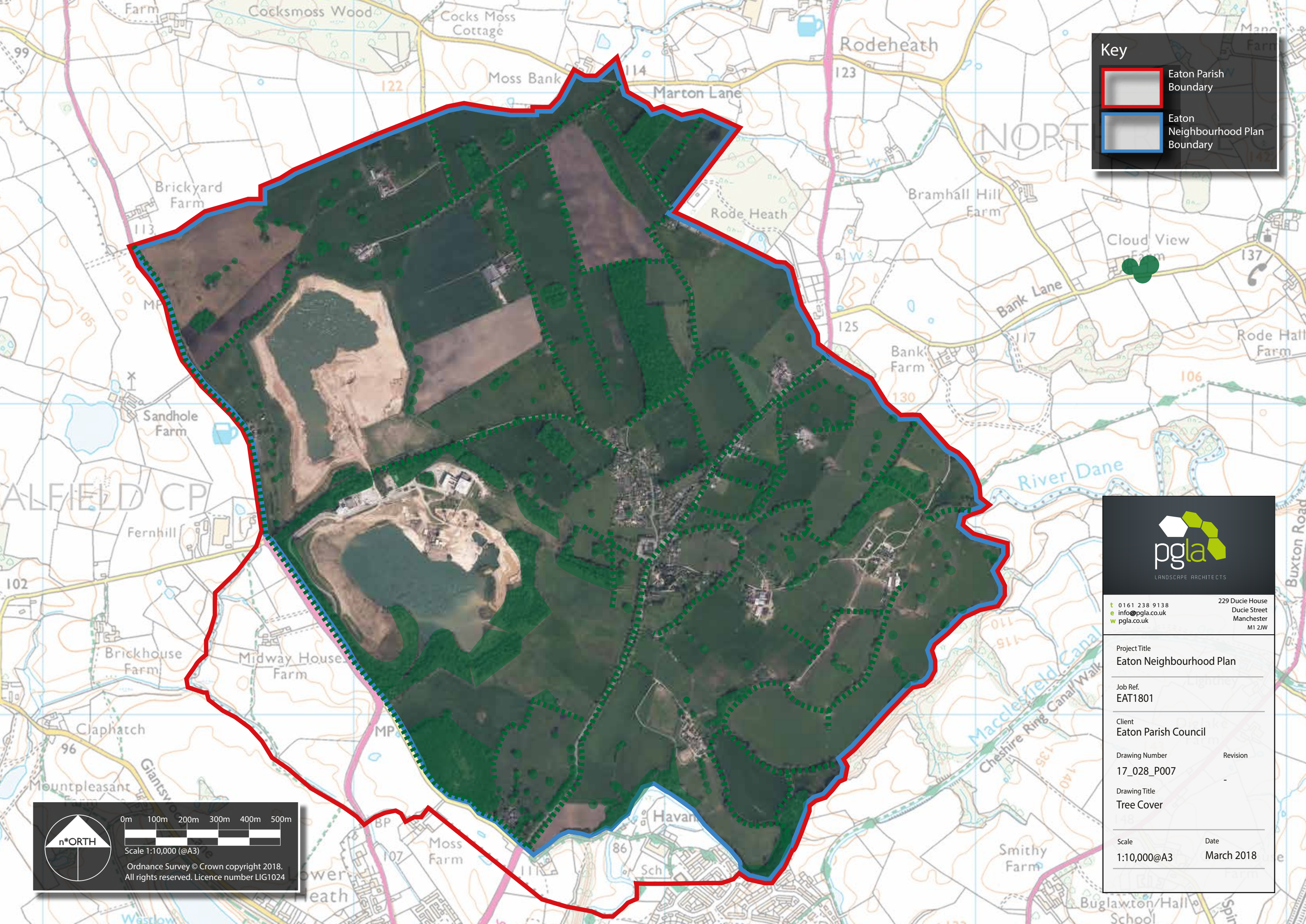
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Date  
**March 2018**





Key

Eaton Parish Boundary

Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary

n\*ORTH

0m100m200m300m400m500m

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Project Title

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Job Ref.

EAT1801

Client

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Drawing Number

17\_028\_P007

Revision

-

Drawing Title

Tree Cover

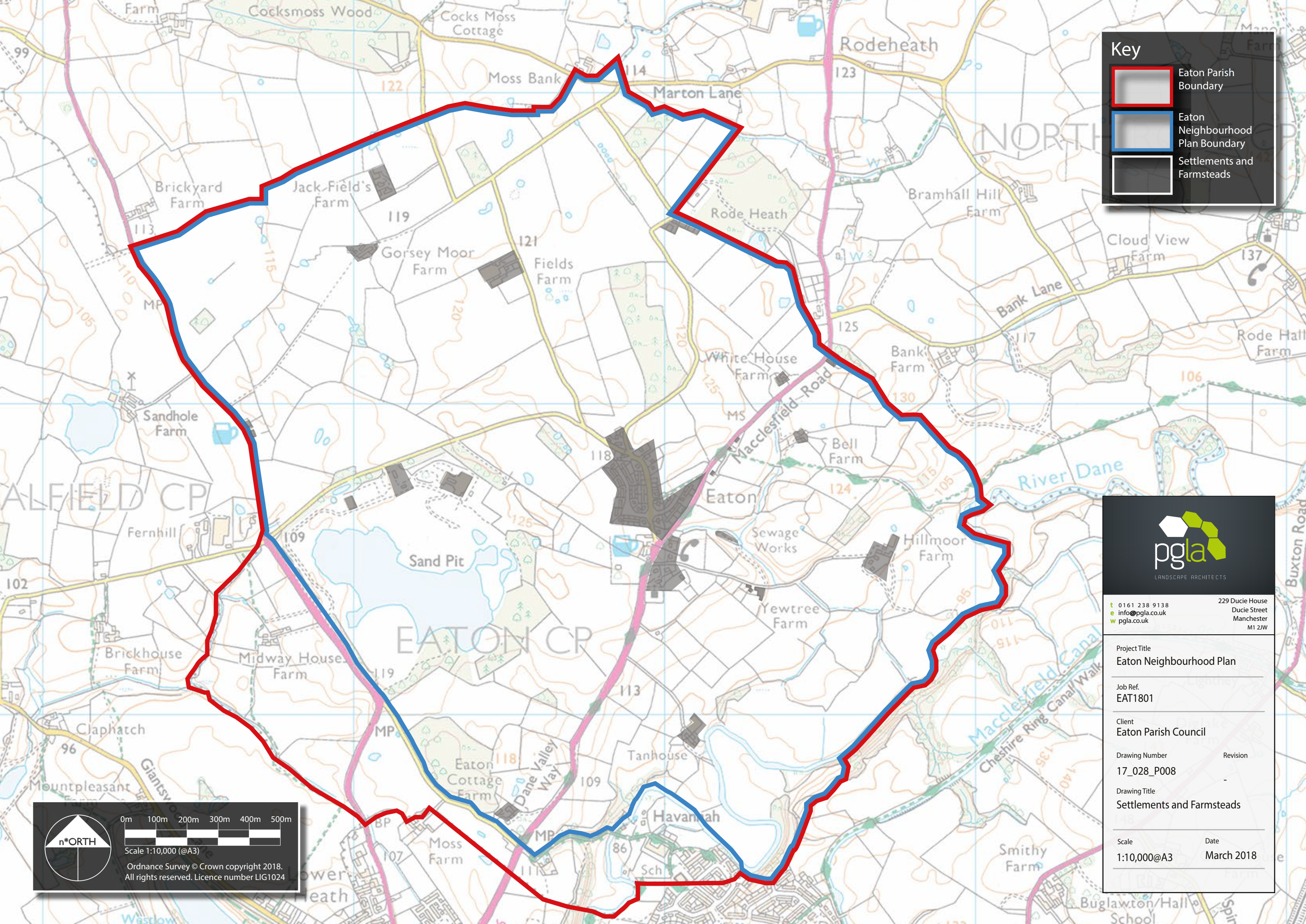
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Date


March 2018





**Key**

-  Eaton Parish Boundary
-  Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
-  Settlements and Farmsteads

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Project Title  
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Job Ref.  
**EAT1801**

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**Eaton Parish Council**

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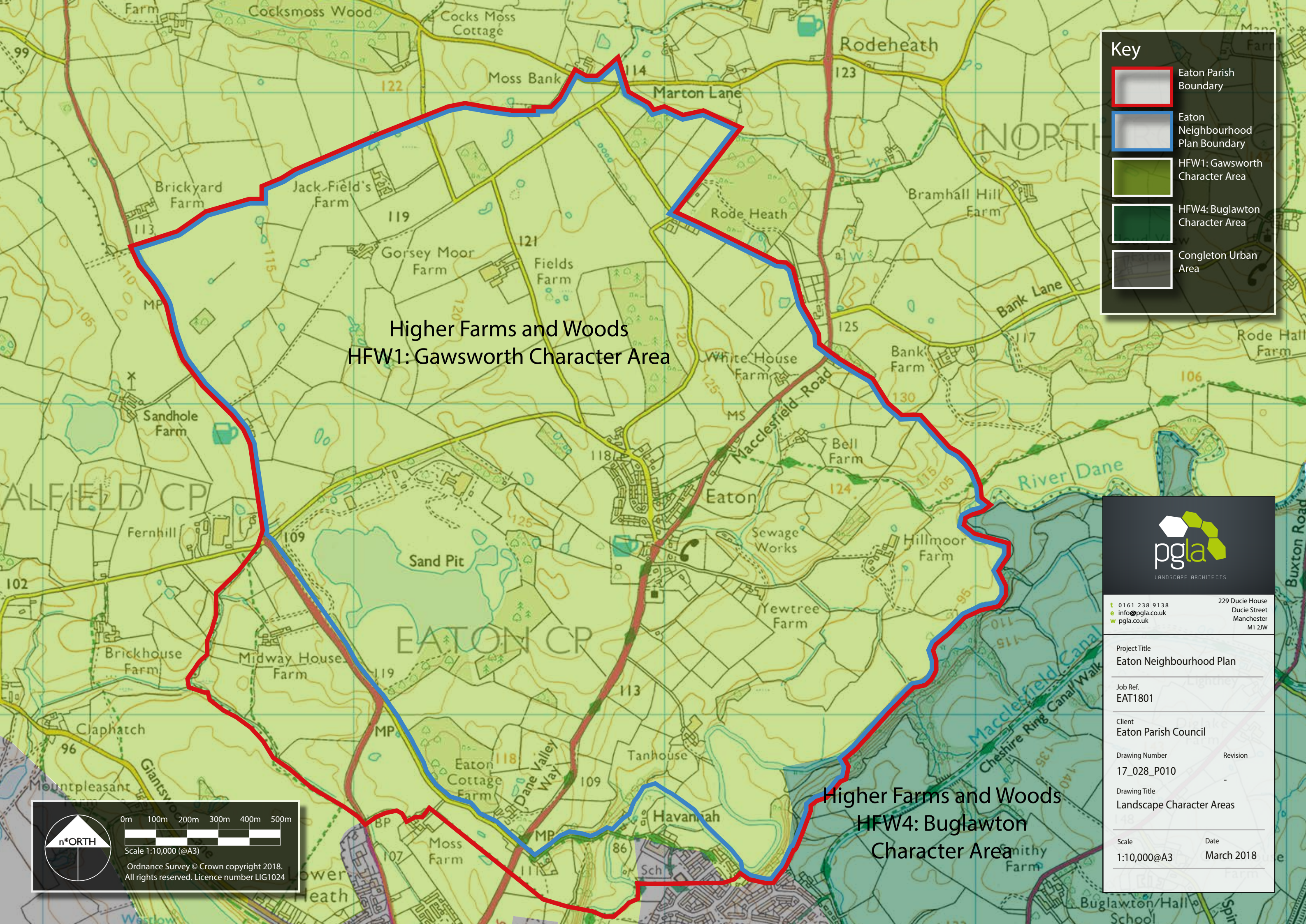
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| Scale              | Date              |
| <b>1:10,000@A3</b> | <b>March 2018</b> |









**Key**

- Eaton Parish Boundary
- Eaton Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- HFW1: Gawsworth Character Area
- HFW4: Buglawton Character Area
- Congleton Urban Area

Higher Farms and Woods  
HFW1: Gawsworth Character Area

Higher Farms and Woods  
HFW4: Buglawton  
Character Area

0m 100m 200m 300m 400m 500m  
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Drawing Number  
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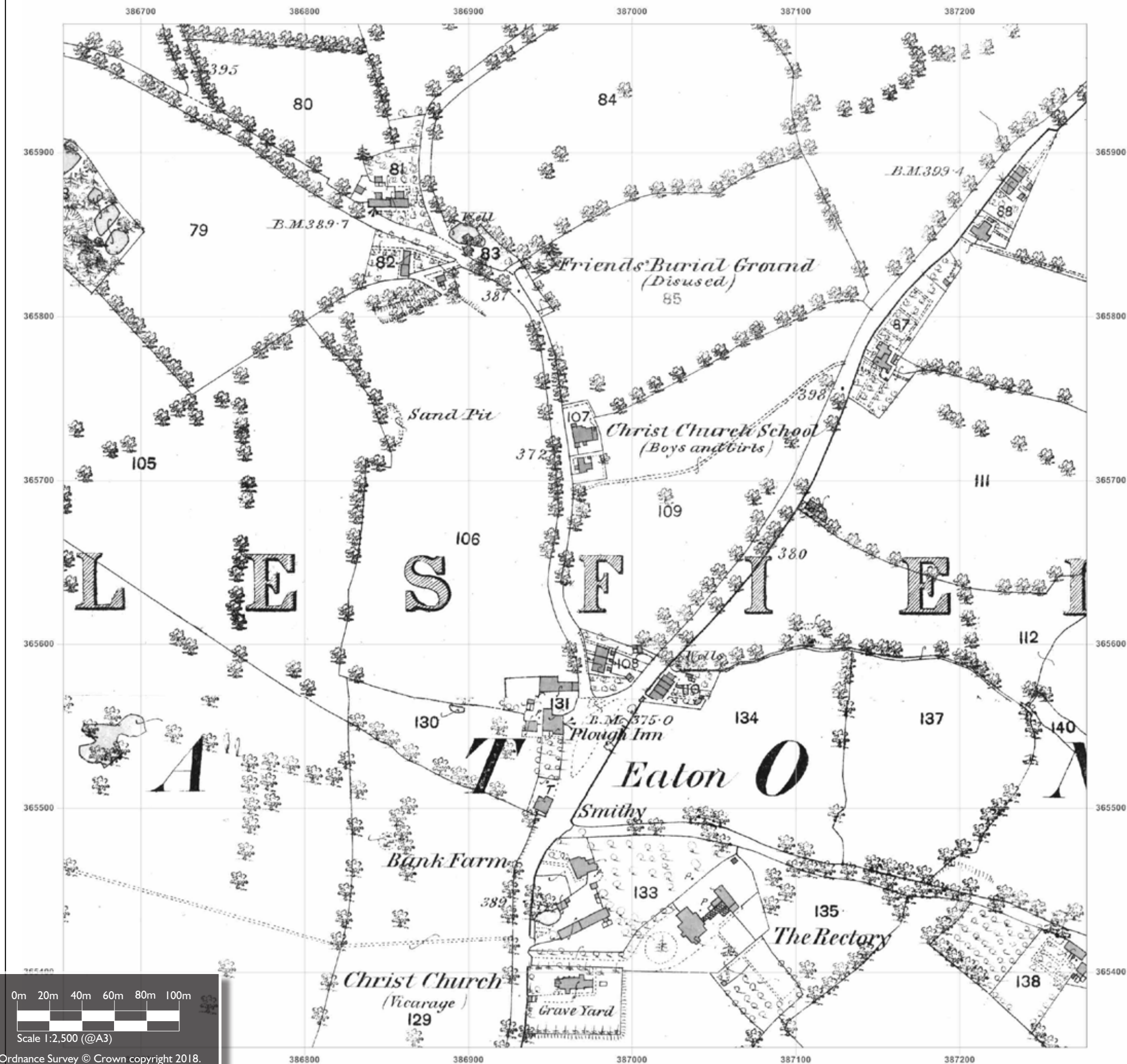
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Date  
March 2018





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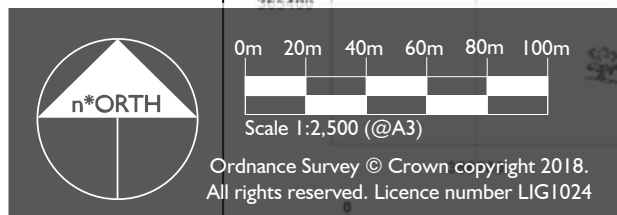
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e\*SCAPE Job No.  
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Client  
Eaton Parish Council

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|----------------|----------|
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|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Drawing Title | 1873 Ordnance Survey County Series Historic Mapping |
| Scale         | Date  |
| 1:2,500 @ A3  | February '18  |





# Key



Points of Arrival  
(Primary & Secondary)

Focal Elements

Tree Cover

Hedgerows



Key Views & Vistas



Village Heart  
Character Area



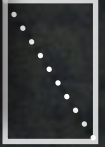
Negative Boundary  
Interfaces



Community Spaces



Food &  
Accommodation Hub



Public Rights of Way



Dane Valley Way



Heritage Zone



Listed Buildings:  
1. Christ Church, 2. Church  
House, 3. The Plough Inn  
4. Yew Tree Farm



Tree Preservation  
Orders  
(Individual/Groups)



Contours  
(5m increments)



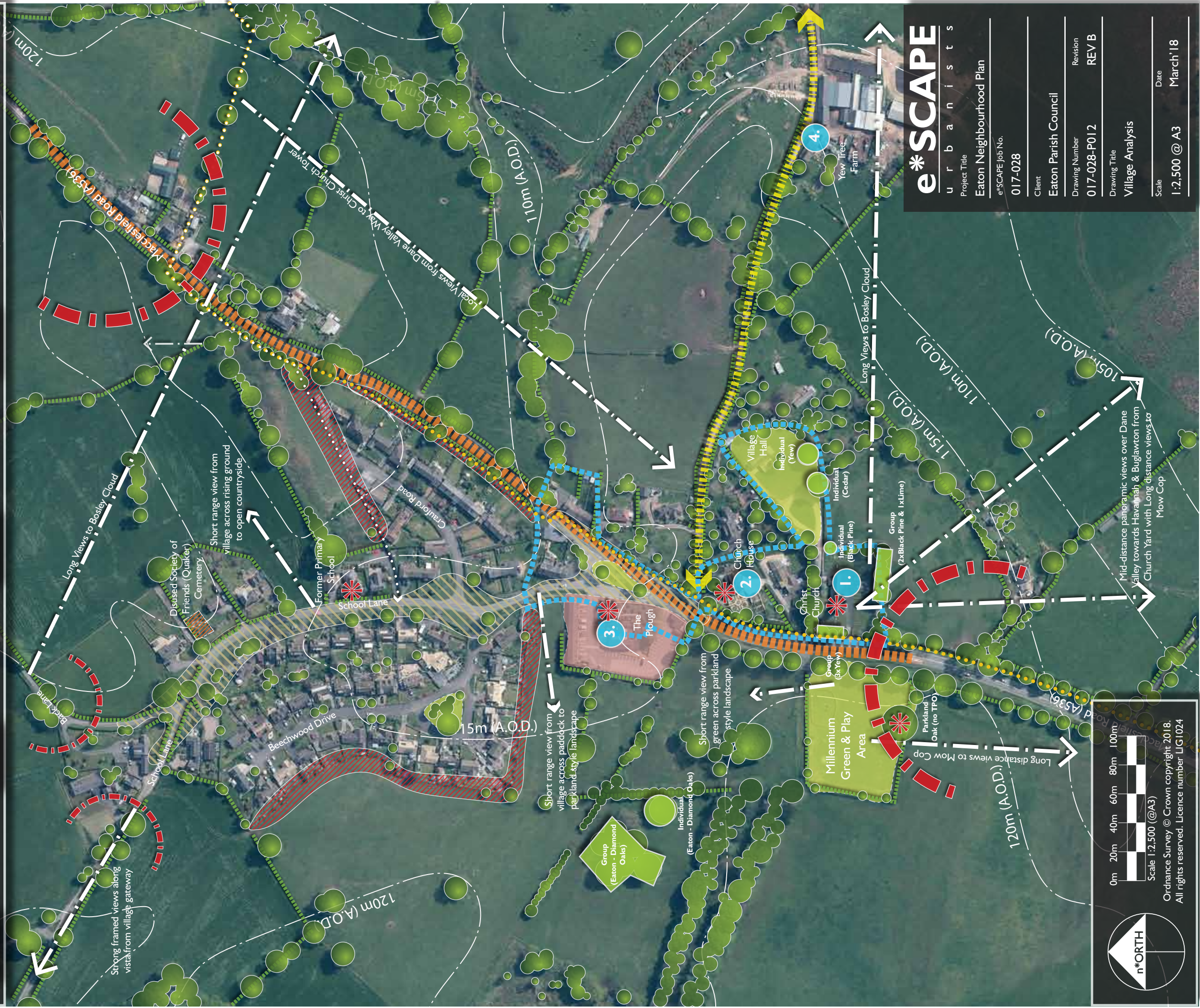
Perceived Road Safety  
& Forward Visibility  
Issues



Site of Heritage  
Interest



Historic Lane



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Project Title

Eaton Neighbourhood Plan

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Drawing Number

017-028-P012

Revision

REV B

Drawing Title

Village Analysis

Scale

1:2,500 @ A3

Date

March 18



Scale 1:2,500 (@A3)

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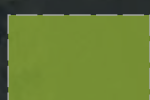
## Key



Settlement Boundary



Local Green Gap



Green Wedges



Indicative Tree Cover



Important Hedgerows



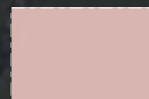
Gateway Thresholds



Shared Space/Traffic Calming Zone



Proposed Speed Limits



Food & Accommodation Hub



Public Rights of Way



Dane Valley Way



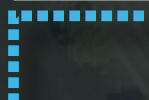
Permissive Heritage Path to River Dane (only with landowners consent)



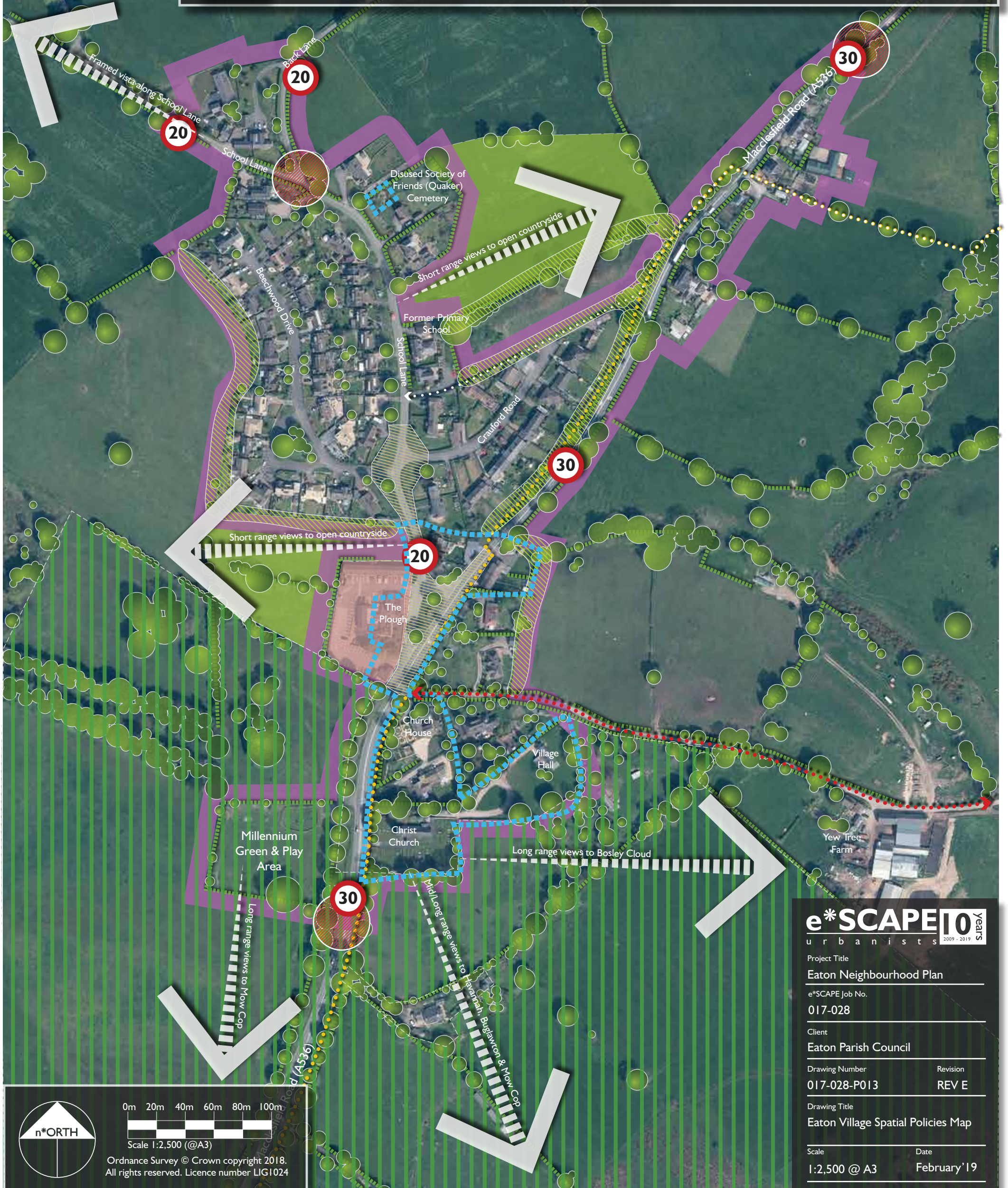
Important Views & Vistas to be retained



Potential Boundary Greening & Strengthening



Heritage Interpretation & Improvement Zones



0m 20m 40m 60m 80m 100m

Scale 1:2,500 (@A3)

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urbanists 2009 - 2019

Project Title

Eaton Neighbourhood Plan

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Drawing Number

017-028-P013

Revision

REV E

Drawing Title

Eaton Village Spatial Policies Map

Scale

1:2,500 @ A3

Date

February '19



**Viewpoints**

Eaton FP3

26 Crauford Road



**VIEWPOINT 1.**

Crauford Road

Eaton FP3



**VIEWPOINT 2.**



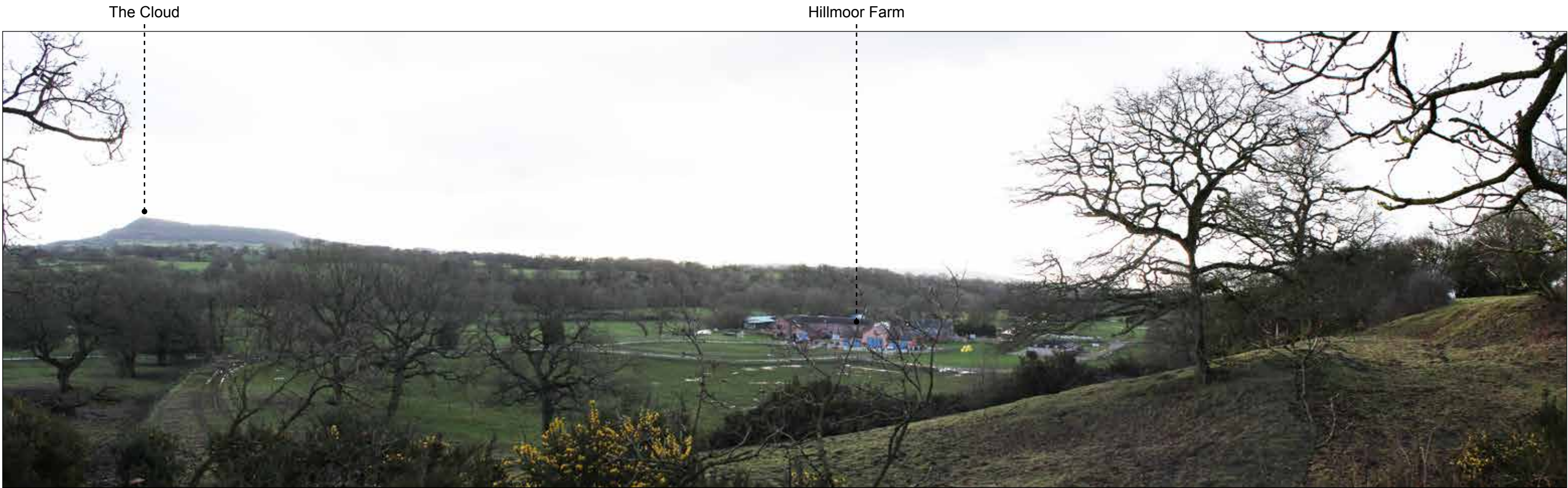


**VIEWPOINT 3.**



**VIEWPOINT 4.**





**VIEWPOINT 5.**



**VIEWPOINT 6.**



Christ Church

A536



**VIEWPOINT 7.**

Mow Cop

Millennium Park



**VIEWPOINT 8.**

A636

Christ Church

Millennium Park

The Cloud



**VIEWPOINT 9.**



Diamond Oaks



VIEWPOINT 10.



VIEWPOINT 11.





**VIEWPOINT 12.**



**VIEWPOINT 13.**



School Lane



**VIEWPOINT 14.**

Back Lane Farm

Big Plantation Wood



**VIEWPOINT 15.**



Fields Farm



VIEWPOINT 16.

Sutton Common Tower

White House Farm

Big Plantation Wood

The Cloud

Bebbington Road



VIEWPOINT 16A.



Tarmac Quarry

School Lane



**VIEWPOINT 17.**

Quarry site

School lane



**VIEWPOINT 18.**



The contents of this document have been prepared by:  
**Eaton Parish Council**

with advice and support by:  
e\*SCAPE Urbanists and PGLA Landscape Architects

