

Proposed solar energy production site, North Farm,  
Spetisbury, Dorset

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## **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**

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Prepared for Stark Energy Production Ltd

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### **NOTE:**

This report to be read in conjunction with the  
accompanying reports:

LVIA Plans and Representative Views

Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)

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## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1.1. Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects were approached by Savills to complete Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) documentation in support of a solar energy production site at North Farm, Spetisbury, Dorset (hereinafter referred to as 'The Site'). This LVIA Report assesses the landscape and visual effects of developing a 20MW solar energy production site upon surrounding receptors.

### Summary assessment

2.1.2. Through a detailed landscape and visual assessment, this is assessed as a good site for solar energy production.

2.1.3. The site has no landscape designations. It lies in a natural bowl, with views towards the site restricted to within the 'rim' of the bowl and within 500m. Outside this natural bowl area there are no views towards the site and within the surrounding ridgeline views are hard to find from many directions.

2.1.4. The presence of the existing neighbouring solar farm is not assessed as significantly increasing any cumulative assessed adverse effects.

2.1.5. The site has a moderate sensitivity to solar energy production and there are no assessed adverse effects upon landscape character. The proposal provides an opportunity to improve the described landscape character, in the medium and long-term, through changing landscape management regimes which will increase biodiversity as well as enhancing hedgerow cover and wildflower planting in this relatively intensively farmed landscape.

2.1.6. Views from the south where the land rises to over Charlton Downs towards Little Coll Wood are long panoramic, with views to the north. The site sits in a natural depression, with views from three viewpoints experiencing open views across the site where solar arrays will be visible. From these viewpoints, mitigation measures will not screen the proposal and the residual effect, following the construction phase, will remain moderate and slightly adverse. It is important to note that these effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. It is principally a visual change from one material (agricultural crops) to another (solar arrays), but with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this type of landscape change.

2.1.7. From public footpaths and bridleways immediately adjacent to, or within, the site boundary direct views towards the site and will experience moderate, or moderate to large, and adverse effects prior to mitigation. In both cases the views can be mitigated, but not screened completely until around 7-10 years post-planting during which time the effect remains slightly adverse. Once mitigation planting has established, within 7-10 years the residual effect is likely to be not adverse. In addition to mitigation screening, it may be possible, in the short term, to enhance views from these properties through careful landscape master planning. This is shown within the accompanying Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

## Sensitivity of the landscape and opportunities arising from the proposal to enhance landscape character

2.1.8. The effect of solar energy production upon the range of described landscape characteristics are summarised as **Moderate to Slight**: “These beneficial or adverse effects are important but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such issues may become a decision- making issue if leading to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor”.

2.1.9. The site has a medium sensitivity to changes to landscape character, is low-lying and well-screened from most of the surrounding area, minimising potential effects upon landscape character. There are no proposed changes to defined field boundary patterns or hedgerows. The effect of the proposal upon landscape character may slightly alter the perception of a rural arable fields through a change from agricultural crops to solar panels. This could increase the perception of human influence on the landscape.

2.1.10. There is an opportunity to enhance other described key characteristics by implementing new planting following the guidelines listed below. These are described in more detail within the accompanying Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)

2.1.11. In accordance with published landscape management guidelines for the local area, hedgerows and trees will be retained and protected, with existing hedgerows allowed to grow more naturally - enhancing biodiversity and offering improved visual screening from the surrounding area.

2.1.12. A response is made to national guidance on siting solar PV development - focussing on minimising landscape and visual effects, and recognising that technologies need to be sited and designed to ensure a reasonable output.

- i. The site is located on slightly undulating land increasing the potential effects upon landscape character.
- ii. The site lies in a natural depression and is located within a wider landscape with a high sense of enclosure rather than in open and unenclosed landscapes. However, at a local level (within 500m) the site is visible from the surrounding area corresponding to the ‘rim’ of the bowl.
- iii. There are some views from local viewpoints, and popular footpath routes (evidenced by wear and tear upon the footpaths and bridleways), but none from recognised /iconic views, and designated landscapes. From higher ground, some panels will be sited in areas where they can be well concealed or integrated into sensitive views, while others will be more visible.
- iv. Viewpoint assessment has considered the appearance of the development as viewed from the ‘backs’ and ‘sides’ (where frames will be more visible) as well as from the ‘front’.
- v. The site does not span across marked changes in character on the ground.
- vi. The site is not located in an area valued for its remoteness, or in an area free from human influence and perceived as ‘untamed’ naturalness.
- vii. The proposal provides enhanced management of landscape features, and habitats as part of the development. This includes contributing to wider landscape scale targets and projects in LPA’s Biodiversity Action Plans, guidelines in Landscape Character Assessments, and landscape management objectives set out in local landscape character assessments.

### Effects upon Landscape Character

2.1.13. The site has a moderate sensitivity to solar farm development: "These beneficial or adverse effects are important but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such issues may become a decision-making issue if leading to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor". This is a low-lying, flat site containing few special landscape features.

2.1.14. The site lies in a natural depression and is located within a wider landscape with a high sense of enclosure rather than in open and unenclosed landscapes. However, at a local level (within 500m) the site is visible from the surrounding area corresponding to the 'rim' of the bowl.

2.1.15. The presence of the existing neighbouring solar farm is not assessed as significantly increasing any cumulative assessed adverse effects.

2.1.16. The proposal is to install solar arrays within the existing hedged field boundaries. No hedgerows are to be removed such that the pattern of landscape remains as the baseline condition, and as described in landscape character areas descriptions.

2.1.17. At a local level, the landscape character contains some agricultural modern development and is quite intensively farmed. This is not an area noted for its remoteness or one with little evidence of human activity. The site has no landscape designations.

2.1.18. On balance, the significance of the effect upon landscape character is assessed as slight. This is principally due to the addition of new human scale features.

2.1.19. Described landscape characteristics, especially those listed in landscape management guidelines, will be enhanced by changing intense agricultural practice into a less-intense, nature-led, approach to landscape management. This will have benefits upon local biodiversity, as well as, reducing any residual visual effects.

### Effects upon Visual Receptors

2.1.20. The effect upon visual receptors is assessed in the range large, through moderate, to slight. No assessments of very large or neutral effects were recorded.

2.1.21. The site lies in a natural bowl, with views towards the site restricted to within the 'rim' of the bowl and within 500m. Within this bowl area, views are hard to find from many directions.

2.1.22. The exception are views from the south where the land rises to over Charlton Downs towards Little Coll Wood. From here there are long panoramic views to the north. The site sits in a natural depression, with views from three viewpoints experiencing open views across the site where solar arrays will be visible.

2.1.23. From these viewpoints, mitigation measures will not screen the proposal and the residual effect, following the construction phase, will remain moderate and slightly adverse. It is important to note that these effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. It is principally a visual change from one material (agricultural crops) to another

(solar arrays), but with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this type of landscape change.

2.1.24. Glimpse views through existing boundary vegetation along the public bridleway. Mitigation is included to reduce any adverse effects.

2.1.25. A number of viewpoints are included immediately adjacent to, or within, the site boundary. New hedgerow planting is proposed to mitigate against these effects.

#### Recommended mitigation measures

2.1.26. Twelve viewpoints were assessed, of which 7 will benefit from mitigation measures which will be effective and reduce any residual effects. Three viewpoints will receive a slightly adverse effect upon views, but mitigation will have a limited impact reducing these effects. Two further viewpoints can effectively be mitigated by planting gaps in hedgerows and tree cover along an existing bridleway.

2.1.27. The key principle, through mitigation, is to reduce moderate and adverse effects from viewpoints immediately adjacent to the proposals. All of these are located immediately east and north of the site and either adjacent to, or within, the site boundary. The proposals include mitigation measures to reduce the adverse effects upon these low-level views through the introduction of new hedgerows which will, once established, screen the panels, and focus the viewer's attention on the more distant views towards the wider landscape. This will help to maintain a sense of rurality along the footpath routes. Post mitigation establishment, the residual effect reduces dramatically to slightly adverse within the first 5-7 years and then not adverse beyond 7-10 years.

2.1.28. Elsewhere, mitigation will take the form of gap-filling within existing hedgerows and tree screen, principally along the bridleway with runs west of the site.

2.1.29. As a general recommendation, existing field boundary hedgerows should be allowed to grow to a height to help screen the solar arrays without interfering with the effectiveness of energy production.

2.1.30. These mitigation measures as described, in detail, in the accompanying Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

## 3. INTRODUCTION

### 3.1. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

3.1.1. Richard Sneesby Landscape Architects were approached by Savills Taunton to complete Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) documentation in support of a solar energy production site at North Farm, Spetisbury, Dorset (hereinafter referred to as 'The Site'). This LVIA Report assesses the landscape and visual effects of developing a 20MW solar energy production site upon surrounding receptors.

### 3.2. THE SITE

3.2.1. This LVIA Report assesses the landscape and visual effects of developing a 20MW solar energy production site upon surrounding receptors. The site covers approximately 75 acres of agricultural land at North Farm, west of Spetisbury and approximately 3.5km south of Blandford St Mary. The site immediately adjoins the western boundary of the existing solar farm at North Farm, which resides east of A354 and west of A350.

3.2.2. The Site lies in a natural depression within a gently rolling landscape. It contains 2 rectilinear fields enclosures, both surrounded by native species hedges. The site is surrounded by a network of public footpaths and bridleways. The ridgeline to the west, south and east contain large woodland plantations which form a backdrop the proposals from most directions and which are typical of the area.



### 3.3. THE STUDY AREA

3.3.1. The study area is taken as a 5Km radius from the development site. Further site work extends this, from key viewpoint directions, to include other areas from where there is visibility of the site from the surrounding area.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1.1. This section briefly describes the methodology and sequence of stages in the assessment process. Details of judgement criteria are included in Appendix 1.

### 4.2. BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

4.2.1. A full desk-survey was carried out to review policies and guidance available from North Dorset Council, relating to proposed developments.

4.2.2. Designated landscapes were identified and recorded to establish the sensitivity of the site to change.

4.2.3. The Visual Impact Assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidance set out in the Landscape Institute publication: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013).

4.2.4. A site visit was carried out in March 2020 to assess the likely impacts from the surrounding area. The visit took place in the morning and early afternoon with the sun from the south-east and south. The weather was clear and sunny with good visibility to and from the site. Deciduous trees and shrubs were not in leaf, illustrating a worse-case visual condition. The visual effect of the proposal will be reduced in summer when the surrounding trees, hedgerows and woodland are in full leaf.

### 4.3. LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.3.1. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a well-established tool to identify the effects of change resulting from development and the significance of those effects. It distinguishes between:

- Effects on landscape as a resource in its own right; and
- Effects on specific views and general visual amenity experienced by people.

4.3.2. The LVIA should be proportional to the scale and nature of the development proposal. For this proposal, the scale and nature of the development is described in the scoping process which describes what has been assessed and details those aspects which are considered most relevant to the proposal.

## 4.4. LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

4.4.1. The European Landscape Convention 2000 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”.

4.4.2. This covers not only landscapes that are recognised as being special or valuable, but also landscapes which can be considered ordinary or every day. These are landscapes where people live, work, and spend leisure time – a setting for their day-to-day lives, and for aesthetic enjoyment. Furthermore, landscapes are considered as environment – for biodiversity, flora, and fauna.

4.4.3. LVIA requires that the landscape is assessed by recording and recognising:

- Protected landscapes and townscapes.
- The contribution the landscape character has on sense of place and quality of life; and the way change may affect:
- Individual components of the landscape
- Aesthetic and perceptual qualities
- The character of the landscape in different areas
- Visual effects

4.4.4. Assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development focuses on the following principles:

- How the surroundings of individuals/groups of people may be affected by changes to the landscape
- How people will be affected by changes in views and/or visual amenity at different places
- To identify impacts various visual effects are assessed:
- The areas from which the development may be visible
- Different groups who may experience views of the development
- The places where they will be affected
- The nature of the views and visual amenity at those points
- Changes in specific views.

## 4.5. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.5.1. The significance of the proposal is assessed against two key criteria:

- i. The significance of the receptor. This involves making judgements about the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the proposal; and the value attached to the receptor.
- ii. The magnitude of change. Judgements are based upon the size and scale of the effect (for example, is there a complete loss of a particular element or a minor change); the geographical extent of the areas that will be affected; and the duration of the effect and its reversibility.

4.5.2. These assessments lead to judgements on the individual criteria and how these, in combination, provide a means of describing the significance of the proposal. This involves combining judgements of both the significance of the receptor and magnitude of change in order to demonstrate:

- How the value of the receptor and its susceptibility of change contribute to its sensitivity to the effects.
- How judgements about the scale of the proposal, its geographical extent and duration of the effect contribute to judgements about the magnitude of the effects; and
- How the resulting judgements about sensitivity and magnitude are combined to inform judgements about the overall significance of the effects.
- The assessments describe effects which can be significant and non-significant.

## 4.6. METHODOLOGIES USED IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### 4.6.1. Desk Study

- Receiving information from the developer and other consultants
- Identifying the site location and its surroundings using Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs, and development site plans
- Familiarisation with the details of the proposals.
- Use of LPA and District Council planning portals to acquire information on landscape designations, Rights of Way, landscape character assessments, areas for Conservation Action, local topography and patterns of vegetation and any other information which may be relevant.

### 4.6.2. Field Survey

- Visits to the site to confirm, or otherwise, the understanding of the site and proposals gained through the desk study.
- Production of a photographic record of site features, landscape elements and details not revealed by maps or aerial photographs.
- Checks to confirm visibility, key viewpoints, and visual receptors.
- Professional judgements which could be made about possible alterations to the design of the proposal and/or mitigation measures to address any possible negative judgements about the significance of the proposal.

### 4.6.3. Assessment

- Assessment of the significance of landscape and visual receptors, the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the proposal; and the value attached to the receptors.
- Assessment of the magnitude of change based upon the size and scale of the effect; the geographical extent of the areas that will be affected; and the duration of the effect and its reversibility
- Assessment of the sensitivity to the effects and the magnitude of the effects
- Assessment of the overall significance of the effects

- Summary statements describing both significant and non-significant effects
- Assessment, where appropriate, of cumulative effects based upon available information.

#### 4.6.4. Influences on design

- Assessment of changes to the proposal to minimise negative impacts and recommendations for mitigation measures.
- Presentation of findings
- Production of this written report, supporting plans, maps, photographs, and mitigation measures.

## 4.7. PRODUCTION OF ZONES OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

### 4.7.1. Purpose and Limitations

4.7.2. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is a computer-based modelling exercise, undertaken to assist the landscape professional in carrying out a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) of a development. The ZTV provides a guide as to the potential location of possible viewpoints, for further evaluation. As a ZTV is theoretical, it should not be used in isolation and, as part of the assessment process, requires on-site verification.

4.7.3. A ZTV is subject to a number of limitations, in particular:

- the terrain data may be of limited resolution and, therefore, may not fully represent all local variations in topography, including features such as banks, roadside cuttings etcetera.
- other screening features, such as buildings, fences, trees, and hedges are not routinely incorporated into ZTVs, due to the complexity and detail of such objects.

4.7.4. Tests have been carried out to compare the accuracy of a GIS-based ZTV mapping programme and Google Earth's terrain-based Viewshed software. The results are remarkably similar and, given the limitations of a bare-earth ZTV, are considered appropriate to establish a visual baseline which is then tested at the site survey

4.7.5. Accordingly, an indicative ZTV was generated using Google Earth's Viewshed software. The height was set at 4m above existing ground level to illustrate the visibility of roof ridgelines.

## 4.8. PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY AND PHOTOGRAPHS FROM REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

4.8.1. Site photographs were taken using a Canon 750D digital SLR cropped frame camera. Site photographs used to illustrate representative views were taken using a focal length of around 35mm – equivalent to a 50mm focal length lens on a full frame camera. This is the closest equivalent to human eye views.

4.8.2. Photographs were printed and tested against the human eye equivalent from the viewpoint.

4.8.3. Many of the views are wide and panoramic. Panorama views were taken using a tripod mounted camera.

4.8.4. To help illustrate the wider contextual view, some photographs were stitched together using Microsoft Image Composite Editor software without loss of resolution.

#### 4.9. ILLUSTRATION OF THE EFFECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT UPON REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

4.9.1. Photomontage 'before and after' images have not been produced at this stage.

### 5. POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS OF FREE-STANDING SOLAR PV DEVELOPMENTS

5.1.1. People's response to landscapes (both rural and urban) and the forces that act on them are personal and may change over time according to their cultural values. For example, there are varying attitudes to wind energy development depending on individual attitudes to the principle and presence of wind energy generation.

5.1.2. In order to minimise effects on the landscape through siting and design, it is important to first understand the characteristics of free-standing solar PV development and how they may affect the landscape (and in turn economic, social and community values).

5.1.3. Free standing solar PV developments, although not particularly prominent in height, can occupy substantial areas of ground which may be visible, particularly if located on slopes. Landscape effects may include the following:

- i. Single panels or small rows of panels on farms will have less of an impact than 'field-scale' developments that may be accompanied by buildings/ cabinets, tracks, and securityfencing.
- ii. As extensive developments, field-scale solar PV developments may be particularly visible in open landscapes or on upper slopes of hillsides, especially where covering significant areas. Undulating land can exacerbate the effect.
- iii. Solar panels, en-masse, tend to reflect the sky - for example, on a sunny day they can appear blue while on a cloudy day they can appear a metallic grey - this can make them stand out from their landscape context.
- iv. The perceived urban/industrial character of large areas of free-standing solar PV panels and associated infrastructure means they can increase the perceived human influence on the landscape and erode sites with an intrinsically rural character, including landscapes that form a setting to heritage assets.
- v. Solar PV developments will change the land use and appearance of a field or fields, affecting land cover patterns and the character of landscapes.
- vi. The regular edges of solar PV developments may be conspicuous in more irregular landscapes (particularly where they do not follow contours or where field boundaries are irregular in form).
- vii. The height of racks (up to 3m) means that they may overtop typical hedgerow/ hedgebank field boundaries.

- viii. Screen planting around solar PV development, or management changes such as allowing hedges to grow higher, can change the sense of enclosure of a landscape.
- ix. Construction of the solar PV development may result in damage to landscape features such as hedgerow/ hedgebank field boundaries.
- x. Structures, including free-standing panels, security fencing, and other hard, built elements, can appear out of place in landscapes that are perceived as wild, natural, or remote from development, and that are valued for these qualities.
- xi. Ancillary buildings and security requirements (such as fencing and/or CCTV) may introduce new and unfamiliar features into a rural landscape.
- xii. Access tracks will be necessary on field scale schemes with central inverters (central inverters cannot be delivered and maintained using temporary tracks).

5.1.4. Photovoltaic technology requires absorption of sunlight to allow for the conversion of energy to take place and therefore very little light energy is lost through reflection. Glare is further minimised through the use of translucent coating materials to improve light transmittance through the glass<sup>38</sup>. Nevertheless panels do change under different atmospheric conditions, tending to reflect the light and colour of the sky, and the appearance of the panels under different atmospheric conditions is an important consideration in terms of the visual effects of schemes.

## 6. BASELINE CONDITIONS

6.1.1. Baseline conditions are described for both landscape and visual receptors within the study area. The landscape character baseline is set by the areas which directly effect, and are affected by, the development proposal. In the main this means the landscape within which the proposal will have visual and perceptual influence. For the visual baseline, the study has focused upon those areas which have been revealed as having potential impacts through the site visit and analysis of site plans, area maps and aerial photographs.

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE

#### 6.2. NATIONAL CHARACTER AREAS

The site lies within Natural England's National Character Assessment Area NCA profile 134: Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase.

The key characteristics of NCA 134 are:

- North-west to south-east transition through dramatic scarps, plateaux, rolling chalk upland, and a gentle but expansive dip slope - all dissected by often steep-sided, sheltered valleys and coombes.
- Relict, species-rich calcareous grassland, meadows, water meadows, ancient woodland, and parkland. Chalk streams and rivers play host to a thriving, distinctive community of plants, invertebrates, and fish.
- Semi-natural ancient woodlands, with large coups of hazel coppice, and the deer parks of Cranborne Chase, clothe the undulations of the dip slope. Prominent planted

shelterbelts and hill-top clumps of beech, oak and ash emphasise and reinforce the simple but expansive geometry of the high downland.

- Highly legible and coherent history of early human occupation, including a particularly well-preserved network of imposing hill forts, clusters of barrows, field systems, earthworks, ancient lanes, and other prehistoric features, often delineating ritual landscapes.
- Very large fields, resulting from the enclosure of downland for sheep and corn that took place between the 16th and 19th centuries. Changes during the 20th century have resulted in an intensively arable agricultural landscape.
- An intimate and older (often medieval in origin) enclosed, mixed-farming landscape of smaller, often hedgerow-bounded fields is found in the valleys and combes, and around the formally landscaped estate parklands.
- River valleys, dry in their upper sections, are often occupied by winterbournes, each with its own character, with thick hedgerows, flood meadows and linear villages in a variety of vernacular styles and materials.
- The wide flood plain of the River Stour brings a lowland interlude to this downland NCA and provides the location for the NCA's second-largest town, Blandford Forum.
- Isolated farmsteads punctuate the highest downland areas, contrasting with closely spaced, linear villages and hamlets close to water along the valley bottoms or at the foot of the combes and scarp, along the springline.
- A suite of large houses and estates have played a key role in the formation of the character of the NCA.
- The chalk plateau of Cranborne Chase itself, particularly the Inner Bounds and the Walks.

### 6.3. NORTH DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE: OPEN CHALK DOWNLAND. THE EFFECT OF THE DEVELOPMENT UPON THIS DESCRIPTION IS COVERED IN SECTION 7.3

6.3.1. The site lies within North Dorset Council's Character Area - Open Chalk Downland.

6.3.2. Key characteristics:

- elevated areas of open chalk upland with a broad rolling landform
- gentle curving convex profiles to the landform
- an expansive open scale with panoramic views to distant landmarks
- uniform and homogenous landscape character
- patchwork of large-scale arable fields subdivided by low, straight, and weak hedges
- isolated small blocks of geometrically shaped woods
- sparsely populated with few settlements and scattered isolated farmsteads
- a network of widely spaced roads, footpaths, and bridleways
- many important archaeological sites such as long barrows and burial mounds
- literary associations with Thomas Hardy

6.3.3. Landscape Management Guidelines:

- restore and extend native habitats of chalk grassland, ancient broadleaved oak woodland, and calcareous meadows. for grasslands, encourage opportunities for

reversion from arable cropping back to chalk grassland on the valley sides, linking up areas in good condition and enhance management of existing chalk grasslands

- restore and conserve chalk streams and other watercourses along with associated habitats and features of cultural interest
- conserve and enhance the integrity and setting of archaeological features through low impact grassland management and promote wider understanding through selective and sensitive interpretation for visitors
- restore important boundary features of cultural interest where the open character of the downs will not be affected
- promote the natural regeneration and planting of small oak, ash, and hazel broadleaved woodlands on gentle slopes to increase landscape diversity. new coniferous planting and shelterbelts should not be encouraged
- restore and enhance old hazel coppice stands
- conserve the distinctive open character of the landscape e.g. by keeping built development off the ridge tops and exposed downland summits
- identify, protect, and conserve the long ranging views especially from roads, rights of way and key viewpoints e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements, and other Settlement Appraisals
- improve recreational links into the countryside to tie in with the provision of functional 'greenspace' where possible around settlements

## 6.4. LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

6.4.1. The site has no national or local landscape designations. At its nearest point, the site lies approximately 1.5km south-west of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is no visual connection between the site and the AONB.

## 6.5. VISUAL BASELINE

6.5.1. To identify and assess the visual impact of development on the surrounding area the capacity of the site to accommodate change has been reviewed through a site visit, the collection of photographic data which illustrates the key visual receptors which are affected by possible development and using a computer-generated model and photomontage images.

6.5.2. Bare earth ZTV maps have been generated and cover the 5Km study area:

6.5.3. The bare earth ZTV model shows the theoretical visibility towards the site from the surrounding area based upon topography alone. It is useful inasmuch that it reveals widespread theoretical visibility from much of the study surrounding the site, especially from the hills to the east, as well as potential viewpoints to the north and north-west.

6.5.4. However, this form of modelling is increasingly unhelpful where the landscape contains many buildings or large trees as is the case within the site itself and the countryside surrounding Foston.



6.5.5. To test this, the areas which are shown within the model as having theoretical visibility have been visited to assess the actual visibility of the site and recorded through the selection of a number of representative viewpoints which were recorded photographically.

## 6.6. VISUAL ENVELOPE

6.6.1. The site lies on rolling land south-west of Spetisbury.

6.6.2. The ZTV reveals that theoretical views are possible from a 360° area around the site. In reality, there are very few views towards the site, and none found beyond 500m from the site boundary. The rolling nature of the landscape, combined with substantial tree and woodland cover on the surrounding ridgelines, means that theoretical views are screened from potential receptors.

6.6.3. There are no private dwellings or public roads with direct views towards the site. All of the viewpoints are taken from the surrounding PROW network.

### From the north and west

6.6.4. Northerly viewpoints are the least sensitive to solar energy production sites as views will be towards the rear of the panels where they can appear as a succession of dark shadow lines in the landscape.

6.6.5. The ZTV reveals many potential visual receptors in locations north of the site. In reality, the only views found are from a public bridleway (E6/20) along a stretch between Gorcombe Farm and East Down. This bridleway is bounded by mature trees and hedgerows along much of its length, with views towards the site only possible at field entrances and through gaps in the hedge and trees.

6.6.6. From this location, the proposals are in close proximity to the bridleway and, where possible, views towards the solar arrays will be significant and obvious. Travelling west along this bridleway the site becomes increasingly distant with visual effects reducing with increased distance.

6.6.7. Within the ZTV, to the west, is Charisworth, a private dwelling. It is possible to see this property from the site and therefore the proposed solar arrays may be visible from this visual receptor. This was not assessed, but it is likely that views are glimpse views between trees from this property. The visibility may be greater in winter than summer.

### From the south

6.6.8. Southerly viewpoints are the most sensitive to solar energy production sites as views will be directly towards the front of the panels where they can appear as a continuous sheet of PV material.

6.6.9. The ZTV reveals very few potential visual receptors in locations south of the site.

6.6.10. The main viewpoints, with open views towards the site from distance, are located south of the site along a public footpath between Little Coll Wood and Rendezvous Plantation (footpath E17/19).

6.6.11. From this direction, the site lies in a dip, surrounded by open fields and woodland blocks. It forms an important part of the view, in the middle-distance, with partial screening afforded by mature trees and hedgerows along the boundary of the host field. The existing solar farm is also visible from this direction, as a small part of the wider view, and forms an immediate backdrop to the proposal.

6.6.12. Travelling north along this footpath, towards Rendezvous Plantation, the site becomes increasingly dominant in the near and middle distance.

#### From the east

6.6.13. South-easterly viewpoints have a comparatively high sensitivity to solar energy production sites as oblique views will be towards the side and front of the panels where they can appear as a broken sheet (parallel lines) of PV material. Views directly from the east and north-east are less sensitive as they will be of side elevations with parallel lines of angled panels, but less obvious views of the front sheets.

6.6.14. Viewpoints from the east are the closest to the proposed solar arrays. All are from public footpaths (E17/19 and E6/7) on, or near the boundary of the site. From this location, the proposals are adjacent to the proposed solar arrays with views towards the rear of the panels significant and obvious.

## 6.7. VISUAL RECEPTORS

6.7.1. The following visual receptors were assessed:

- Settlements
- Residential properties
- Public Rights of Way and transport links

#### Settlements

6.7.2. Only those settlements which have a visual or perceived connection to the site are included. The site is only visible from the east. The main settlements, marked on the OS 1:25,000 maps are:

- Spetisbury (no visual connection)

## Residential Properties

6.7.3. In accordance with the GLVIA guidelines residential receptors have not been assessed on an individual basis. The viewpoints have been selected to illustrate visibility from representative viewpoints and, where possible, these have been taken as close to those residential receptors which are likely to be most affected as possible.

6.7.4. There are a small number of residential properties with views to the site:

- Charisworth (possible glimpse views towards the site)
- East Down (no visual connection)
- Gorcombe Farm (no visual connection)

## Public Rights of Way and transport links

6.7.5. The Public Rights of Way and transport links from which the site can be seen are listed below:

### Roads

6.7.6. The proposed development will be visible from the following public roads to varying degrees as these routes undulate across local topography and move in and out of built-up areas, past scattered buildings, and along sections in cuttings, with high hedgerows and tree cover. Some views will be open and uninterrupted whilst others may occur as glimpses.

- None

### Footpaths (CHECK CODES - different sources, use different coding)

6.7.7. The following lists footpaths which fall within the ZTV and which were surveyed.

- DT1925 - Bridleway running north-west from North Farm and then west, behind a ridgeline and just below Kitehill Plantation, and connecting North Farm to the wider and extensive local bridleway network.
- DT1697 - Bridleway running in a north-east to south-west orientation, south of North Farm and connecting South Farm with 2 further bridleways (#6435, #1903) which return to the bridleway above.
- DT1927 - Footpath running in a north-west to south east orientation, connecting North Farm with South Farm, approximately 1km distant, joining the end of the minor road between South Farm and Spetisbury lying to the north-east.
- DT1994 - Footpath connecting footpath #DT192, from a point roughly halfway along its length, with the village of Spetisbury lying to the north-east.

## **7. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS AND SIGNIFICANCE**

### **7.1. LANDSCAPE EFFECTS - GENERALLY**

#### 7.1.1. Assessment of sensitivity of the landscape to change

The criteria used for assessing site sensitivity to both landscape and visual receptors are summarised in the table in Appendix 1.

The sensitivity of the site to accommodate changes to the landscape is assessed in the range:

**Very High - High - Medium - Low - Negligible**

#### 7.1.2. Assessment of the magnitude of effect upon the landscape

The criteria used for assessing the magnitude of impact is summarised in the table in Appendix 1

The magnitude of change to the landscape is assessed in the range:

**Major - Moderate - Minor - Negligible - No Change**

#### 7.1.3. Assessment of sensitivity and magnitude combined - Significance of effect

To report on the overall significance of the proposal on both landscape and visual receptors the sensitivity of the site and the magnitude of change are assessed in combination. The outcomes are reported using descriptive terms rather than numerical scores and the terms used are summarised in Appendix 1.

The significance of the effect of the proposal upon the landscape is assessed in the range:

**Very Large - Large - Moderate - Slight - Neutral**

#### 7.1.4. Valency

7.1.5. The outcome can be both positive - i.e. the proposal makes a beneficial change to the landscape; and negative - the proposal will result in an adverse change to landscape character and visual character. Effects are defined as adverse, neutral, or beneficial. Descriptions of these are shown in the table in Appendix 1.

## 7.2. EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL UPON CHANGES TO THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### Environmental change without the works

7.2.1. In the event of the proposed development not being implemented, the site would remain as described in the baseline assessment.

7.2.2. Introduction to the development and its potential to generate landscape and visual effects

### Landscape effects - generally

7.2.3. Landscape effects can be both direct and indirect. Direct effects include permanent or temporary changes to townscape features such as buildings, vegetation (especially large mature trees or woodland), streetscape (roads, boundary treatments), marine infrastructure (sea walls, jetties, etc.). Indirect effects include those on the character of adjacent landscapes where temporary or permanent effects may occur through visual intrusion from, for example, lighting effects.

7.2.4. These effects may be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) or involve no change to the baseline (neutral). Most usually, adverse effects are on sensitive natural landscapes and sensitive, usually historic, townscapes. Where developments result in enhancement to damaged or degraded landscape of townscapes they are generally considered to result in positive (beneficial) changes.

7.2.5. Townscapes which are more sensitive to development include Conservation Areas, presence of listed buildings and protected trees, areas recognised for their historic integrity, and places cited in art and literature.

### Visual effects - generally

7.2.6. Direct visual effects include temporary or permanent changes to views brought about by loss of existing, or introduction of new elements into the landscape. These changes can bring about indirect visual effects by blocking previously available views.

7.2.7. These effects can also be beneficial, adverse, or neutral. Sensitivity to adverse effects relates to the receptor (person or group of people affected by the change to the view). People, usually residents, with permanent and uninterrupted views towards the development are the most sensitive. Visitors and tourists who come to the area for its scenic value are also sensitive receptors. People passing through the area have lower sensitivity.

### 7.3. OPERATIONAL PHASE ASSESSMENT

#### Landscape Effects: Response to effects upon Landscape Character GUIDANCE.

7.3.1. This section responds to the characteristics identified in Section 5.1.

7.3.2. Key characteristics include:

- elevated areas of open chalk upland with a broad rolling landform
- gentle curving convex profiles to the landform
- an expansive open scale with panoramic views to distant landmarks
- uniform and homogenous landscape character
- patchwork of large-scale arable fields subdivided by low, straight, and weak hedges
- isolated small blocks of geometrically shaped woods
- sparsely populated with few settlements and scattered isolated farmsteads
- a network of widely spaced roads, footpaths, and bridleways
- many important archaeological sites such as long barrows and burial mounds
- literacy associations with Thomas Hardy

#### Response to described Key Characteristics

The proposal for a solar PV energy production site will not damage any of the described key characteristics.

The site has a medium sensitivity to changes to landscape character, is low-lying and well-screened from most of the surrounding area, minimising potential effects upon landscape character (refer Sections 6.5 and 6.6). There are no proposed changes to defined field boundary patterns or hedgerows. The effect of the proposal upon landscape character may slightly alter the perception of a rural arable fields through a change from agricultural crops to solar panels. This could increase the perception of human influence on the landscape. This is localised and hidden from most viewpoints (refer Section 7: Visual Effects)

There is an opportunity to enhance other described key characteristics by implementing new planting following the guidelines listed below. These are described in more detail within the accompanying Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)

### 7.3.3. Management Guidelines

- restore and extend native habitats of chalk grassland, ancient broadleaved oak woodland, and calcareous meadows. for grasslands, encourage opportunities for reversion from arable cropping back to chalk grassland on the valley sides, linking up areas in good condition and enhance management of existing chalk grasslands
- restore and conserve chalk streams and other watercourses along with associated habitats and features of cultural interest
- conserve and enhance the integrity and setting of archaeological features through low impact grassland management and promote wider understanding through selective and sensitive interpretation for visitors
- restore important boundary features of cultural interest where the open character of the downs will not be affected
- promote the natural regeneration and planting of small oak, ash, and hazel broadleaved woodlands on gentle slopes to increase landscape diversity. new coniferous planting and shelterbelts should not be encouraged
- restore and enhance old hazel coppice stands
- conserve the distinctive open character of the landscape e.g. by keeping built development off the ridge tops and exposed downland summits
- identify, protect, and conserve the long ranging views especially from roads, rights of way and key viewpoints e.g. via Parish Action Plans, Village Design Statements, and other Settlement Appraisals
- improve recreational links into the countryside to tie in with the provision of functional 'greenspace' where possible around settlements

#### Response to Management Guidelines

Solar PV sites involve comparatively light-touch management regimes. No changes are proposed to any of the landscape features listed above.

Hedgerows and trees will be retained and protected, with existing hedgerows allowed to grow more naturally - enhancing biodiversity and offering improved visual screening from the surrounding area.

Woodland is characteristic of the area, but not of the site itself. No woodland screening belts are proposed.

The proposals include a range of bio-diversity benefits including additional to scrub areas, hedgerows, meadows, and grazing. This is a substantial benefit to the site and locality compared with the baseline condition. These are described in detail within the accompanying Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

## 7.4. ASSESSING SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

### Assessment of sensitivity of the landscape to change

7.4.1. The criteria used for assessing site sensitivity to both landscape and visual receptors are summarised in the table in Appendix 1.

7.4.2. The sensitivity of the site to accommodate changes to the landscape is assessed in the range:

**Very High - High - Medium - Low - Negligible**

### Assessment of the magnitude of effect upon the landscape

7.4.3. The criteria used for assessing the magnitude of impact is summarised in the table in Appendix 1

7.4.4. The magnitude of change to the landscape is assessed in the range:

**Major - Moderate - Minor - Negligible - No Change**

### Assessment of sensitivity and magnitude combined - Significance of effect

7.4.5. In order to report on the overall significance of the proposal on both landscape and visual receptors the sensitivity of the site and the magnitude of change are assessed in combination. The outcomes are reported using descriptive terms rather than numerical scores and the terms used are summarised in Appendix 1.

7.4.6. The significance of the effect of the proposal upon the landscape is assessed in the range:

Very Large - Large - Moderate - Slight - Neutral

### Valency

7.4.7. The outcome can be both positive - i.e. the proposal makes a beneficial change to the landscape; and negative - the proposal will result in an adverse change to landscape character and visual character. Effects are defined as adverse, neutral, or beneficial. Descriptions of these are shown in the table in Appendix 1.



## 7.5. SENSITIVITY OF THE SITE TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGES TO THE LANDSCAPE

### Sensitivity of effects upon landform and scale

7.5.1. Assessment is **Lower to Medium Sensitivity**: “Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale”. “An extensive lowland flat landscape, often a larger scale landform”.

### Landform cover pattern and presence of human scale features

7.5.2. Assessment is **Medium**: “Medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution”. “A landscape with medium sized fields, some variation in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings”.

### Sensitivity of effects upon tracks and transport patterns

7.5.3. Assessment is **Medium Sensitivity**: “Medium importance and rarity, local scale”. “A landscape containing some existing roads and vehicular tracks, including some restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes”.

### Sensitivity of effects upon skylines

7.5.4. Assessment is **Medium to Higher Sensitivity**: “High or medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution”. “A landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints and/or with important landscape features”.

Sensitivity of effects upon perceptual qualities

7.5.5. Assessment is **Medium Sensitivity**: “High or medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited opportunity for substitution”. “A rural landscape with some modern development and human landscape”.

Sensitivity of effects upon historic landscape character

7.5.6. Assessment is **Medium Sensitivity**: “High or medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution”. “The majority of the landscape covered by medium sensitivity historic landscape types or a mixture of higher and lower historic landscape types”.

Sensitivity of effects upon scenic and special landscape qualities

7.5.7. Assessment is **Medium Sensitivity**: “High or medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution”. “a landscape which has a medium scenic quality and some of the special qualities may be affected by energy development”.

Summary of landscape sensitivity ratings

**7.5.8.** The **sensitivity of the landscape** to accommodate change is summarised below. **This IS NOT an assessment of the effect of proposed development upon this landscape (refer Section 7.6).**

<i>Landscape characteristic</i>	<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Magnitude of effect</i>	<b>Significance of effect</b>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>Landform and scale</b>	Medium to Lower	Medium	<b>Moderate to slight</b>	Effect very localised
<b>Landform cover pattern and presence of human scale features</b>	Medium to higher	Medium	<b>Moderate</b>	Effect very localised
<b>Tracks/transport patterns</b>	Medium	Minor	<b>Slight</b>	Minimal additions compared with baseline
<b>Skylines</b>	Medium to higher	Minor	<b>Slight or moderate</b>	Effect very localised
<b>Perceptual Qualities</b>	Medium	Medium	<b>Moderate</b>	Effect very localised
<b>Historic landscape character</b>	Medium	Minor	<b>Slight or neutral</b>	No adverse effects assessed
<b>Scenic and special qualities</b>	Medium	Medium	<b>Moderate</b>	Effect very localised

## 7.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS UPON CHANGES TO THE LANDSCAPE

7.6.1. The effect of solar energy production upon the range of landscape characteristics described in Section 7.5 are summarised as **Moderate to Slight**: “These beneficial or adverse effects are important but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such issues may become a decision-making issue if leading to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor”.

7.6.2. The outcome of this assessment will inform site mitigation measures which are covered in Section 7.13.

## 7.7. VISUAL EFFECTS

### Assessment of Visual Sensitivity and Magnitude

7.7.1. This section describes the effect of the proposal upon selected viewpoints. Priority is given to viewpoints with public access such as public rights of way, roads and residential dwellings which would be unacceptably harmed by views of the proposed development.

7.7.2. Representative viewpoints for the assessment of visual effects have been identified in the baseline assessment. These are at publicly accessible locations such as roads and public rights of way and public open space. The sensitivity of receptor, magnitude of change to the view, and the significance of the impact on the receptor are assessed for each representative viewpoint.

7.7.3. For private dwellings assessment is made at ground level. In reality, views may be apparent from first floor windows or further upper floors. These have not been assessed.

### Visibility generally

The visual envelope is described in Section 6.6.

### Selection of representative viewpoints

7.7.4. To test the ZTV model and to identify individual viewpoints not immediately apparent for the computer model, a visual tour within the area was carried out. The selection of viewpoints favoured visual receptors with higher sensitivity to the development. In particular residential properties, designated public footpaths, popular tourist areas and areas noted for their quietness and remoteness.

7.7.5. It was not possible to assess the effect of the proposal from individual properties. This especially applies to the neighbouring property at Littleton Pastures.

## 7.8. MAGNITUDE AND SIGNIFICANCE FROM VISUAL RECEPTORS

7.8.1. The significance of effect is a combination of receptor sensitivity and magnitude of the visual effect. For example, a view experienced by residents (high sensitivity) with a minor magnitude of effect gives rise to a slight or moderate effect. The same view experienced by the travelling public (low sensitivity) produces a slight or neutral effect. The greatest effects are experienced by residents observing a major magnitude of change to the view.

7.8.2. The effect of the construction phase (CP in the table) will give rise to more adverse assessments than the operational phase. This is because of the presence of an unsightly construction infrastructure. The duration of the construction phase is assumed to be between 1-2 years and these adverse effects will be temporary. After the construction is complete, the significance of the visual effect reduces as the project enters the operational phase.

## 7.9. SIGNIFICANCE OF RESIDUAL VISUAL EFFECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL UPON VISUAL RECEPTORS

7.9.1. Reference should be made to the assessment tables in the Appendices for detailed descriptions of the range of visual effects.

### Very Large

7.9.2. There are no visual receptors which will experience a very large effect upon views.

### Large

7.9.3. There are no visual receptors which will experience a large effect upon views.

### Moderate

7.9.4. **Five visual receptors are assessed as experiencing a moderate, or moderate to large, and partially adverse effect upon views prior to mitigation.** The assessment of partially adverse is based upon the effect of the solar arrays altering the immediate low-level view, but not affecting the wider and longer views towards the ridgelines and wider countryside. The change to the views may be perceived differently by different users depending upon their personal response to solar panels within the landscape.

7.9.5. It is important to note that these effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. It is principally a visual change from one material (agricultural crops) to another (solar arrays), but with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this type of landscape change. The changes will be low-lying with distant views unchanged.

**7.9.6.** Viewpoints 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12 are all located on the site boundary, or from public footpaths within the boundary. From these viewpoints the solar arrays will dominate the low-level view. The proposals include mitigation measures to reduce the adverse effects upon these low-level views through the introduction of new hedgerows which will, once established, screen

the panels, and focus the viewer's attention on the more distant views towards the wider landscape. This will help to maintain a sense of rurality along the footpath routes. **Post mitigation establishment, the residual effect reduces dramatically to slightly adverse within the first 5-7 years and then not adverse beyond 7-10 years.**

**7.9.7.** Viewpoints 3, 4 and 5 are from the public bridleway which runs between Gorcombe Farm and East Downs. This is heavily planted on the east side with almost complete visual separation between the bridleway and the site. However, some large openings in the hedge and tree screen exist as field entrances and gaps in the screen with open views towards the site, some of which are located along the site boundary. **Mitigation planting is recommended, in the form of new hedgerow species, to fill these gaps without interfering with farm access routes.**

**7.9.8.** Viewpoints 7, 8 and 9 are from the public footpath which runs between Little Coll Wood and Rendezvous Plantation south of the site. From here the site lies at the bottom of a natural bowl with views towards the south facing elevations of the panels. Beyond the site lies an existing solar farm which occupies a small part of the view. The proposal will be apparent within these views and a significant addition to the middle distance, but by no means dominating the wide panoramic view from these locations. **No specific mitigation is recommended to reduce these effects as the elevation viewing location will look over the top of any new tree or hedgerow planting. However, some benefit can be gained through hedgerow management which will allow the boundary hedgerows to grow. This will have some effect in reducing low-level adverse effects, but the solar arrays will remain visible from this viewpoint.**

#### Slight

7.9.9. Two viewpoints were assessed as experiencing a slight and slightly adverse effect upon views.

**7.9.10.** Viewpoint 1 is taken from a public footpath where it meets the northern site boundary. The proposals include mitigation measures to reduce the adverse effects upon these low-level views through the introduction of new hedgerows which will, once established, screen the panels, and focus the viewer's attention on the more distant views towards the wider landscape. This will help to maintain a sense of rurality along the footpath routes. **Post mitigation establishment, the residual effect reduces dramatically to slightly adverse within the first 5-7 years and then not adverse beyond 7-10 years.**

Viewpoint 6 is taken from a public bridleway south-west of the site. **Mitigation planting is recommended, in the form of new hedgerow species, to fill these gaps without interfering with farm access routes.**

#### Neutral

**7.9.11.** **No viewpoints are assessed as experiencing a neutral effect. It is important to note that there are numerous potential viewpoints from where the proposal cannot be seen.**

## 7.10. EFFECT OF THE GRID YARD UPON VISUAL RECEPTORS

7.10.1. The grid yard is located adjacent to the existing solar farm. It is assessed that this will not create any significant new landscape or visual effects.

7.10.2. From all viewpoints, the grid yard will read as a minor addition to the existing solar farm and not a wholly new addition to the landscape.

## 7.11. VISUAL EFFECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL UPON VISUAL RECEPTORS DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE

7.11.1. Those receptors experiencing an adverse effect upon views will experience a moderately adverse effect during the construction phase. Adverse effects are the result of construction site traffic and infrastructure, including noise. Solar energy sites are short duration installations and the adoption of considerate construction methods and protocols can reduce any temporary adverse effects.

7.11.2. Post construction phase, there will be a period of moderate and adverse effects while mitigation planting establishes. The screening effect should develop within 5 years and the landscape proposals show some larger advanced nursery stock plants to speed establishment and screening within this 5-year period.

## 7.12. VISUAL IMPACT SCHEDULE - REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

7.12.1. The assessment of individual viewpoints is produced in tabulated form in the accompanying illustrated report and describes each Representative View.

7.12.2. Each table assesses:

- Distance to the development
- Type of receptors
- Sensitivity of the receptor
- Significance of the effect
- A description of the view and the extent of representation
- The magnitude of the effect on the view and its valency (Adverse, Beneficial, Neutral)
- The significance of the effect on the view and its valency (Adverse, Beneficial, Neutral)
- Action required to mitigate against adverse effects, including design development.
- The significance of the effect on the view and its valency (Adverse, Beneficial, Neutral) - post design development/successful mitigation.

## 7.13. OUTCOMES OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT INFLUENCING DESIGN DEVELOPMENT AND MITIGATION

### RESPONSE TO LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND APPLICATION OF GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE ON SITING SOLAR PV DEVELOPMENTS TO THIS SITE

7.13.1. The following provides a response to the landscape character assessment by reference to national guidance on siting solar PV development - focussing on minimising landscape and visual effects. It is recognised that technologies need to be sited and designed to ensure a reasonable output.

- viii. The site is located on slightly undulating land increasing the potential effects upon landscape character.
- ix. The site lies in a natural depression and is located within a wider landscape with a high sense of enclosure rather than in open and unenclosed landscapes. However, at a local level (within 500m) the site is visible from the surrounding area corresponding to the 'rim' of the bowl.
- x. There are some views from local viewpoints, and popular footpath routes (evidenced by wear and tear upon the footpaths and bridleways), but none from recognised /iconic views, and designated landscapes. From higher ground, some panels will be sited in areas where they can be well concealed or integrated into sensitive views, while others will be more visible.
- xi. Viewpoint assessment has considered the appearance of the development as viewed from the 'backs' and 'sides' (where frames will be more visible) as well as from the 'front'.
- xii. The site does not span across marked changes in character on the ground.
- xiii. The site is not located in an area valued for its remoteness, or in an area free from human influence and perceived as 'untamed' naturalness.
- xiv. The proposal provides enhanced management of landscape features, and habitats as part of the development. This includes contributing to wider landscape scale targets and projects in LPA's Biodiversity Action Plans, guidelines in Landscape Character Assessments, and landscape management objectives set out in local landscape character assessments.

## 7.14. RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURES TO REDUCE ASSESSED ADVERSE EFFECTS

7.14.1. Twelve viewpoints were assessed, of which 7 will benefit from mitigation measures which will be effective and reduce any residual effects. Three viewpoints will receive a slightly adverse effect upon views, but mitigation will have a limited impact reducing these effects. Two further viewpoints can effectively be mitigated by planting gaps in hedgerows and tree cover along an existing bridleway.

**7.14.2.** The key principle, through mitigation, is to reduce moderate and adverse effects from viewpoints immediately adjacent to the proposals. All of these are located immediately east and north of the site and either adjacent to, or within, the site boundary. The proposals include mitigation measures to reduce the adverse effects upon these low-level views through the introduction of new hedgerows which will, once established, screen the panels, and focus the viewer's attention on the more distant views towards the wider landscape. This will help to maintain a sense of rurality along the footpath routes. **Post mitigation establishment, the residual effect reduces dramatically to slightly adverse within the first 5-7 years and then not adverse beyond 7-10 years.**

7.14.3. Elsewhere, mitigation will take the form of gap-filling within existing hedgerows and tree screen, principally along the bridleway with runs west of the site.

7.14.4. As a general recommendation, existing field boundary hedgerows should be allowed to grow to a height to help screen the solar arrays without interfering with the effectiveness of energy production.

7.14.5. These mitigation measures as described, in detail, in the accompanying Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).



## 8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1.1. The assessment has revealed the following conclusions and includes recommendations to reduce adverse effects described in this report:

### 8.2. EFFECTS UPON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

8.2.1. The site has a moderate sensitivity to solar farm development: "These beneficial or adverse effects are important but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such issues may become a decision-making issue if leading to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor". This is a low-lying, flat site containing few special landscape features.

8.2.2. The site lies in a natural depression and is located within a wider landscape with a high sense of enclosure rather than in open and unenclosed landscapes. However, at a local level (within 500m) the site is visible from the surrounding area corresponding to the 'rim' of the bowl.

8.2.3. The presence of the existing neighbouring solar farm is not assessed as significantly increasing any cumulative assessed adverse effects.

8.2.4. The proposal is to install solar arrays within the existing hedged field boundaries. No hedgerows are to be removed such that the pattern of landscape remains as the baseline condition, and as described in landscape character areas descriptions.

8.2.5. At a local level, the landscape character contains some agricultural modern development and is quite intensively farmed. This is not an area noted for its remoteness or one with little evidence of human activity. The site has no landscape designations.

8.2.6. On balance, the significance of the effect upon landscape character is assessed as slight. This is principally due to the addition of new human scale features.

8.2.7. Described landscape characteristics, especially those listed in landscape management guidelines, will be enhanced by changing intense agricultural practice into a less-intense, nature-led, approach to landscape management. This will have benefits upon local biodiversity, as well as, reducing any residual visual effects.

### 8.3. EFFECTS UPON VISUAL RECEPTORS

8.3.1. The effect upon visual receptors is assessed in the range large, through moderate, to slight. No assessments of very large or neutral effects were recorded.

8.3.2. The site lies in a natural bowl, with views towards the site restricted to within the 'rim' of the bowl and within 500m. Within this bowl area, views are hard to find from many directions.

8.3.3. The exception are views from the south where the land rises to over Charlton Downs towards Little Coll Wood. From here there are long panoramic views to the north. The site sits in

a natural depression, with views from three viewpoints experiencing open views across the site where solar arrays will be visible.

8.3.4. From these viewpoints, mitigation measures will not screen the proposal and the residual effect, following the construction phase, will remain moderate and slightly adverse. It is important to note that these effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. It is principally a visual change from one material (agricultural crops) to another (solar arrays), but with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this type of landscape change.

8.3.5. Glimpse views through existing boundary vegetation along the public bridleway. Mitigation is included to reduce any adverse effects.

8.3.6. A number of viewpoints are included immediately adjacent to, or within, the site boundary. New hedgerow planting is proposed to mitigate against these effects.

## 8.4. SUMMARY CONCLUSION

8.4.1. On balance, through a detailed landscape and visual assessment, this is assessed as a good site for solar energy production.

8.4.2. The site has no landscape designations. It lies in a natural bowl, with views towards the site restricted to within the 'rim' of the bowl and within 500m. Outside this natural bowl area there are no views towards the site and within the surrounding ridgeline views are hard to find from many directions.

8.4.3. The presence of the existing neighbouring solar farm is not assessed as significantly increasing any cumulative assessed adverse effects.

8.4.4. The site has a moderate sensitivity to solar energy production and there are no assessed adverse effects upon landscape character. The proposal provides an opportunity to improve the described landscape character, in the medium and long-term, through changing landscape management regimes which will increase biodiversity as well as enhancing hedgerow cover and wildflower planting in this relatively intensively farmed landscape.

8.4.5. Views from the south where the land rises to over Charlton Downs towards Little Coll Wood are long panoramic, with views to the north. The site sits in a natural depression, with views from three viewpoints experiencing open views across the site where solar arrays will be visible. From these viewpoints, mitigation measures will not screen the proposal and the residual effect, following the construction phase, will remain moderate and slightly adverse. It is important to note that these effects are upon the land cover within the field enclosures themselves, rather than any changes to landscape pattern or wider views which will remain unchanged. It is principally a visual change from one material (agricultural crops) to another (solar arrays), but with a potential change to perceptions of the landscape view based upon an individual's response to this type of landscape change.

8.4.6. From public footpaths and bridleways immediately adjacent to, or within, the site boundary direct views towards the site and will experience moderate, or moderate to large, and

adverse effects prior to mitigation. In both cases the views can be mitigated, but not screened completely until around 7-10 years post-planting during which time the effect remains slightly adverse. Once mitigation planting has established, within 7-10 years the residual effect is likely to be not adverse. In addition to mitigation screening, it may be possible, in the short term, to enhance views from these properties through careful landscape master planning. This is shown within the accompanying Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

## 9. APPENDIX 1 - ASSESSMENT CRITERIA TABLES

### 9.1. SENSITIVITY VALUES

9.1.1. Measures of sensitivity are described more fully in this report, but follow the general principles outlined in the table below:

Value/Sensitivity	
Value (Sensitivity)	Typical Descriptors
Very High	Very high importance and rarity, international scale, and limited potential for substitution
High	High importance and rarity, national scale, and limited potential for substitution
Medium	High or medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution
Low (or Lower)	Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale

### 9.2. ASSESSMENT OF MAGNITUDE EFFECT ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

9.2.1. The criteria used for assessing the magnitude of impact is summarised in the table below:

Magnitude of effect upon Landscape Character	
Magnitude of impact	Typical Criteria Descriptors
Major	Loss of resource and/or quality and integrity: severe damage to key characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse)  Large scale or major improvement of resource quality: extensive restoration or enhancement: major improvement of attribute quality (Beneficial)
Moderate	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting integrity: Partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse)

	Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features, or elements: improvement of attribute quality (Beneficial)
Minor	Some measurable change in attribute's quality or vulnerability: minor loss of, or alteration to, one (or maybe more) key characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse)  Minor benefit to, or addition of, on (or maybe more) key characteristics, features, or elements: some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring (Beneficial)
Negligible	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse)  Very minor benefit to or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features, or elements (Beneficial)
No change	No loss or alteration to characteristics, features, or elements: no observable impact in either direction

### 9.3. SENSITIVITY AND MAGNITUDE COMBINED - SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT

9.3.1. In order to report on the overall significance of the proposal on both landscape and visual receptors the sensitivity of the site and the magnitude of change are assessed in combination. The outcome can be both positive - i.e. the proposal makes a positive change to the landscape; and negative - the proposal will result in a negative change to landscape character and visual character. The outcomes are reported using descriptive terms rather than numerical scores and the terms used are summarised below:

Significance of Effect	
Significance of Category	Typical descriptors of Effect
Very Large	Only adverse effects are normally assigned this level of significance. They represent key factors in the decision-making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national, or regional importance that are likely to suffer a most damaging impact and loss of resource integrity. However, a major change in a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category
Large	These beneficial or adverse effects are considered to be very important considerations and are likely to be material in the decision-making process

Moderate	These beneficial or adverse effects may be important but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such issues may become a decision-making issue if leading to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor
Slight	These beneficial or adverse effects may be raised as local factors. They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process, but are important in enhancing the subsequent design of the project
Neutral	No effects or those that are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error

## 9.4. VALENCY OF EFFECT - LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL ASSESSMENT

9.4.1. Effects are defined as adverse, neutral, or beneficial.

Valency of Effect	
Nature of Effect	Definition
Adverse	Effect that would result in damage to the condition, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual resource
Neutral/ Not adverse	Effect that would maintain, on balance, the existing level of condition, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual resource. Whilst the nature of the change may be significant, the proposal does not compromise the inherent qualities of the resource and can incorporate a combination of positive and negative effects.
Beneficial	Effect that would result in improvement to the condition, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual resource

## 9.5. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER SENSITIVITY

Landform and scale				
A smooth, convex or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent headlands and cliffs) or pronounced undulations; and larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because solar farms may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms or appear confusing in the latter types of landscapes.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. an extensive lowland flat landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landform	e.g. a simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform	e.g. an undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform	e.g. a landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. a landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale landform

Landform cover pattern and presence of human scale features				
Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and/ or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features that are traditional of the landscape, such as stone farmsteads and small farm woodlands 18. This is because large features may dominate smaller scale traditional features within the landscape.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a very large-scale landscape with uniform groundcover and lacking in human scale features	e.g. a landscape with large-scale fields, little variety in land cover and occasional human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with medium sized fields, some variations in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with irregular small-scale fields, variety in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with a strong variety in land cover and small scale/irregular in appearance containing numerous human scale features

Tracks/transport pattern				
Landscapes that are devoid of tracks will be particularly sensitive to development because it will be more difficult to absorb permanent new tracks into the landscape without change to character in these areas. In addition, if an LCA has a rural road network which contributes to landscape character (e.g. winding narrow lanes bounded by high hedge banks or sunken lanes), this aspect of character may be affected by access works to enable HGVs carrying development materials to a site. This characteristic therefore also influences sensitivity.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a landscape containing existing roads and vehicular tracks, and no restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	e.g. a landscape containing existing roads and vehicular tracks, and few restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	e.g. a landscape containing some existing roads and vehicular tracks, including some restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	e.g. a landscape containing few lanes or vehicular tracks, and these are predominantly narrow lanes bounded by high hedge banks	e.g. a landscape devoid of roads or vehicular tracks

Skylines				
Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to development because development may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines. These include the skylines of elevated coastlines and coastal headlands. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a large scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline	e.g. a large scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline - other skylines in adjacent LCAs are more prominent	e.g. a landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline.	e.g. a landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features	e.g. a landscape comprising prominent or distinctive undeveloped skylines or skylines with particularly important landmark features



Perceptual qualities				
Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development (as the development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness).				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development such as industrial areas or a port	e.g. a rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and / or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a remote or 'wild' landscape with little or no signs of current human activity and development

Historic Landscape Character				
Landscapes comprising prehistoric and medieval enclosures (including strip fields) are considered to have a higher sensitivity to development than landscapes comprising modern enclosures or industrial/military Historic Landscape Types (HLTs) due to the potential effects of development on the coherence of these landscapes (including effects of access tracks on field boundaries) and the ability to appreciate them. Historic landscape types such as rough ground, ancient woodland, other woodland, marsh, dunes, mud, sand, outcrop/ scree/ cliffs, water meadows, and orchards also have a higher sensitivity to energy development as a result of potential change to the coherence of these historic landscape types.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. majority of the landscape covered by least sensitive HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by lower sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of higher sensitivity	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by medium sensitivity HLTs or a mixture of higher and lower sensitivity HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of lower sensitivity	e.g. the majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs

Scenic and Special Qualities				
Landscapes that have a high natural beauty/ scenic quality (which may be recognised as a National Park, Heritage Coast or AONB) and whose scenic qualities, special qualities (as recorded in the LCA or by AGLV designation) or natural beauty are likely to be affected by development will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality or whose special scenic qualities or special qualities are not likely to be affected by wind energy development (some areas may include special qualities that might not be affected by development). Scenic and special qualities may relate to landscapes that are not designated as well as landscape designated for their natural beauty.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. landscape has low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land - special qualities will not be affected by energy development	e.g. landscape has low-medium scenic quality, or special qualities are unlikely to be affected by energy development	e.g. landscape has a medium scenic quality and some of the special qualities may be affected by energy development	e.g. landscape has a medium-high scenic quality - most of the special qualities are likely to be affected by energy development	e.g. area has a high scenic quality (likely to be recognised as National Park/AONB/ Heritage Coast) and the scenic qualities will be affected by energy development

## 9.6. SENSITIVITY OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

### 9.6.1. The sensitivity of visual receptors - general principles

- the location i.e. proximity and context of the viewpoint.
- the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor, including awareness of their surroundings and duration of viewing opportunity, whether prolonged or intermittent.
- the importance of the view, which may be determined with respect to its popularity or numbers of people affected, its appearance in guidebooks, on tourist maps, and in the facilities provided for its enjoyment and references to it in literature or art.

9.6.2. A wide variety of visual receptors can reasonably be anticipated to be affected by a proposed development. The range of visual receptors will include pedestrians, and recreational users of the surrounding landscape such as walkers, cyclists and those otherwise engaged in the pursuit of leisure activities within the visual envelope of the site, local residents, motorists, those working outdoors and other workers. All categories of receptors can potentially be affected to a greater or lesser degree by a development. The four main visual receptor groups are considered in more detail below under the headings of residents, workers, the travelling public, and visitors.

#### Residents

9.6.3. Local residents tend to have a higher level of sensitivity to changes in their landscape and visual environment than those passing through. For residents, the most important views are

those from their homes, although they will also be sensitive to other views such as those experienced when travelling to work or other local destinations. However, it is these latter views, from public areas nearby houses that are of relevance to the main body of the visual impact assessment (assessment of effects from the representative viewpoints).

### Workers

9.6.4. Workers are generally less sensitive to effects as they are focussed on the tasks they are carrying out. Indoor workers generally have a Low sensitivity, and outdoor workers, such as farmers and those offering outdoor pursuits are considered to have a Low to Medium sensitivity.

### The Travelling Public

9.6.5. This category of visual receptor group overlaps to a degree with the other categories in that it embraces local residents, workers and those who come to visit the area. This group of visual receptors will include the following:

9.6.6. Motorists - For major trunk routes and motorways, the sensitivity of users will be Low, as they will be travelling at speed and will be primarily focussed on achieving their destination. Users of other A-roads will have a Low to Medium sensitivity, unless these are particularly scenic or slow routes, in which case the sensitivity may be assessed as Medium. The users of local roads will have a Medium sensitivity.

9.6.7. Cyclists and footpath users - These groups are addressed under the heading of visitors as they are generally less concerned with the object of reaching their destination than with the enjoyment of being outside and enjoying the landscape and available views.

### Visitors

9.6.8. This category includes several visual receptor groups, each with different objectives and levels of sensitivity to any change in the fabric or character of the landscape and views arising from the proposed development. This group includes those who are mainly concerned with enjoyment of the outdoor environment but also those who may pursue indoor recreational pursuits and is anticipated to include the following (arranged in decreasing sensitivity):

- Those whose main preoccupation is the enjoyment of scenery (High sensitivity).
- Recreational walkers and equestrians (High sensitivity)
- Those visitors engaged in cultural pursuits (High-Medium sensitivity)
- Cyclists (High-Medium sensitivity)

## 9.7. MAGNITUDE OF EFFECT ON VIEWS FROM REPRESENTATIVE VIEWPOINTS

9.7.1. Magnitude of effect identifies the degree of change to the character and quality of views experienced by the visual receptor. This will be influenced by:

9.7.2. the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development and the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.

9.7.3. the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour, and texture.

Magnitude of Effect on Views	
High	Total or major alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be noticeably changed.
Low	Minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be largely unchanged despite discernible differences.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be fundamentally unchanged with barely perceptible differences.

9.8. TABLE SHOWING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECT AS A COMBINATION OF MAGNITUDE AND RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY

		MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE				
		Major	Moderate	Minor	Negligible	No Change
RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY	Very High	Very Large	Large or Very Large	Moderate or Large	Slight	Neutral
	High	Large or Very Large	Moderate or Large	Slight or Moderate	Slight	Neutral
	Medium	Moderate or Large	Moderate	Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral
	Low	Slight or Moderate	Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral
	Negligible	Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral or Slight	Neutral	Neutral

## 10. APPENDIX 2 - GLOSSARY

- **Cumulative effects** - The summation of effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions.
- **Indirect effects** - Effects on the environment, which are not a direct result of the development but are often produced away from it or as a result of a complex pathway. Sometimes referred to as secondary impacts.
- **Landscape character type** - A landscape type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement, and field pattern discernible in maps and field survey records.
- **Landscape effects** - Change in the elements, characteristics, character, and qualities of the landscape as a result of development. These effects can be negative or positive.
- **Landscape character** - means the distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occur consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how these are perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.
- **Landscape quality (or condition)** - is based on judgements about the physical state of the landscape, and about its intactness, from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.
- **Landscape value** - is concerned with the relative value that is attached to different landscapes. In a policy context, the usual basis for recognising certain highly valued landscapes is through the application of a local or national landscape designation. Yet a landscape may be valued by communities for many different reasons without any formal designation.
- **Landscape sensitivity** - The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without material effects on its character.
- **Magnitude** - A combination of the scale, extent, and duration of an effect.
- **Mitigation** - Measures, including any process, activity, or design to avoid, reduce, remedy, or compensate for adverse landscape and visual effects of a development project.
- **Receptor** - Physical landscape resource, special interest or viewer group that will experience an effect.
- **Visual amenity** - The value of a particular area or view in terms of what is seen.
- **Visual effect** - Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction).
- **Visual envelope** - Extent of potential visibility to or from a specific area or feature.
- **Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)** - A computer generated model, based upon bare earth terrain data, which shows areas from where a theoretical visual connection to and from the site is possible.
- **Zone of visual influence** - Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or effect on visual amenity.

## 11. APPENDIX 3 - REFERENCES

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