

---

## Appendix B: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

# Priory Farm Solar Array

---

## Proposed Development of a Photovoltaic Solar Array on Land at Priory Farm to the East of Great Wymondley, North Hertfordshire

---

### Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

OCTOBER 2021



Chester Office | Well House Barns | Chester Road | Bretton | Chester | CH4 0DH  
South Manchester Office | Camellia House | 76 Water Lane | Wilmslow | SK9 5BB  
t 0844 8700 007 | e [enquiries@axisped.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@axisped.co.uk)

---

<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Competence .....	2
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Proposed Development</b> .....	<b>3</b>
2.1	Proposed Development.....	3
2.2	Environmental Design and Management .....	3
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Methodology</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1	Legislation and Guidance .....	5
3.2	Assessment Methodology .....	5
3.3	Study Area.....	5
3.4	Assessment of Significance / Assessment Criteria .....	7
3.5	Limitations .....	7
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Baseline Conditions</b> .....	<b>9</b>
4.1	Data Collection .....	9
4.2	The Site and its Surroundings .....	9
4.3	Landscape Character Assessment and Other Studies .....	11
4.4	Visual Baseline .....	17
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Assessment of Effects</b> .....	<b>26</b>
5.1	Embedded Mitigation.....	26
5.2	Construction Phase .....	26
5.3	Operational Phase: Landscape .....	28
5.4	Operational Phase: Visual.....	30
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Mitigation</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Residual Effects and Conclusions</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Green Belt</b> .....	<b>38</b>

---

## Figures

Figure 1	Proposed Development and Landscape Proposals
Figure 2	ZTV (Bare-Earth)
Figure 3	ZTV (DSM)
Figure 4	Site Boundary
Figure 5	National Character Area
Figure 6	Regional Character Types
Figure 7	County / District Character Areas
Figure 8	Viewpoint Locations
Figure 9a(i)	Viewpoint 1 - Existing
Figure 9a(ii)	Viewpoint 1 - Existing
Figure 9b(i)	Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Y0
Figure 9b(ii)	Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Y0
Figure 9c(i)	Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Y10
Figure 9c(ii)	Viewpoint 1 - Proposed Y10
Figure 10	Viewpoint 2 - Existing
Figure 11a	Viewpoint 3 - Existing
Figure 11b	Viewpoint 3 - Proposed Y0
Figure 11c	Viewpoint 3 - Proposed Y10
Figure 12a(i)	Viewpoint 4 - Existing
Figure 12a(ii)	Viewpoint 4 - Existing
Figure 12b(i)	Viewpoint 4 - Proposed Y0
Figure 12b(ii)	Viewpoint 4 - Proposed Y0
Figure 12c(i)	Viewpoint 4 - Proposed Y10
Figure 12c(ii)	Viewpoint 4 - Proposed Y10
Figure 13	Viewpoint 5 - Existing
Figure 14	Viewpoint 6 - Existing
Figure 15a	Viewpoint 7 - Existing
Figure 15b	Viewpoint 7 - Proposed Y0
Figure 15c	Viewpoint 7 - Proposed Y10
Figure 16	Viewpoint 8 - Existing
Figure 17	Viewpoint 9 - Existing
Figure 18	Viewpoint 10 - Existing
Figure 19	Viewpoint 11 - Existing
Figure 20	Viewpoint 12 - Existing
Figure 21	Viewpoint 13 - Existing
Figure 22	Viewpoint 14 - Existing
Figure 23	Viewpoint 15 - Existing
Figure 24	Viewpoint 16 - Existing

## Appendices

Appendix 1	LVIA Methodology
Appendix 2	Visualisation Methodology
Appendix 3	Assessment of Landscape Effects
Appendix 4	Assessment of Visual Effects

---

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) follows best practice guidance set out in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*<sup>1</sup>, hereafter referred to as the GLVIA.

1.1.2 Landscape and visual effects are separate, although closely related and interlinked issues.

1.1.3 Landscape effects are caused by physical changes to the landscape, which may result in changes to the fabric or distinctive character of that landscape and how it is perceived.

1.1.4 Visual effects are caused by changes to what can be seen by people as a result of what is proposed. A visual assessment assesses the change in visual amenity undergone by people (either individually or in groups) that would arise from any change in the nature of views experienced.

1.1.5 In accordance with guidance set out in the GLVIA, the LVIA adopts an approach proportionate to the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The conclusions of the LVIA have been determined via use of professional judgement, set within a structured assessment framework, and supported by reasoned justification.

1.1.6 The LVIA aims to establish the following:

- A clear understanding of the Site and its context, in respect of the physical and perceived landscape and in respect of views and visual amenity;
- An understanding of the Proposed Development in terms of how this would relate to the existing landscape and views;
- An identification of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape and upon views, throughout the life-cycle of the Proposed Development;
- Potential for mitigation to reduce / eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or views arising as a result of the Proposed Development; and

---

<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- 
- A conclusion as to the residual likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.

1.1.7 The process follows a standard approach, namely:

- The establishment of the baseline conditions against which the effects of the Proposed Development will be assessed, through the identification of landscape and visual receptors;
- The determination of the sensitivity of the receptor likely to be affected;
- A judgement on the magnitude of impact likely to occur;
- An assessment of whether a significant landscape and visual effect would likely be experienced by any receptor, by considering the predicted magnitude of impact together with the sensitivity of the receptor, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures.

1.1.8 Further details regarding the specific methodologies of assessment and determination of significance are included in Appendix 1. The LVIA has been informed by both desk- and field-based studies.

1.1.9 It should be noted that the landscape (including the context in which views are experienced) is dynamic, i.e. it is affected by social, economic, technological and climatic changes, all of which can influence patterns of land use, land cover and land management. As such, the baseline context for the LVIA is not static.

## **1.2 Competence**

1.2.1 The LVIA was undertaken by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI) with over eight years' experience in the landscape and visual assessment of major infrastructure projects. The LVIA was directed and reviewed by a second CMLI with over twenty-five years' similar experience.

---

## **2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Proposed Development**

2.1.1 The 'Proposed Development' comprises a 49.99 MW solar farm which would have an operational life of forty years, and would comprise:

- c.150,000 photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and associated support frames and cabling, approximately 3m in height;
- 22 no. inverter & transformer stations, approximately 3m in height;
- 22 no. battery storage containers, approximately 3m in height;
- 1 no. control building, approximately 2.6m in height;
- 1 no. storage building, approximately 2.6m in height;
- 1 no. switchgear building, approximately 3.6m in height;
- Access tracks;
- Security fencing, approximate 2.1m in height;
- 40 no. CCTV security cameras & supports, approximately 4m in height;
- Grid connection cable to Wymondley Substation following the local road network via Graveley Lane, Priory Lane, Stevenage Road, Blakemore End Road, and Sperberry Hill;
- New hedgerows and woodland planting;
- Creation of species rich grassland and pasture; and
- Management of existing hedgerows (including 'gapping up' where required).

### **2.2 Environmental Design and Management**

2.2.1 The landscape proposals that would form part of the Proposed Development are illustrated indicatively on Figure 1, and would be developed in detail prior to commencement of the development.

2.2.2 The Proposed Development has been designed to retain all existing hedgerow and woodland vegetation. A minimum of 6m buffer has been allowed between these features and the solar farm boundary fencing. These buffer areas would be sown with a species-rich wildflower and grass mix that would be managed for biodiversity benefits. The arable land within the boundary fence would be seeded with a low intensity grazing grass mix and hedgerows within the site would be allowed to grow to enhance biodiversity and screening. Additional hedgerows and woodland planting are also proposed to provide further screening, landscape integration and habitat connectivity.

---

2.2.3 The landscape proposals inherent in the design are summarised as follows:

- Grassland within the perimeter/stock fencing suitable for sheep grazing, with a sward comprising a broad selection of grasses, herbs and clover that are productive for livestock, and which provide pollen and nectar for biodiversity benefit;
- Species-rich grassland between field boundaries and perimeter/stock fencing to contribute to enhancing hedgerow buffer zones for improved ecological connectivity;
- Native-species woodland planting approximately 10m wide along the western and northern boundaries of the northern part of the Site, to provide visual screening, landscape integration, and improved ecological connectivity;
- New native-species hedgerows alongside Graveley Lane and the A1(M) for visual screening and ecological connectivity, and for the purpose of landscape integration by restoring boundaries that have likely been lost through historic widening; and
- Gapping up of existing hedgerows around and within the Site which are generally in a poor and declining condition, with fragmentation reducing their function as ecological corridors and potential for visual screening.

2.2.4 During the forty-year operational life of the Proposed Development the Site would be grazed by sheep and/or mown in accordance with a Landscape Management Plan. Hedgerows would be managed to increase their height and width, such that existing and proposed hedgerows would be maintained at a minimum of 3m in height.

2.2.5 Following decommissioning, the Site could easily be returned to arable use, or retained permanently as pasture. The proposed boundary hedgerows and woodland would be retained permanently to provide long-term landscape and biodiversity benefits.



---

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Legislation and Guidance**

3.1.1 Details of the planning and policy background, including an appraisal of effects on relevant landscape-related policies as set out in the adopted Statutory Development Plan, are included in the Planning Statement.

#### ***Planning Policy***

3.1.2 For details of relevant planning policies, refer to the Planning and Design & Access Statement.

### **3.2 Assessment Methodology**

3.2.1 As noted in Section 1, this LVIA has followed a methodology which has been developed using the published good practice guidelines set out in the GLVIA. The detailed methodology followed in undertaking the LVIA is set out in Appendix 1.

3.2.2 The LVIA also follows the Landscape Institute's current guidance regarding the production of visualisations<sup>2</sup>. The methodology followed in the production of visualisation material is set out in Appendix 2.

### **3.3 Study Area**

3.3.1 The purpose of the study area is to identify the area from which there is likelihood for significant landscape or visual effects. Whilst the Proposed Development may be perceived from beyond the study area, the assessment has considered that the combination of distance, intervening landform and vegetation is such that there would not be significant effects.

3.3.2 To inform the extent of the study area, two zones of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the Proposed Development were established.

3.3.3 The first ZTV shown on Figure 2 is a 'bare-earth' ZTV and has been prepared by modelling the visibility of the Proposed Development within a Digital Terrain Model (DTM) that does not include vegetation, buildings or other structures within the landscape; as such, it is considered to represent the maximum potential visibility, but does not represent a realistic visibility envelope.

---

<sup>2</sup> Landscape Institute, 2019. *Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19*

- 
- 3.3.4 The second ZTV on Figure 3 models the visibility of the Proposed Development based on a Digital Surface Model (DSM) which reflects the presence of vegetation, buildings and other structures in the landscape; as such it is considered to be a more realistic representation of where the Proposed Development is likely to be visible from.
- 3.3.5 The methodologies for the two ZTVs are set out in the notes on Figures 2 and 3, along with a summary of the process in Appendix 2.
- 3.3.6 Figure 2 demonstrates that the Proposed Development would potentially be visible from a wide area extending as far as the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to the west. Whilst the Chilterns AONB is approximately 5.3km from the Site at its closest point, and visual effects are widely accepted to decrease with distance, the extent of potential visibility shown is such that the study area for the LVIA has been set to include views from the AONB.
- 3.3.7 Figure 3 demonstrates that from within 2.5km of the Site (where significant effects are more likely to occur due to proximity), visibility would be contained by existing landscape features within the Site and immediate surroundings, and as such visibility of the Proposed Development would be limited.
- 3.3.8 The ZTV indicates that principal visibility of the Site would likely be from Graveley Lane, short-sections of the Hertfordshire Way adjoining the northern boundary of the Site, the A1 (M), and from the settlement edges of Great Wymondley and Graveley. Figure 3 demonstrates intermittent locations further afield with potential visibility of the Site, relating primarily to discrete areas of elevated land to the east, south and south-west.
- 3.3.9 Fieldwork was undertaken in Summer 2021 to review the ZTVs against the actual visibility of the Site and fix the study area for assessment. The fieldwork considered the potential for seasonal variation between summer and winter based on the characteristics of the vegetation present in the landscape.
- 3.3.10 The study area for the LVIA is not uniform in extent such that it represents the true area of potential visibility. The study area is shown on Figure 4 and approximately extends:
- 1.6km east of the Site to include Graveley and the hills to its east;
  - 2.5km south of the Site to include Little Wymondley and hills to its south;

- 
- 4.5km south-west of the Site to include a ridgeline at Poynders End;
  - 9km west of the Site to include the Chilterns AONB; and
  - 0.6km north of the Site towards Roxley Court.

### **3.4 Assessment of Significance / Assessment Criteria**

3.4.1 Not all landscape and visual effects arising as a result of a particular proposal will be significant. Furthermore, where likely significant environmental effects are predicted, this does not automatically mean that such effects are unacceptable. The acceptability of landscape and visual effects is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely effects of any proposal are transparently assessed and described in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision-making process.

3.4.2 In the case of development (such as that proposed) that does not require Environmental Impact Assessment, there is no requirement to state whether an effect is significant or not. However, it is considered likely to be of assistance to the decision-maker if such a statement is included, and therefore this LVIA reports whether an effect is likely to be significant or not, 'in EIA terms'.

3.4.3 The judgement in relation to this LVIA is that a greater than 'moderate' level of effect is more likely to be significant. This is because such an effect would generally result from larger magnitudes of change on higher sensitivity receptors. This does not preclude a 'moderate' effect or lower being significant, or a greater than 'moderate' effect not being significant. The professional judgement made will depend on the specific circumstances being considered. Refer to Appendix 1 for further details.

#### ***Scope of Assessment***

3.4.4 The scope of this LVIA was discussed with North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC). The Council's consultation response identified the need to consider additional viewpoint locations, which are discussed in Appendix 2.

### **3.5 Limitations**

3.5.1 Assessment work reflects the level of vegetation cover present at the time of the field visits to the Study Area (July and September 2021), with deciduous foliage in

---

leaf. Where relevant to its conclusions, the LVIA makes assumptions as to the likely visibility of the Proposed Development in winter when vegetation is not in leaf.

---

## **4.0 BASELINE CONDITIONS**

### **4.1 Data Collection**

4.1.1 Baseline data for the LVIA has been gathered by both desk- and field-based surveys. These have included a review of extant landscape character assessment studies (see below) and field visits to gain an understanding of the landscape and visual context of the Site.

### **4.2 The Site and its Surroundings**

4.2.1 The Site of the Proposed Development is shown on Figure 4 and comprises approximately 85ha of arable farmland east of Great Wymondley. The Site is split by Graveley Lane, with a 45ha parcel to the north of Graveley Lane, and a 40ha parcel to the south of Graveley Lane. Both parts of the Site are accessed from Graveley Lane and are similar in character comprising arable fields bounded and divided by hedgerows or fencelines.

4.2.2 The northern part of the Site (north of Graveley Lane) is located to the north-east of Great Wymondley. The boundary of this part of the Site is formed by Graveley Lane to the south, with the Site access approximately 0.5km east of Great Wymondley. The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by intermittent hedgerows and woodland that separate the Site from the Hertfordshire Way long distance trail. The western boundary is formed by an arable field, an existing woodland block, and an existing hedgerow / tree belt between the woodland block and Graveley Lane.

4.2.3 The southern part of the Site (south of Graveley Lane) is located to the east and south-east of Great Wymondley. The boundary of this part of the Site is formed by Graveley Lane to the north, with the Site access approximately 0.7km east of Great Wymondley. The eastern boundary is formed by the A1(M). The southern and western boundaries are formed by existing intact hedgerows with intermittent hedgerow trees.

4.2.4 The Site is located across undulating land on broad west-facing slopes at the upper part of the River Purwell valley catchment, which springs to the south of the study area.

4.2.5 The most elevated part of the Site lies centrally along its eastern boundary, being approximately 115m above ordnance datum (AOD) close to the A1(M) bridge over

- 
- Graveley Lane. North and south of this point, the landform falls gradually to approximately 105m AOD in the north-east corner of the Site, and 100m AOD in the south-east corner of the Site.
- 4.2.6 The lowest part of the Site is at approximately 88m AOD along Graveley Lane, roughly central to the western boundary of the Site. North and south of this point the landform gently rises to approximately 95m AOD in the north-west corner of the Site, and 95m AOD in the south-west corner of the Site.
- 4.2.7 With reference to Figure 4, east of the Site the land gently falls from the A1(M) towards Graveley before rising sharply up the chalk hills north of Stevenage. North and south of the Site the landscape is undulating with low points at Willian to the north and Little Wymondley to the south. West of the Site the landscape falls towards Great Wymondley and continues to fall towards the eastern edge of Hitchin and the River Purwell.
- 4.2.8 The west and south-west of the study area is strongly undulating towards the foothills of a chalk escarpment on a north-west to south-east axis, forming part of the broader dip-slope to the Chilterns escarpment to west / north-west. Part of this chalk escarpment to the west of Hitchin falls within the Chilterns AONB.
- 4.2.9 The landscape around the Site comprises hedgerows, woodland shelterbelts, and blocks of woodland such that whilst it is not an extensively wooded landscape, the combination of vegetation cover and undulating landform does provide an intermittent sense of enclosure. This enclosure is most notable along roads and public rights of way, which aside from the A1(M) are generally characterised by mature vegetated boundaries.
- 4.2.10 The Site lies entirely within North Hertfordshire District between the towns of Stevenage to the south-east, Hitchin to the west, and Letchworth to the north. More locally, the Site lies between the villages of Great Wymondley to its west, Little Wymondley to its south-west, and Graveley to its east. The Site is separated from Great Wymondley and Little Wymondley by fields, and from Graveley by the A1(M) and a narrow arable field. As such, the Site does not adjoin any residential areas. The closest residential receptors to the Site are at Graveley (separated by the A1(M)), and at Wymondley Priory (separated by arable fields and associated field boundaries).

- 
- 4.2.11 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) across the Site, the closest being the Hertfordshire Way which is located along the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site. The bridleway that follows the north-eastern Site boundary (Wymondley 001) forms part of National Cycle Network (NCN) 12. Whilst marked on OS mapping, the section of the Hertfordshire Way linking the bridleway (Wymondley 001) to Willian Road is not recorded on the online version of Hertfordshire's definitive map as a PRoW.
- 4.2.12 The landscape around the Site is heavily influenced by the A1(M) which is a visual and audible detractor in the area as a result of traffic and highway infrastructure such as gantries. The East Coast Main Line railway also passes approximately 0.5km south-west of the Site.

#### ***Landscape Designations***

- 4.2.13 The Chilterns AONB is located within the west of the study area, approximately 5.3km west of the Site at its closest point. There are no further statutory landscape designations within the Study Area.
- 4.2.14 North Hertfordshire District Council does not currently maintain any non-statutory local level landscape designations.

#### ***Other Designations***

- 4.2.15 A brief summary of landscape and visual impacts relating to openness of the Green Belt is provided at Section 8 of this LVIA.
- 4.2.16 An assessment of the Proposed Development in relation to Green Belt policy is provided in the Planning Statement.

### **4.3 Landscape Character Assessment and Other Studies**

#### ***National Character Areas***

- 4.3.1 159 National Character Areas (NCA) have been identified across England by Natural England. Their broad geographic reach means that the key characteristics identified as typical of a particular character area may not necessarily apply to a specific location within that character area.

4.3.2 The Site is located within *NCA 87: East Anglian Chalk*<sup>3</sup>, as shown on Figure 5. NCA 87 is characterised by its narrow continuation of the chalk ridge that runs south-west to north-east across southern England. It is described as comprising ‘*a visually simple and uninterrupted landscape of smooth, rolling chalkland hills with large regular fields enclosed by low hawthorn hedges, with few trees and expansive views to the north*’.

### **Regional Landscape Character**

4.3.3 The *East of England Landscape Framework*<sup>4</sup> comprises a range of information sources aimed at aiding the planning and management of landscape, both urban and rural, in the East of England region. It includes a consistent, integrated landscape typology, which forms a structured, spatial framework for describing and evaluating the countryside.

4.3.4 The Site is located within Regional Landscape Character Type (RLCT) 13: Lowland Village Farmlands, as shown on Figure 6. RLCT 13 is described as a ‘*well settled, low lying landscape which is often crossed by major river corridors. The high density of settlement, intensive agriculture and major transport infrastructure mean that this is often a busy, rural landscape*’.

4.3.5 Key characteristics are not defined for each landscape type. However, a series of objectives<sup>5</sup> have been identified for each. Objectives for RLCT 13 which are relevant to the Site and Proposed Development are set out in the Table below.

**Table 5.1 Regional Character Types: Key Objectives**

<b>Regional Character Type</b>	<b>Key Objective</b>
RLCT 13: Lowland Village Farmlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage and enhance the agricultural landscape and address loss of biodiversity from agricultural intensification and the impact of ‘horseculture’               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ restore gappy hedges and reinstate lost hedgerows adding new features using indigenous species mixes and increased number of hedgerow trees of appropriate locally native species</li> <li>○ reinstate species rich grassland where feasible and locally in character</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Natural England. 2014. *National Character Area profile: 87 East Anglian Chalk*. Available at <<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-the-east-of-england>> [accessed 14 Sept 2021]

<sup>4</sup> Landscape East, undated. *Landscape East [online]*. <<http://landscape-east.org.uk/>> [accessed 14 Sept 2021]

<sup>5</sup> Landscape East, 2010. *Integrated Landscape Character Objectives*



Regional Character Type	Key Objective
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ manage existing woodlands using traditional methods (e.g. coppicing), extend existing woodlands, create new woodlands and create linkages with ancient woodland sites and smaller woodland blocks in the valleys but without creating too much visual enclosure in the landscape</li> </ul>

### **County Character**

- 4.3.6 At a county level, Hertfordshire County Council published the *Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment*<sup>6</sup> in 2003-04 in partnership with the District Councils, including North Hertfordshire District Council.
- 4.3.7 The *Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment* subdivided the county into a series of landscape character areas (LCAs), as shown on Figure 7. The Site is located within the Arlesey / Great Wymondley LCA, which is considered further in relation to the District Character below.

### **District Character**

- 4.3.8 In 2011, North Hertfordshire District Council published the *North Herts Landscape Study*<sup>7</sup> as part of their Local Development Framework.
- 4.3.9 The North Herts Landscape Study is based on the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment work completed in 2003-04, and subsequent sensitivity and capacity work carried out in 2011. The original LCA locations, assessments, and evaluations remain the same as the county-level study. The North Herts Landscape Study only adds sensitivity and capacity to the evaluation and additional guidelines on built development guidelines to supplement the landscape management guidelines. As such, the District Assessment is referred to as part of this LVIA, rather than the County Assessment.
- 4.3.10 As per the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, in the North Herts Landscape Study the Site is within the Arlesey / Great Wymondley LCA.

<sup>6</sup> Hertfordshire County Council, 2004. *Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment* [online] <<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape/landscape-character-assessment.aspx>> [accessed 14 Sept 2021]

<sup>7</sup> North Hertfordshire District Council, 2011. *North Herts Landscape Study*. [online] <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ID14%20-%20North%20Herts%20Landscape%20Study%202011%20-%20Part%201.pdf> [accessed 14 Sept 2021].

---

4.3.11 With reference to Figure 7, the key characteristics of the Arlesey / Great Wymondley LCA are:

- Large flat expansive arable landscape in the north;
- Rolling arable landscape of large-scale fields and with relatively few trees in the south; and
- Core defined by the urban development of Letchworth and Hitchin.

4.3.12 In relation to the visual and sensory perception of the LCA, the study notes that it comprises a *'Large scale open landscape which provides views to the often poorly screened urban fringes of Letchworth, Hitchin and the A1(M)'*.

4.3.13 In relation to the rarity and distinctiveness of the LCA, the study notes that the LCA is not rare and is exhibiting typical pressures associated with urban fringe use.

4.3.14 In relation to visual impact, the study notes that the *'Urban fringe is prominent in numerous locations as is the impact of the A1(M). Other road and rail corridors are dominant features in the landscape.'*

4.3.15 The study identifies landscape character sensitivities for the LCA, with relevant guidelines for managing change including:

- *'The character area is largely rural but is influenced by the pressures of urban areas and significant infrastructure systems. The core of the area is defined by the extents of Hitchin and Letchworth and would be vulnerable to development pressure. However the area should be retained as a green wedge between the two towns. [Note: the Site is not within this 'green wedge']*.
- *There is a gradual change in landform and character from historic enclosed rolling arable landscape of the south to flat expansive arable fields in the north, creating a fragmented landscape character. The south of the character area would be vulnerable to loss of its historic character.*
- *The character area has large arable fields with geometric regular patterns. The majority of boundary hedgerows to the north have been removed. The character area would be vulnerable to further removal of any existing field boundaries.*
- *The southern area is characterised by the limited woodland of the character area. Generally in the form of small copses associated with isolated settlements. The woodland is vulnerable to lack of management or removal.*

- 
- *The southern area is also characterised by winding lanes with tall hedgerows and some hedge banks, particularly adjacent to the historic settlement of Great Wymondley. The area would be vulnerable to improvements or upgrading of the minor roads or any removal of the hedgerows.*
  - *Electricity pylons stride through the character area in the south and ... are existing detractors to the character of the area.*
  - *The transport infrastructure is also a detractor. The A1 borders the character area to the east and the area is crossed by a number of further busy roads. The railway also cuts through the character area. The area is vulnerable to further degradation from the removal of any existing screening.'*
- 4.3.16 Overall, the Study identifies the Arlesey – Great Wymondley LCA as being of low landscape sensitivity as a result of significant urban influence and numerous detractors.
- 4.3.17 The study goes on to identify visual sensitivities for the LCA, the following of which are relevant to this LVIA and the Proposed Development:
- *'Views of the countryside from the settlements are an important feature;*
  - *The small woodland copses and hedgerows to the south maintain the more enclosed historic character of the area;*
  - *Expansive views from higher ground create a sense of space and openness. However the views are not always high quality; and*
  - *Existing urban edges are often raw, with scope for mitigation through screening with treebelts.'*
- 4.3.18 Overall, the Arlesey – Great Wymondley LCA is identified as being of low to moderate visual sensitivity, as views *'are relatively open and would be sensitive to the introduction of further urbanising features or elements, which detract from the character.'*
- 4.3.19 The North Herts Landscape Study identifies that the LCA is of overall low landscape value as a result of adverse aspects including the large number of roads and transport routes and the presence of significant settlement to the fringes.
- 4.3.20 The study evaluates the capacity for the LCA to accommodate different types and scales of development. Whilst solar development is not a form of development evaluated, the LCA is identified as having between a low to moderate capacity for 'other types of development'.

---

4.3.21 The overall strategy for the LCA is to ‘*conserve and restore*’, with relevant guidelines for managing change including:

- *“Promote the creation of buffer zones between intensive arable production and areas of semi-natural habitat and the creation of links between habitat areas;*
- *Promote hedgerow restoration along the lines of historic field boundaries and for the creation of visual links between existing woodland areas;*
- *Promote the use of traditional field hedges in place of post and wire enclosures to new grazing areas;*
- *Promote the diversity of hedgerow species and the planting of standard hedgerow trees;*
- *In the south encourage the development of species-rich calcareous grassland habitats;*
- *Encourage small blocks of woodland planting along the A1(M) corridor and especially around Junction 9;*
- *Conserve the traditional character of Great Wymondley and Graveley villages, ensuring that any new development located on the edge of the village uses appropriate vernacular materials and features to avoid inappropriate visual intrusion;*
- *Encourage the retention of vegetation along infrastructure routes to ensure that it remains screened;*
- *Encourage the planting of appropriate broadleaved woodland and vegetation to screen any new development that could intrude in panoramic rural views;*
- *Avoid the location of new development in visual intrusive locations;*
- *Ensure that new development does not necessitate the removal of existing woodland blocks or hedgerows; and*
- *Ensure that where appropriate, new development provides mitigation for itself and where possible existing intrusive features in the vicinity.”*

### **Summary**

4.3.22 The landscape character of the study area has been classified at national, regional, county and district levels. Across all scales of landscape classification, the landscape is identified as a large-scale, open, arable landscape with prominent urban fringes to towns, and with major transport infrastructure and pylons creating an impression of a busy, rural landscape.

---

4.3.23 Sensitivities to development include protecting the green wedge between Hitchin and Letchworth, avoiding the loss of field boundaries and removal of hedgerows, and avoiding the loss of historic character. The landscape is identified as having expansive views from areas of high ground, but that due to detracting features these views are not always of a high quality.

#### ***Future Landscape Change***

4.3.24 In the absence of the Proposed Development, it is considered that the Site would continue in its current state, i.e. in intensive arable use.

#### **4.4 Visual Baseline**

4.4.1 To understand the visual context of the Site, desk-based study and fieldwork has been carried out across the study area between July 2021 and September 2021.

4.4.2 As set out in paragraphs 3.3.2 to 3.3.8, ZTVs of the Proposed Development were prepared as part of the determination of the LVIA study area.

4.4.3 In summary, the ZTVs indicate that there would be generally limited visibility of the Proposed Development as a result of existing landscape features around the Site, and the influence of landform; however, there would be potential intermittent views from as far as the Chilterns AONB to the west.

4.4.4 The principal visibility of the Site would be from Graveley Lane, short-sections of the Hertfordshire Way adjoining the Site, the A1 (M), and from the settlement edges of Great Wymondley and Graveley.

4.4.5 Fieldwork was undertaken to verify the visibility of the Site considering the influence of features not captured in the ZTV, such as vegetation, buildings, structures, localised changes in landform, and the effect of distance. The purpose of the fieldwork was to identify viewpoints to be taken forward for the visual assessment.

4.4.6 Viewpoints have been identified to represent the range of views experienced by visual receptors from various distances and directions around the Site.

4.4.7 A total of 16 viewpoints have been identified within the study area. These viewpoints have been discussed with NHDC as the local planning authority, as set out in Section 3 of Appendix 2.

4.4.8 Viewpoints can fall into three categories, as set out in the GLVIA:

- 
- Representative viewpoints (which represent the experience of different types of receptors in the vicinity);
  - Specific viewpoints (a particular view, for example a well-known beauty spot);
  - Illustrative viewpoints (which illustrate a particular effect / issue, which may include limited / lack of visibility).

4.4.9 The locations of viewpoints are shown on Figure 8.

4.4.10 Baseline photography has been captured from each of the viewpoints and is presented on Figures 9 to 24, which are annotated where appropriate to highlight key features

4.4.11 The following section provides a summary of the visual amenity of the study area, and views towards the Site, with reference to the 16 viewpoints (VPs).

4.4.12 It should be noted that the viewpoint itself is not the receptor; rather the receptor is the people that would be experiencing the view from the viewpoint. Receptors in the vicinity of the Site that are likely to experience views of the development include:

- Residents in nearby properties;
- Users of public rights of way and other routes / land with public access; and
- Road users.

4.4.13 The full narrative on the visual context and judgements on visual value, susceptibility and the sensitivity of visual receptors are set out in Appendix 4.

***Close views from the Hertfordshire Way – VP 1 to VP 3***

4.4.14 The Hertfordshire Way passes around the northern site boundary, between Graveley Lane in the east and Willian Road in the west. From along this part of the Hertfordshire Way, views transition between VP 1 and VP 2 where gaps in vegetation allow intermittent more open views into the Site, through to a section of footpath between VP2 and VP3 which passes through woodland such that vegetation between the footpath and the Site prevents views. Views open up around VP 3 before the route drops in elevation towards Willian Road, which is well enclosed by vegetation with no views towards the Site.

4.4.15 VP 1 on Figure 9a demonstrates that views west from the Hertfordshire Way along the eastern boundary are across the northern part of the Site in the foreground,

---

with the landscape falling towards Great Wymondley and Hitchin, and with the rolling wooded hills of the Chilterns forming the backdrop to the view in the distance. Great Wymondley is nestled in the valley amongst trees and woodland such that the settlement is not readily visible. Settlement at Hitchin is more visible across the mid ground of the view. High voltage pylons are notable as a linear feature across the view.

- 4.4.16 VP 2 on Figure 10 demonstrates that views south from the Hertfordshire Way are principally of the northern part of the Site, which forms the foreground and middle ground of the view. There are partial views of the rolling wooded hills of the Chilterns in the distant background of the view. High voltage pylons are notable as a linear feature across the view.
- 4.4.17 VP 3 on Figure 11a demonstrates that views east from the Hertfordshire Way at the north-west boundary of the Site are across gently rising large-scale arable fields with intermittent scattered trees and sections of hedgerow. Blocks of woodland frame views of the Site. The A1(M) sits along a ridgeline in the background of the view, with a wooded skyline beyond. High voltage pylons are notable as a linear feature across the background of the view.

#### ***Views from Graveley Lane – VP 4 to VP 5***

- 4.4.18 Graveley Lane passes between the northern and southern parts of the Site, such that there are close views from the road into the Site. Graveley Lane is a relatively narrow country lane, which is slightly sunken in relation to the adjacent fields, and lined intermittently by tall hedgerows. The change in visibility of the Site from along Graveley Lane is illustrated by VP 4 and VP 5.
- 4.4.19 VP 4 on Figure 12a is from a gap in the hedgerow on the north side of the road close to Great Wymondley, where views east are focused along the road, with limited views into the arable field to the north, and more open views across the fields to the south.
- 4.4.20 VP 5 on Figure 13 is from the Site access, located centrally between Great Wymondley and the A1(M). This is a short section of the road not lined by hedgerows on either side, such that there are more open views into the adjoining fields. There are direct views into the northern part of the Site, but the southern part of the Site is beyond an existing hedgerow which provides a degree of screening.

- 
- 4.4.21 As Graveley Lane approach the A1(M) it transitions into cutting such that there are no views into the north or south of the Site.

***Views from Great Wymondley – VP 6 to VP 7***

- 4.4.22 Great Wymondley is located at a lower elevation than the Site, and is predominantly enclosed by tree cover such that there are very infrequent and limited views out. Where views are available these are from south-east of the church.
- 4.4.23 VP 6 on Figure 14 is from the location of the former Wymondley Castle to the east of St Mary's Church and demonstrates that the extent of tree cover within and around Great Wymondley is such that there are very limited views towards the Site.
- 4.4.24 VP 7 on Figure 15a is from a public footpath south of Great Wymondley, and part of the Hertfordshire Way. Along the same public footpath, between the location of VP 7 and St Mary's Church to the north, the Site is largely screened by intervening vegetation, with intermittent glimpsed views. VP 7 is judged to be the most open view towards the Site from this area, and demonstrates the view comprises gently undulating large-scale arable fields, interspersed with intermittent hedgerows and scattered trees. The landform rises towards the east to a wooded ridgeline which forms the skyline, with the A1(M) partially visible along this ridgeline. The Site is partially visible, with the part of the Site north of Graveley Lane visible in the background; and the part of the Site to the south of Graveley Lane predominantly screened by vegetation around Wymondley Priory, apart from a narrow, glimpsed view into the Site.

***Views from Little Wymondley – VP 8***

- 4.4.25 Little Wymondley is south-west of the Site and predominantly located to the south of a railway line. The railway line and the extent of vegetation along the railway and around the village fringe screen most views out towards the east. The village therefore has an enclosed character.
- 4.4.26 VP 8 from Figure 16 demonstrates that from Stevenage Road to the east of Little Wymondley and outside the main area of settlement, views are of the adjoining arable field, with intermittent trees and blocks of woodland. The rising landform to the north curtails any longer-distance views towards the Site.

***Views from north of the Site – VP 9***



---

4.4.27 From the landscape north of the Site, public rights of way through the area are along field margins, with fields lined by mature hedgerows such that views tend to be only across the adjoining field. The extent of tree cover around the northern Site boundary restricts views into the Site from the north.

4.4.28 VP 9 on Figure 17 demonstrates that views south from this bridleway are across an arable field in the foreground, with hedgerows and woodland limiting long-distance views. High voltage pylons are intermittently visible in the distance. The background of the view includes a distant wooded skyline to the south. There are glimpsed views of the north-east corner of the Site through gaps in the vegetation.

***Views from the A1(M) – no viewpoint***

4.4.29 Views from the A1(M) are transient due to the speed of the receptor past the Site, the short section of the A1(M) from which views of the Site would be available, and the close proximity of the Site relative to the A1(M). As the A1(M) passes the Site there are intermittent glimpsed views to the west where there are gaps in the verge vegetation. Views are somewhat open in character, but not distinctive in the context of the wider views available from along the route.

***Views from Graveley – VP 10***

4.4.30 Graveley is located east of the A1(M), in a lower-lying position relative to the A1(M) and the Site to its west. There are only views available towards the Site from the western edge of the village.

4.4.31 VP 10 on Figure 18 demonstrates that views west from the footpath are across a rising arable field in the foreground towards the A1(M) which sits along a low ridgeline between Graveley and the Site, with traffic and highway infrastructure seen along the A1(M). There are trees intermittently visible alongside the A1(M) but it is otherwise open onto fields. High voltage pylons are visible along part of the skyline to the south. The Site is located on the opposite (west) side of the A1(M) and is therefore screened by the intervening landform.

***Views from the east – VP 11 and VP 12***

4.4.32 From east of the Site, the landform rises north and east of Graveley such that there are more open and far-reaching views towards the west. VP 11 and VP 12 present a closer and more distant view from the Site to demonstrate the change in visibility.

- 
- 4.4.33 VP 11 on Figure 19 demonstrates that from closer to the Site, views west are across an arable field in the foreground towards the A1(M) which has an open boundary such that that traffic and other highway infrastructure is notable in the view. The Chilterns are visible in the distant background, beyond the A1(M). There are high voltage pylons and a telecommunications mast across the skyline of the view. The Site is located on the opposite (west) side of the A1(M) and the ground level of the Site is screened by intervening landform and vegetation.
- 4.4.34 VP 12 on Figure 20 demonstrates that from more elevated positions to the east, views west are far-reaching and have an open aspect. The view is across large-scale open arable fields, with the broad valley to the west appearing extensively wooded, with high voltage pylons across the view. Part of the Chilterns hills form the backdrop of the view across the skyline. Stevenage is notable in the view to the south, with the Lister Hospital a prominent building. The Site is not visible in the view as a result of the extensive intervening vegetation

***Views from the south – VP 13 and VP 14***

- 4.4.35 From south of the Site, the landscape is undulating such that from elevated positions there are occasional open views towards the Site; however, views from this part of the landscape are generally contained by landform and vegetation.
- 4.4.36 VP 13 on Figure 21 demonstrates that from south of Titmore Green views are across an undulating landscape principally in arable use, and with hedgerows, woodland and intermittent trees limiting any long-distance views. High voltage pylons are a prominent feature across the middle ground and background of the view, being the dominant feature of the skyline. The Site is not readily distinguishable as a result of distance, the angle of view, and intervening vegetation and landform.
- 4.4.37 VP 13 on Figure 22 demonstrates that where the landscape rises more steeply at the chalk escarpment 4.5km south-west of the Site, there are locations with panoramic views across the landscape including to the north in the direction of the Site. Views are of an undulating arable landscape interspersed with belts of trees and vegetation. Settlement is evident across the view, with the towns of Stevenage and Hitchin visible. There are high-voltage pylons across the middle ground of the view which often break the skyline, and a wind farm in the distance to the north on the horizon. The Site is partially visible between the middle ground and background of the view.

---

### ***Views from the west – VP 15***

- 4.4.38 From the landscape west of the Site there is very limited or no visibility of the Site as a result of intervening landform and vegetation. VP 15 is from a local road north of St Ippolyts, between the Site and Hitchin.
- 4.4.39 VP 15 on Figure 23 demonstrates that views are of an undulating landscape, with the A602 prominent in the middle ground of the view, and high voltage pylons prominent across the skyline of the view. The view is fairly well-wooded with tree belts and woodland across the view integrating the settlement and infrastructure in the view. The Site is partially visible in the background of the view, identifiable in front of the A1(M) which is distinctive due to the visibility of traffic along the road.

### ***Views from the Chilterns AONB – VP 16***

- 4.4.40 The west of the study area covers the eastern edge of the Chilterns AONB. The ZTV on Figure 2 indicates that in a bare-earth scenario there is potential visibility from across a large extent of the ZTV. Fieldwork identified that from much of this area the landscape is characterised by mature tree belts and hedgerows alongside public footpaths and roads, such that there are very limited views towards the Site. VP 16 is taken from Deacon Hill, a popular local hill which is open access land and somewhere visited by receptors specifically to experience the view. This was found to be one of the few locations in this part of the AONB where there are open and uninterrupted views towards the Site.
- 4.4.41 VP 16 on Figure 24 demonstrates that views are far-reaching and panoramic from the chalk scarp in the Chilterns AONB, with the aspect of views generally across the flat lower-lying landscape to the north as opposed to the direction of the Site in the east. Views east are of a rolling wooded arable landscape, with settlement at Hitchin and Stevenage visible across the background of the view. The Site is not easily distinguishable from this distance, but is partially visible beyond Hitchin within a part of the view characterised by settlement.

### ***Summary***

- 4.4.42 The fieldwork and viewpoint photography undertaken demonstrates the accuracy of the ZTV presented on Figure 3, with visibility of the Site found to be highly localised to the Site boundary, and then from intermittent locations within the wider landscape.

4.4.43 The viewpoints set out above and included in the LVIA are set out in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 Viewpoint Locations**

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>British National Grid Co-ordinates</b>	<b>Viewpoint Details</b>
1: View west from the Hertfordshire Way, along the eastern Site boundary	522844, 228465	<i>Representative</i> of views available to users of the Hertfordshire Way at the eastern boundary of the Site ,and to road users along the A1(M)
2: View south from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary	522628, 228916	<i>Representative</i> of views south available to users of the Hertfordshire Way at the northern boundary of the Site
3: View east from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary	521660, 229083	<i>Representative</i> of views east available to users of the Hertfordshire Way at the northern boundary of the Site
4: View east from Graveley Lane	521812, 228447	<i>Representative</i> of views for road users
5: View east from Graveley Lane	522190, 228558	<i>Representative</i> of views for road users
6: View east from Great Wymondley	521529, 228475	<i>Illustrative</i> of the views available from within Great Wymondley
7: View east from the Hertfordshire Way, south of Great Wymondley	521527, 228124	<i>Representative</i> of views for users of the Hertfordshire Way
8: View north from Stevenage Road	522082, 227173	<i>Representative of views for road users, and views from Little Wymondley to the west</i>
9: View south from PRow Letchworth Garden City 002	522649, 229512	<i>Representative</i> of views for users of public rights of way north of the Site
10: View west from Graveley	522936, 227986	Representative of views available to residents of Graveley
11: View west from Jacks Hill, north of Graveley	523199, 228623	<i>Representative</i> of views for road users
12: View west from PRow Graveley 008, part of the Hertfordshire Way	524193, 227533	<i>Representative</i> of views from public rights of way east of the Site, and users of the Hertfordshire Way
13: View north from PRow Wymondley 022	521607, 225624	<i>Representative</i> of views from public rights of way south of Little Wymondley
14: View north-east from PRow Langley 001, part of the Chiltern Way	519217, 224817	<i>Specific</i> view experienced by users of the Chiltern Way close to Poynders End
15: View east from	519636, 227621	<i>Representative</i> of views available

---

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>British National Grid Co-ordinates</b>	<b>Viewpoint Details</b>
Hitchin Lane, north of St Ippolyts		from west of the Site
16: View east from Deacon Hill in the Chilterns AONB	512682, 229799	<i>Representative</i> of views experienced by recreational visitors to the Chilterns AONB

---

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS**

### **5.1 Embedded Mitigation**

5.1.1 A series of measures have been incorporated into both the design of the Proposed Development and the drawing up of the construction and operational procedures, which are intended to provide embedded mitigation against potentially adverse landscape and visual effects and other environmental effects. These measures include:

- The landscape proposals set out in Section 2.2 and shown on Figure 1;
- The development of an ‘on demand’ external security and maintenance lighting system in accordance with best practice measures, which would minimise the generation of obtrusive light/ light spillage when in use; and
- The implementation of a project-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which would govern construction activities, and would include measures to protect existing vegetation and control construction lighting.

5.1.2 The landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development (as assessed below) therefore relate to a project that has benefited from mitigation by design.

### **5.2 Construction Phase**

#### ***Overview***

5.2.1 Construction would be managed in accordance with a CEMP, setting out how environmental issues would be managed in compliance with any limitations imposed by the planning permission, as well as in compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and best practice guidance.

5.2.2 Items to be addressed by the CEMP that pertain to landscape and visual effects are likely to include:

- Measures for ensuring the successful retention of existing vegetation (for example, use of protective fencing);
- Measures taken to limit the effects of temporary construction lighting;
- Approximate protocols governing the establishment of the temporary contractor’s compound(s), to reduce any potential adverse effects upon the amenity of the surrounding area).

- 
- 5.2.3 Construction would, by necessity, require the use of specialist vehicles and other plant, some of which would be readily apparent by virtue of their colour, size or movement. In particular, cranes used to install the Inverter-Transformer stations would be particularly visible due to their height. However, these would only be on Site for a small number of days.
- 5.2.4 The timing and phasing of the different elements of construction are not known in detail. However, the assessment assumes the Proposed Development would take approximately thirty-six weeks to build and commission. Different activities would take place at different times during this period and, as such, construction effects would vary over time and would not occur on a consistent basis throughout the construction stage, but rather are likely to vary in intensity with specific effects of shorter duration occurring.
- 5.2.5 Temporary lighting may be required to ensure the health, safety and welfare of those on Site during poor light conditions, and in particular at the beginning and end of the working day in winter. This would require mobile task lighting. Some use of low-level lighting of compounds for security purposes may be required through the night. Potential for adverse effects upon amenity arising from such lighting would, as stated above, be addressed by the CEMP.

### ***Construction Effects***

- 5.2.6 Temporary construction compounds would be required within the Site. There would be some loss of arable farmland to accommodate the compounds, but this would be reinstated post-construction and would subsequently be grazed.
- 5.2.7 Construction activities would be temporary and localised and would take place in the context of existing periodic movements of large farm vehicles in the local landscape. Construction activities would be temporary and intermittent in nature, having only a limited influence upon the character of the wider landscape outside the Site and upon views beyond the site boundary. The increased presence/movement of staff, plant and machinery would have obvious effects on views for users of sections of Graveley Lane and sections of the Hertfordshire Way along the northern boundary of the Site. These would represent a significant although localised and temporary change to the existing views during the thirty-six week construction period. The CEMP would include provisions for public communication to inform local people and footpath/cycle route users about construction activities at the site.

---

5.2.8 Night-time construction effects resulting from lighting would be limited and would not be significant. Lighting would generally not be present outside of normal working hours, other than low-level security lighting triggered by motion sensors, and the CEMP would include measures to minimise any effects on amenity.

### **5.3 Operational Phase: Landscape**

#### ***Landscape Fabric***

5.3.1 The fabric of the Site chiefly comprises large-scale intensively farmed arable fields bounded and subdivided by hedgerows which are occasionally gappy and in poor or declining condition, with scattered trees in field boundaries.

5.3.2 The farmland and hedgerows are easy to recreate if necessary (although the loss of hedgerows should always be avoided if possible). As such, their susceptibility to change is low to medium. These are relatively functional elements which are not rare and, considering the poor or declining condition of some of the hedgerows, are judged to be of low value.

5.3.3 The scattered and intermittent trees within hedgerows have a medium to high susceptibility to change as they cannot be recreated on a like-for-like basis in the short term, requiring time for replacement planting to mature. The value of these features is low to medium as their presence within the Site does not notably contribute to any sense of enclosure, or visual screening. The overall sensitivity of the landscape fabric is judged to be low to medium.

5.3.4 The Proposed Development would introduce new solar panels and associated infrastructure, thereby removing the Site from arable use. Existing trees and hedgerows within the Site and around the Site boundary would be protected and retained by ensuring a 6m buffer on either side. Gaps in existing hedgerows would be planted up, and existing hedgerows would be maintained to a minimum height of approximately 3m, and would be cut less regularly to enhance biodiversity value. New hedgerow and woodland planting within the Site and around the Site boundary would strengthen the landscape framework around the Site by restoring and reinforcing historic boundary features.

5.3.5 During the operational life of the Proposed Development, grazing by sheep would be introduced in combination with mowing/strimming. This would maintain the agricultural usage of the Site, albeit the pasture grassland would be relatively static



---

compared to constantly changing landscape fabric associated with arable crop rotation.

- 5.3.6 As all existing tree and hedgerow vegetation would be retained, there would be no effect on these elements of the landscape fabric.
- 5.3.7 A minor effect on the farmland within the Site would occur, associated with the change from arable use to pasture or mowing activities. This change would be reversible following decommissioning, and the land could be returned to arable use. As such, the effects on the underlying landscape fabric would not be significant.
- 5.3.8 The introduction of new woodland and lengths of hedgerow and the changes to the management of existing hedgerows would have a beneficial effect in respect of the long-term landscape fabric of the area and would be retained following decommissioning. The new species-rich grassland seeding would also have a beneficial effect during the operational life of the solar farm.
- 5.3.9 The landscape proposals would accord with the stated landscape objectives for the Lowland Village Farmlands regional character type and the Arlesey / Great Wymondley local landscape character area, supporting the strategy to conserve and restore the landscape fabric.

#### ***Landscape Character***

- 5.3.10 A detailed assessment of effects upon landscape character is set out in Appendix 3 based on the Arlesey / Great Wymondley local landscape character area. The conclusions regarding effects on landscape character are summarised below.
- 5.3.11 The introduction of the Proposed Development would increase the influence of built development in the vicinity of the Site, which would have a degrading influence in the short-term at a localised level. In the medium- and long-term the proposed mitigation planting around the Site would provide a greater level of landscape integration and improve the condition of declining features such as hedgerows.
- 5.3.12 In relation to the specific sensitivities identified for the local landscape character, the Proposed Development would not affect the green wedge between Hitchin and Letchworth as a result of its positioning away to the south-east, and neither would it result in the loss of field boundaries or hedgerows, or loss of historic character through a change in landscape pattern.

---

5.3.13 The overall effect on the landscape character area is judged to be moderate to minor adverse in both the short-term and long-term, considering the medium to low sensitivity of the landscape character, and the medium magnitude of change. Moderate to major landscape character effects would be limited to the fields occupied by the Proposed Development due to the change of land use and introduction of solar panels and associated infrastructure. In the long-term the proposed planting would have some beneficial change to the landscape, which would reduce the overall impact of the Proposed Development, but not reduce the overall classification of effect.

#### **5.4 Operational Phase: Visual**

5.4.1 A detailed assessment of visual effects from each Viewpoint is set out in Appendix 4. The results of the visual assessment are summarised below.

5.4.2 Short-term major to moderate adverse visual effects would occur for:

- Close views from the Hertfordshire Way
  - *VP 1 – View west from the Hertfordshire Way, along the eastern Site boundary;*
  - *VP 2 – View south from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary;*
  - *VP 3 – View east from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary;*
- Views from Graveley Lane
  - *VP 5 – View east from Graveley Lane.*

5.4.3 These four viewpoints are located adjacent to the Site boundary with clear and largely uninterrupted views into the Site where there would be close and direct views of the Proposed Development in the short-term. In the long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would be effective in reducing the visual impact at each of these locations, and the visual effect at each would reduce to moderate or minor adverse.

5.4.4 From VP 1, as demonstrated by the photomontage on Figure 9b(i) and 9b(ii), in the short-term (Y0) the new solar panels and associated structures would form a new horizontal feature across the middle ground of the view, and interrupt views of the lower-lying part of the valley to the west. The change in view would be intermittently experienced by receptors, and oblique to their direction of travel, such that the

- 
- impact is transient. In the long-term (Y10), as demonstrated by the photomontage on Figure 9c(i) and 9c(ii), the proposed mitigation planting would screen the solar infrastructure such that the change in view would not be inconsistent with the existing features of the view, although views of the lower-lying parts of the valley to the west would remain screened. In the short-term the visual effect would be moderate to major adverse, reducing to moderate to minor adverse in the long-term.
- 5.4.5 From VP 2, in the short-term there would be direct views of the Proposed Development to the south and west, which would be a dominant feature given the close proximity. Views of solar infrastructure would be inconsistent with the existing features of the view. In the medium- and long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the solar infrastructure such that the Proposed Development would not be visible, but all views south and west would be screened from this section of footpath. This level of screening would be consistent with the pattern of views from adjoining sections of footpath to the north and west. In the short-term, the Proposed Development would result in a major to moderate adverse effect as a result of the prominent introduction of solar infrastructure within the foreground of the view. In the medium- and long-term, once the mitigation planting is established views of the solar infrastructure would be screened, and the visual effect would reduce to moderate to minor adverse.
- 5.4.6 From VP 3, as demonstrated by the photomontage on Figure 11b, in the short-term (Y0) the Proposed Development would form a new horizontal feature in the middle ground of the view and would be seen below the skyline. In the long-term (Y10), as demonstrated by the photomontage on Figure 11c the proposed mitigation planting would screen the solar infrastructure and reflect existing views of woodland, intermittent trees and hedgerows. In the short-term the visual effect would be moderate to major adverse, reducing to moderate to minor adverse in the long-term.
- 5.4.7 From VP 5, in the short-term there would be direct views of solar panels and associated infrastructure to the north, where the Proposed Development would be in the foreground of views as road users pass the Site. To the south of Graveley Lane, there would be partial views of the Proposed Development beyond an existing hedgerow. As Graveley Lane passes the southern part of the Site (not at viewpoint) it transitions into a cutting such that the change in elevation would reduce the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development. In the medium- and

---

long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the Proposed Development from along Graveley Lane, such that the view would comprise the road lined by hedgerows. This would represent a change from the existing views onto fields, but would be consistent with wider views from along Graveley Lane. In the short-term the visual effect would be major to moderate adverse, reducing to moderate to minor adverse in the long-term. This change in view would be consistent with the existing sequence of views along roads in the area.

5.4.8 Short-term moderate adverse visual effects would occur at:

- Views from Great Wymondley
  - VP 7 – View east from the Hertfordshire Way, south of Great Wymondley

5.4.9 From VP 7, as demonstrated by the photomontage on Figure 15b, in the short-term (Y0) the Proposed Development would be partially visible in the background of the view as a new horizontal feature following the landform. The Proposed Development would sit below the skyline and relate to the existing field pattern in the view. This type of view is only available from a very short section of the PROW and is a typical of views from Great Wymondley which are typically screened/filtered by intervening vegetation. In the medium- and long-term, as demonstrated by Figure 15c the proposed mitigation planting would slightly increase screening but would not fundamentally alter the visibility or impact of the Proposed Development from this isolated section of footpath. The visual effect would remain moderate adverse in both the short-term and long-term.

5.4.10 Short-term minor adverse visual effects would occur at:

- Views from Graveley Lane
  - VP 4 – View east from Graveley Lane
- Views from the south
  - VP 14 – View north-east from PRow Langley 001, part of the Chiltern Way

5.4.11 From VP 4, as demonstrated by the photomontage on Figure 12b(i) and 12b(ii) in the short-term (Y0) there would be partial views of solar panels through the gap in the hedgerow to the north, where the panels would be glimpsed briefly in the foreground of views. The open aspect to the south side of the road would be maintained, with the Proposed Development to the south of Graveley Lane located further east than the viewpoint. The panels and associated infrastructure to the

---

south side of Graveley Lane would be partially screened by the existing intervening hedgerow boundary. In the medium- and long-term the proposed mitigation planting would screen the Proposed Development from this part of Graveley Lane, such that there would be a barely perceptible change in the view. In the short-term the visual effect would be minor adverse, reducing to negligible adverse in the long-term.

5.4.12 From VP 14, the Proposed Development would be partially visible in the distance, forming a thin horizontal band across a small proportion of the overall view. The Proposed Development would be perceived at this distance as a tonal change in colour assimilated within trees and woodland in the background of the view, which are of a similar darker tonal colour. Whilst visible, this change would not be prominent. The impact would be experienced across a short section of the Chiltern Way. The visual effect would be minor adverse in both the short- and long-term as a result of distance and the small proportion of the view impacted.

5.4.13 At each of the remaining viewpoints, visual effects in the short- and long-term would range between negligible and neutral.

#### ***Pattern of Visual Effects***

5.4.14 The broad pattern of visual effects can be inferred by reference to the ZTVs presented on Figure 3, and by the assessment of visual effects set out in Appendix 4 (supported by Figures 9 to 24). The pattern of landform and vegetation cover in the surrounding area is such that clear visibility of the new solar panels and other structures would be relatively restricted.

5.4.15 In the short-term, clear views of the Proposed Development would be available for close range users of the Hertfordshire Way around the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site, and from Graveley Lane between the northern and southern part of the Site. Each of these routes is intermittently lined by vegetation, and therefore views of the Proposed Development would be infrequent, and the establishment of the proposed mitigation planting to screen the proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure would be consistent with wider views from along these routes. Therefore in the medium-and long-term it is judged the visual effect to users of these routes would not be significant.

5.4.16 From the A1(M) which forms part of the eastern boundary of the Site, there would be close views of the Proposed Development in views west from a short section of

---

the broader route. In the short-term the proposed solar panels and associated infrastructure would be seen set back beyond the existing highway boundary. This would be experienced as part of a brief and transient view. In the medium- and long-term the proposed hedgerow planting alongside the boundary to the A1(M) would screen views from the road, such that the Proposed Development would not be visible. This hedgerow planting along the A1(M) would be retained following decommissioning and would provide long-term benefits in respect of partially screening traffic on the A1(M) from the wider landscape.

- 5.4.17 In the wider study area, the Proposed Development would not generally be clearly visible as a result of the pattern of landform, and the extent of vegetation around settlements, and alongside roads and public rights of way. There would be intermittent locations to the south and within the Chilterns AONB where from elevated positions there would be views of the Proposed Development, but these views would be from short sections of public rights of way, and at a long distance from the Site, such that whilst it may be visible, the Proposed Development would have no greater than a minor adverse effect on views.

***Operational Phase: Glint and Glare***

- 5.4.18 A separate Glint and Glare Assessment is included with the Planning Application. This considers effects on dwellings and roads within approximately 1km to the east, south and west of the Proposed Development.
- 5.4.19 The glint and glare assessment reports that due to the existing screening and / or proposed screening the impact of glint and glare impact of the Proposed Development on receptors would be low. There is therefore no additional mitigation proposed to reduce glint and glare effects over and above the embedded landscape proposals.

***Operational Phase: Night-time Effects***

- 5.4.20 The Proposed Development would not be lit, (with the exception of on demand security lighting at the Inverter-Transformer Stations and the Control Room/Switchgear Building), once operational, and as such night-time landscape and visual effects would not occur.

---

## **6.0 MITIGATION**

- 6.1.1 No further mitigation measures are proposed, over and above those embedded into the design of the Proposed Development, which are described in Section 2.2.

---

## 7.0 RESIDUAL EFFECTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1.1 The landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development have been assessed in accordance with good practice guidance set out in the third edition of *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. The assessment has been undertaken over a study area extending up to 9km from the Site, and is supported by visualisation material, including ZTV mapping and photomontages.
- 7.1.2 The Site comprises large-scale arable fields across gently undulating landform which falls from east to west, bounded by intermittent hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- 7.1.3 The Proposed Development comprises a commercial solar farm and would therefore introduce solar panels and associated infrastructure across the Site. Neither the solar panels or associated infrastructure are tall structures, and hence would not be clearly visible over a wide area.
- 7.1.4 The layout of the Proposed Development relates to the existing landscape pattern, and seeks to conserve and restore landscape fabric. This would be achieved through the retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and tree cover within and around the Site, and the planting of new hedgerows and woodland to provide a permanent improvement to the landscape fabric. This would accord with landscape character guidelines published at a regional and county level.
- 7.1.5 There would be a change in land use across the Site from agricultural land, to land with a twin function of renewable energy generation and continued agricultural use through livestock farming.
- 7.1.6 The introduction of the Proposed Development would increase the influence of built development across the Site, resulting in a moderate adverse effect, but the pattern of vegetation cover in the landscape around the Site is such that existing tree belts and hedgerows would provide considerable screening of the Proposed Development, greatly reducing the extent over which it would be perceived. The effect on landscape character would not be substantial beyond the Site boundary, with a moderate to minor adverse effect reported, which would not be significant.
- 7.1.7 The ZTVs, supported by the viewpoint photography and photomontages of the Proposed Development demonstrate that there would be limited visibility of the Proposed Development due to its low height, existing screening around the Site, and the influence of landform.



- 
- 7.1.8 In the short-term, major to moderate adverse visual effects would occur from part of the Hertfordshire Way along the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site, and from part of Graveley Lane which passes between the northern and southern parts of the Site. From each of these routes the adverse visual effects relate to where there are gaps in the existing boundary vegetation. In the short-term, these effects would, in EIA terms, be considered significant.
- 7.1.9 Once the proposed mitigation planting has established, and changes to the management of existing hedgerows are effective, the gaps in vegetation around the Site boundary will be filled and the Proposed Development would be largely screened in close proximity views. Therefore, the medium- to long-term visual effects to receptors along the Site boundary would reduce to levels which would not be significant.
- 7.1.10 In the wider study area, the Proposed Development would not generally be clearly visible as a result of landform and the extent of vegetation around settlements, roads, and public rights of way. There would be intermittent locations to the south and within the Chilterns AONB where from elevated positions there would be distant views of the Proposed Development, but these views would be from short sections of public rights of way, and at a long distance from the Site, such that whilst it may be visible, the Proposed Development would have no greater than a minor adverse effect on views, which would not be significant.
- 7.1.11 The LVIA has therefore found that the medium- and long-term landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development would be not significant and that long-term benefits would result following decommissioning due to the retention of proposed hedgerows and woodland belts that have established over the 40 year life of the project.

---

## 8.0 GREEN BELT

8.1.1 The Site is located within the Green Belt between Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth.

8.1.2 As set out in paragraph 137 of the NPPF, the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Case law has established that the openness of Green Belt has a visual dimension<sup>8</sup>, and therefore the findings of the LVIA are often referred to when considering the acceptability of a Proposed Development in the Green Belt. However, the visual impact of development on openness of the Green Belt is but one matter that may be considered as part of a wider planning judgement on potential harm to the Green Belt<sup>9</sup>.

8.1.3 In relation to the landscape and visual impacts of the Proposed Development on the openness and permanence of the Green Belt, it is judged that:

- In the short-term, the Proposed Development would have an impact on the perceived openness of views at intermittent locations around the Site boundary through the introduction of solar panels and associated infrastructure into the foreground of views.
- In the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened from these views once the proposed mitigation planting has established, albeit the proposed mitigation planting would still partially reduce the perceived openness through the curtailment of views. However, this is the case for existing vegetation within the Green Belt that is characteristic of the area;
- From the wider landscape beyond the Site boundary, the low height of the Proposed Development and the distant nature of views are such that whilst the Proposed Development may be visible it would form a small proportion of the overall view and would be seen in the context of existing development in the view, such that the perceived openness of views would be unchanged; and
- The landscape and visual effects are easily reversible either during or at the end of the 40-year operational period, such that once decommissioned the Site's existing characteristics could be restored at any time.

---

<sup>8</sup> *Turner v. SSCLG, 2016.*

<sup>9</sup> *Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) and others v North Yorkshire County Council, 2020*

---

## Figures

---

## Appendices

## Appendix 1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to systematically identify and assess the nature and significance of the effects of a proposed development upon the landscape and upon views and visual amenity. The purpose of the LVIA is to identify the level and nature of effect arising from a proposed development and if necessary, through an iterative design process, to inform changes to the development and evolution of mitigation strategies which avoid or reduce significant adverse effects wherever possible.

1.2 The methodology for this LVIA is informed by guidance contained within the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2013), often referred to as ‘the GLVIA’. The LVIA aims to establish the following:

- A clear understanding of the development site and its context, in respect of the physical and perceived landscape and of views and visual amenity;
- An understanding of the proposed development in terms of how this would relate to the existing landscape and views;
- An identification of likely significant effects of the proposed development upon the landscape and upon views, throughout the life-cycle of the development, including cumulative interactions with other developments;
- Those mitigation measures necessary to reduce or eliminate any potential adverse effect on the landscape or views arising as a result of the proposed development; and
- A conclusion as to the residual likely significant effects of the proposed development.

1.3 Professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA process at every stage of the assessment. This judgement must be exercised within an assessment framework that transparently sets out the steps in the assessment process which have led to the overall conclusions. This is emphasised in Box 3.1 (page 37) of the GLVIA, which advocates a structured approach that considers the sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the impact when determining if an effect is significant or not.

1.4 To ensure transparency in the assessment and professional judgements made, the LVIA follows a standard approach, namely:

- The establishment of the baseline conditions, against which the effects of the proposed development will be assessed;
- The determination of the nature of the receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its sensitivity;
- The prediction of the nature of the effect likely to occur, i.e. the magnitude of change; and

- An assessment of whether a likely significant effect would occur upon any receptor, by considering the predicted magnitude of change together with the sensitivity of the receptor, taking into account any proposed mitigation measures.

1.5 The GLVIA clarifies that the guidance concentrates on  
 [1.20] “...principles while also seeking to steer specific approaches where there is a general consensus on methods and techniques. It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not provide a detailed ‘recipe’ that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstance”.

1.6 As set out above, use of professional judgement within a structured assessment framework is a very important element of the assessment of landscape and visual effects. As discussed in the GLVIA:

[2.23] “...Whilst there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, ...much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgement, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative”.

[2.24] “...In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others...”

[2.26] “...In carrying out an LVIA the landscape professional must always take an independent stance, and fully and transparently address both the negative and positive effects of a scheme in a way that is accessible and reliable for all parties concerned”.

1.7 Landscape and visual matters are separate issues, and although closely related and interlinked, are dealt with as such throughout the LVIA. The methodologies for assessing both are outlined separately below.

## **2.0 Landscape Assessment**

2.1 The landscape assessment considers the potential effects of the proposed development on the components of the landscape as an environmental resource. Landscape receptors which could be affected by a proposed development may include:

- Individual constituent elements and features of the landscape (sometimes referred to as landscape fabric);
- Specific aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the landscape;
- The overall character and key characteristics of the landscape as experienced in different areas (e.g. landscape character areas or types).

## **Sensitivity**

- 2.2 The nature of a landscape receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its **sensitivity** is determined by considering two factors, namely:
- Susceptibility to change; and
  - Value.

### *Susceptibility to Change*

- 2.3 Susceptibility to change is defined in the GLVIA as follows:
- [5.40] *“This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”*
- [5.41] *“The assessment may take place in situations where there are existing landscape sensitivity and capacity studies, which have become increasingly common. They may deal with the general type of development that is proposed, in which case they may provide useful preliminary background information for assessment. But they cannot provide a substitute for the individual assessment of the susceptibility of the receptors in relation to change arising from the specific development proposal”.*
- 2.4 To understand susceptibility to change, the various characteristics/factors that make up a particular landscape must be identified and consideration given as to how these will be affected by the proposed development. Consideration is given to physical and perceptual factors which are considered together to derive an overall susceptibility to change. Factors influencing the susceptibility of a landscape to change resulting from a *commercial-scale solar farm* are set out below:
- **Scale:** A larger scale landscape (relative to the development proposed) will typically be less susceptible than a smaller scale landscape;
  - **Pattern/Complexity:** The susceptibility of a receiving landscape to change will be influenced by the specific pattern of features and elements present and by the complexity of this pattern;
  - **Development/Human Influence:** A landscape that includes obvious alterations to natural ground levels, contemporary development, or that is clearly functional/utilitarian in land use will typically be less susceptible than one where development is more traditional in style, or where natural influences and natural or long-established landforms are predominant;

- **Connections with adjacent areas:** A landscape which has a clear relationship with other surrounding landscapes, for example in relation to views in and out, will typically be more susceptible than one where such relationships are not present;
- **Visual Interruption:** A landscape where views are frequently interrupted by screening features, for example vegetation cover or variations in landform, will typically be less susceptible than one where there are few / no screening features.

2.5 A particular landscape may have different characteristics that are more or less susceptible to change. As such, the overall susceptibility to change is allocated using professional judgement based upon consideration of the various factors outlined above and the relative weight attached to these (which will vary from landscape to landscape). The assessment of susceptibility is expressed using a three point verbal scale of high, medium or low. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium/high or low/medium are used to refine the assessment. The rationale in support of the assessment of susceptibility is set out for each receptor in the assessment, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

#### *Value*

2.6 The value of the landscape receptor is independent of any development proposal. The absence of a formal landscape designation does not necessarily imply that a landscape is of lower value. Value is defined in the GLVIA as:  
 [5.19] “...*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons...Landscapes or their component parts may be valued at the community, local, national or international levels...*”

2.7 Factors that can help in identifying valued landscapes include:

- Presence/absence of statutory landscape designations;
- Presence/absence of local landscape designations and associated policies;
- Landscape quality/condition;
- Scenic quality;
- Rarity of particular elements/features;
- Representativeness;
- Conservation interest;
- Recreation value;
- Perceptual aspects; and
- Cultural associations.



2.8 The assessment of value is expressed on a similar basis to that described for susceptibility of change above. Table 2.1 indicates how the above factors have been used to determine landscape value.

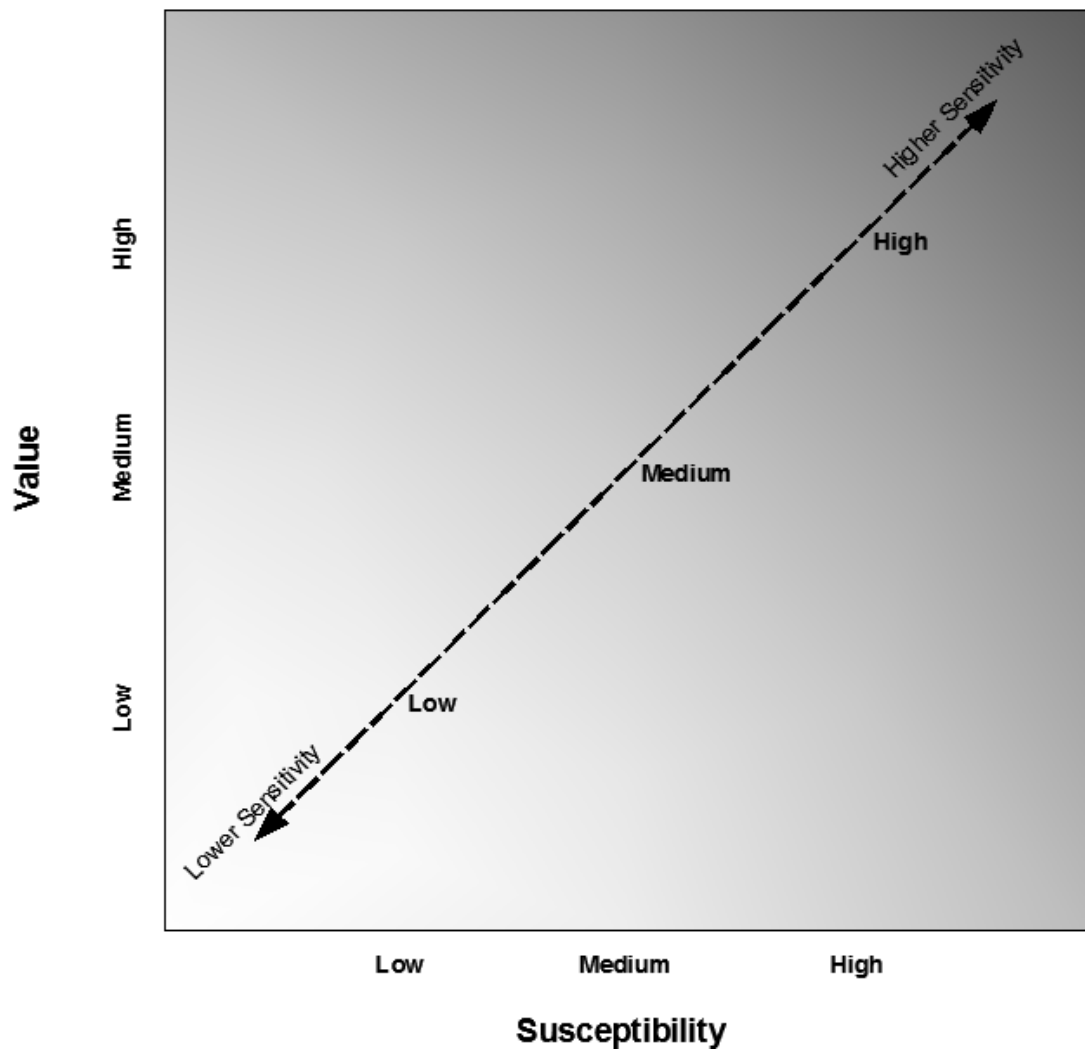
**Table 2.1: Landscape Value Criteria**

	Criteria tending towards higher or lower value	
	Higher ←	→ Lower
Value	Unique, and/or strongly positive landscape character, often with strong associations or (non-landscape) environmental designations. Nationally designated landscape (protected by statute).	Widespread or common landscape character. Negative character. Lack of other environmental qualities. Landscape without formal designation and with limited positive contribution to the locality.

*Sensitivity*

2.9 Susceptibility to change and value are considered together to determine the sensitivity of the receptor. It should be noted that the relationship between susceptibility to change and value can be complex and is not linear. For example, a highly-valued landscape (such as a National Park) may have a low susceptibility to change, due both to the characteristics of the landscape and the nature of the change proposed. Figure 2.1 (below) provides a guide as to how susceptibility and value can be combined to assess sensitivity (with the grey shading indicative of the increasing sensitivity of receptors with increasing susceptibility and / or value). However, the final assessment of sensitivity is one of professional judgement based on consideration of the susceptibility and value assessments.

Figure 2.1: Indicative Sensitivity Assessment



### ***Magnitude***

2.10 The nature of the effect that is likely to occur, i.e. its **magnitude**, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:

- Size/scale;
- Geographical extent;
- Duration;
- Reversibility.

2.11 The size and scale of an effect is determined by considering the amount of change experienced by a receptor, including:

- The extent of existing landscape elements that would be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the wider character;

- The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscapes are altered by the removal, or introduction of new landscape components; and
  - Whether change affects the key characteristics of a landscape.
- 2.12 The geographical extent of an effect is the area over which effects will be experienced. It is not the same as size / scale, as a small-scale change may be experienced over a wider area, or vice-versa.
- 2.13 The duration of an effect simply relates to the length of time for which it would be experienced, as follows:
- Long-term: 10+ years: or the change could not reasonably be considered temporary in nature;
  - Medium-term: 3-10 years;
  - Short-term: 0-3 years.
- 2.14 The reversibility of an effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be wholly or partially reversed, or whether the change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e. it is permanent.
- 2.15 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement. The assessment of the magnitude of change is expressed using a four point verbal scale of large, medium, small or negligible. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium / large or small / medium are used to refine the assessment. Table 2.2 (below) indicates how the above factors have been used to inform magnitude of change. As the circumstances of each specific receptor will vary, a reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular magnitude of change allocated to each receptor.

**Table 2.2: Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria (indicative)**

<b>Magnitude</b>	<b>Description</b>
Large	A substantial change in landscape characteristics and/or over extensive geographical area and/or which may result in an irreversible landscape impact.
Medium	A moderate change in landscape characteristics and/or which may be over a large geographical area, and/or which may be reversible over a long duration of time.
Small	A small change in landscape characteristics and/or which may be over a relatively localised geographical area, and/or which may be reversible over a short duration of time.
Negligible	A barely perceptible change in landscape characteristics and/or which is focused on a small geographical area, and/or which is almost or completely reversible.

### **3.0 Visual Assessment**

3.1 A visual assessment is concerned with the potential effects upon the population likely to be affected (i.e. the views experienced by people). As for landscape effects (Section 2.0), the sensitivity of the receptor affected is identified, as is the magnitude of the change that would occur. These are then considered together to determine the level and significance of effect.

3.2 A key part of the visual assessment is the assessment of effects from a number of predetermined viewpoints, which reflect views available to different groups of people. The viewpoint itself is not the receptor; rather it is the people that would be experiencing the view. These people will generally have different responses to a change in view depending upon their location, their activity and other factors, including the weather and time of day or year. Viewpoints fall into three categories (as set out in the GLVIA):

- Representative viewpoints (which represent the experience of different types of receptors in the vicinity);
- Specific viewpoints (a particular view, for example a well-known beauty spot);
- Illustrative viewpoints (which illustrate a particular effect or issue, which may include limited or lack of visibility).

3.3 Private viewpoints, such as from specific residential properties are not typically included in the LVIA. It is often impractical to visit all affected properties and access to private land may not be granted. Representative or specific viewpoints from nearby publicly accessible locations can often give an impression of what effects from private land would be.

#### ***Sensitivity***

3.4 The nature of a visual receptor likely to be affected, i.e. its **sensitivity** is determined by considering two factors, namely:

- Susceptibility to change;
- Value.

## Susceptibility to Change

3.5 The GLVIA identifies susceptibility to change in view/visual amenity as:

[6.32] "...mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and
- The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations".

3.6 Susceptibility to change is, in part, classified based upon the indicative criteria, provided in the GLVIA, as set out in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Typical Visual Susceptibility to Change Criteria (indicative)**

Criteria Level	Description
<b>Susceptibility to Change</b>	
High	Residents at home; People engaged in outdoor recreation, whose attention/interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or particular views, including from public rights of way; Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience; Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents; Travellers on scenic routes.
Medium	Travellers on road, rail, or other transport routes.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape; People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work / activity and not their surroundings.

3.7 It is important to note that the examples set out in GLVIA and Table 3.1 above only address the first bullet point and part of the second bullet point in paragraph 3.5 above (which are focussed on the occupation or activity of the people and the extent to which their attention is focussed on the view).

3.8 As such, the assessment of susceptibility in Table 3.1 and GLVIA (pages 113 & 114) needs to be adjusted to reflect the requirements of the final part of the second bullet point, namely the visual amenity that people currently experience. GLVIA identifies clearly that the division between categories of susceptibility to change:

[6.35] "...is not black and white and in reality there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change. Each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on views and visual amenity..."

3.9 For example, the presence of existing detracting features in any given view may reduce the visual amenity of those experiencing the view. This may therefore reduce their susceptibility to certain types of change and ultimately their sensitivity.

- 3.10 The assessment of susceptibility to change is made on the same basis as for landscape effects (Section 2.0 above). A three-point scale (with intermediate levels where appropriate) is used, supported by a reasoned narrative that explains the judgement made.

#### *Value*

- 3.11 In accordance with paragraph 6.37 of the GLVIA, when considering the value of a view experienced, this should take account of:
- Recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets or through planning designations;
  - Indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through appearances in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment and references to them in literature or art.
- 3.12 For this reason, whilst not specifically referenced in the current edition of GLVIA, the number of people likely to be affected can influence the value assigned to a particular view.
- 3.13 The assessment of value is made on the same basis as the assessment of susceptibility to change.

#### *Sensitivity*

- 3.14 Susceptibility to change and value are considered together as discussed above for landscape sensitivity and illustrated above in Figure 2.1. Again, professional judgement determines the final judgement of sensitivity, due to the non-linear and complex relationship between susceptibility and value. A reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular sensitivity assessed for each receptor, so that it is clear how each judgement has been made.

#### **Magnitude**

- 3.15 The nature of the visual effect that is likely to occur, i.e. its **magnitude**, is determined by considering four separate factors, namely:
- Size/scale;
  - Geographical extent;
  - Duration;
  - Reversibility.

- 3.16 The size and scale of an effect is determined by considering the following:
- The scale of change in view, in respect of the loss of or addition of features, and change in composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;
  - The degree of contrast or integration of new features or other changes;
  - The nature of the view, namely the relative amount of time it would be experienced for and whether the views would be full, partial or glimpsed.
- 3.17 The geographical extent of an effect will vary from viewpoint to viewpoint and will reflect the following:
- The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
  - The distance from the proposed development;
  - The extent over which a change in view would be visible.
- 3.18 The duration of an effect simply relates to the length of time for which it would be experienced, as follows:
- Long-term: 10+ years; or the change could not reasonably be considered temporary in nature;
  - Medium-term: 3-10 years;
  - Short-term: 0-3 years.
- 3.19 The reversibility of an effect relates to the prospects and practicality of an effect being able to be wholly or partially reversed, or whether the change cannot realistically be reversed, i.e. it is permanent.
- 3.20 These four factors are then considered together to derive an overall magnitude of change for each receptor, which is determined by use of professional judgement. The assessment of the magnitude of change is expressed using a four-point verbal scale of large, medium, small or negligible. Where appropriate, intermediate levels such as medium/large or small/medium are used to refine the assessment. Table 3.2 indicates how the above factors have been used to inform magnitude of change. As the circumstances of each specific receptor will vary, a reasoned narrative is set out in the LVIA in order to justify the particular magnitude of change allocated to each receptor.

**Table 3.2: Magnitude of Visual Change Criteria (indicative)**

Magnitude	Description
Large	A change affecting a large proportion of a view, which may be seen across an extensive area or experienced from a long section of a route, and/or a longer-term effect, and/or contrasting with the existing view.
Medium	A change affecting a moderate proportion of a view, which may be seen across a wider area or experienced from a section of a route, and/or a medium-term effect, and/or broadly compatible with the existing view.
Small	A change affecting a smaller proportion of a view, which may be seen from a limited area or experienced from a short section of a route, and/or a shorter-term effect, and/or compatible with the existing view.
Negligible	A change which is barely perceptible in the view, and/or which is only glimpsed from a route.

#### 4.0 Level and Significance of Effect

4.1 The purpose of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to determine the likely significant effects of a development proposal. Not all landscape and visual effects arising as a result of a particular proposal will be significant. Furthermore, a significant effect does not necessarily mean that such an effect is unacceptable to decision-makers. This is a matter to be weighed in the planning balance alongside other factors. What is important is that the likely effects of any proposal are transparently assessed and described in order that the relevant determining authority can bring a balanced and well-informed judgement to bear as part of the decision-making process.

4.2 *The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK* (Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment 2011) identifies a range of different factors that should be considered when evaluating the significance of an effect, including:

- Knowledge and experience of significance from previous assessments;
- Details of the development proposal, such as construction and operational activities, and the nature of the effect associated with such activity;
- Details about the environmental sensitivity of the area that will be affected;
- Feedback from scoping and consultation;
- The wider legal and policy context, which offers protection to the environment and community.

4.3 The level of effect can only be defined in relation to each particular development and its specific location. It is for each LVIA to determine how judgements about receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of change should be combined to derive the level of effect and to clearly explain how this assessment has been made, and if the level of effect is considered significant.

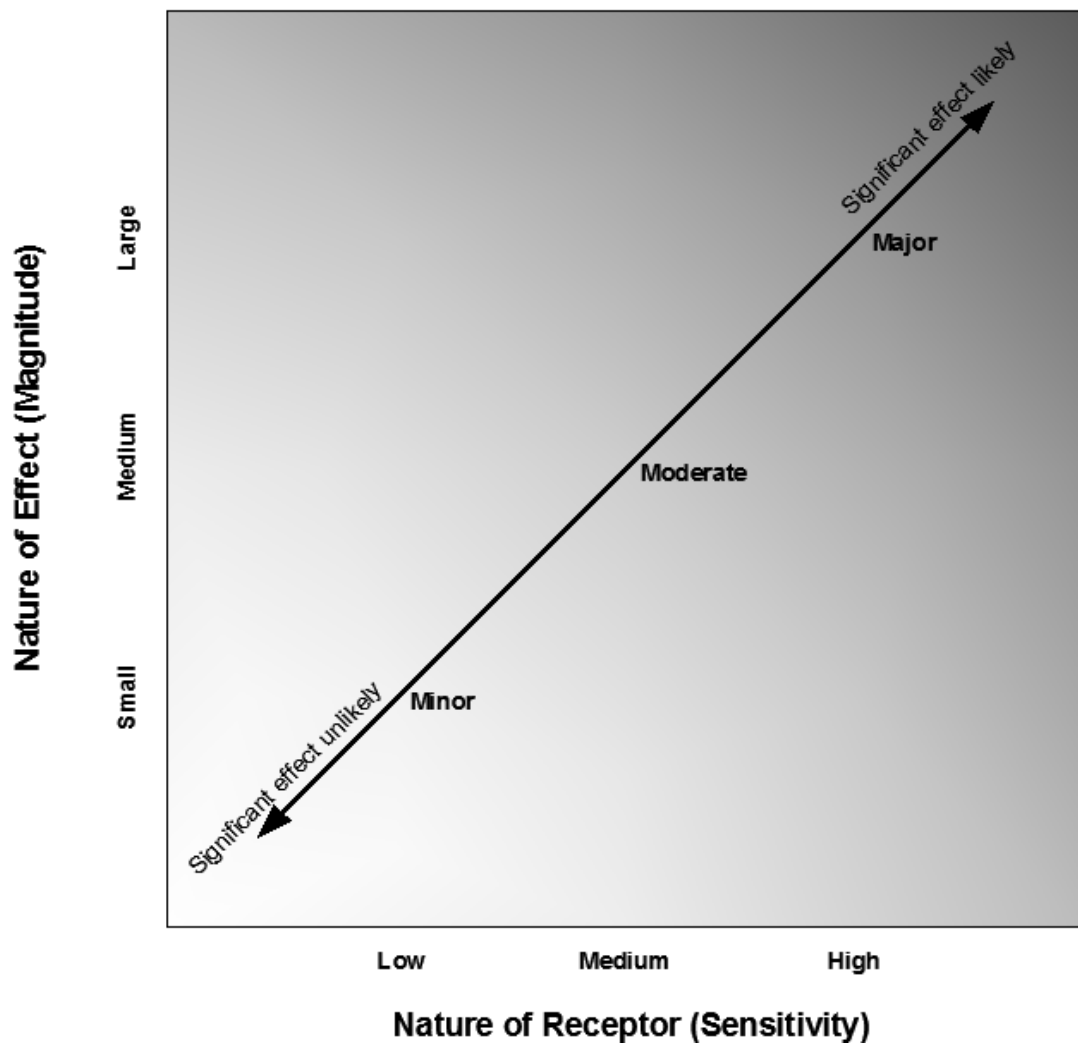
4.4 Figure 4.1 (below) provides a guide as to how sensitivity and magnitude can be combined to identify the level of effect upon a receptor (with the grey shading indicative of the increasing



level of effect with increasing sensitivity and/or magnitude). However, the final assessment of the level of effect and whether this is significant for decision makers is one of professional judgement.

- 4.5 Where magnitude of change is identified as 'negligible', then effects are automatically considered not to be significant due to the minimal level of change from baseline (which would often not be perceptible).
- 4.6 The judgement for this particular assessment is that greater than 'moderate' effects are more likely to be significant. This is because they would generally result from larger magnitudes of change on higher sensitivity receptors. This does not preclude a 'moderate' effect or lower being significant or a greater than 'moderate' effect not being significant. This judgement will depend on the specific circumstances being considered.

**Figure 4.1: Level of Effect Matrix (indicative)**



4.7 The GLVIA identifies that:

[3.32] *“The Regulations require that a final judgement is made about whether or not each effect is likely to be significant. There are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed ‘significant’ but LVIAs should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be significant and non-significant effects...*

[3.33] *It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided that it is made clear whether or not they are considered significant. The final overall judgement of the likely significance of the predicted landscape and visual effects is however, often summarised in a series of categories of significance reflecting combinations of sensitivity and magnitude. These tend to vary from project to project but they should be appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development and should as far as possible be consistent across the different topic areas of the EIA”.*

[5.56] & [6.44] *“There are no hard and fast rules about what makes a significant effect, and there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the location and [landscape]<sup>1</sup> context and with the type of proposal”.*

4.8 It should be noted that effects may be either adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive). An effect can be significant and adverse, or significant and beneficial. If change occurs, with no obvious deterioration or improvement resulting, this can be said to be neutral.

---

<sup>1</sup> The word landscape is present in paragraph 5.56 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of GLVIA only. Otherwise, the sentence quoted from paragraphs 5.56 and 6.44 is identical.

## APPENDIX 2: ZTV & VISUALISATION METHODOLOGY

### Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
2.0	Zone of Theoretical Visibility .....	2
3.0	Viewpoint Selection .....	4
4.0	Viewpoint Visualisations.....	7

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this methodology is to provide an understanding of how visualisation material prepared to support the planning application for the Proposed Development has been produced. The methodology addresses the production of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping and viewpoint visualisations.
- 1.1.2 It should be recognised that production of visualisations is only one component of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), which will consider a range of other factors when identifying and assessing changes to the landscape and to views. The use of visualisations is a useful aid when undertaking LVIA, but the assessment process is not dependent on them. LVIA may be undertaken without use of visualisation material, although for major developments the inclusion of visualisations is accepted practice.
- 1.1.3 Current good practice regarding the production of visualisations is set out in:
- Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. This document is referred to hereafter as ‘the GLVIA’;
  - Landscape Institute (2019), *Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19*. This document is referred to hereafter as ‘TGN 06/19’.
- 1.1.4 The remainder of this Methodology document is structured as follows.
- 1.1.5 Section 2.0 addresses the production of the ZTV mapping that informs the LVIA.
- 1.1.6 Section 3.0 gives details of how Viewpoints were selected for inclusion in the LVIA, and includes the details required as part of the ‘Visualisation Types Methodology’ that forms part of the Technical Methodology specified in Appendix 10 of TGN 06/19.
- 1.1.7 Section 4.0 gives details of how the viewpoint visualisation material was produced, and includes the remaining details required by the Technical Methodology specified in Appendix 10 of TGN 06/19.

## **2.0 Zone of Theoretical Visibility**

2.1.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps have been generated in order to better understand the likely extent of the surrounding landscape across which the Proposed Development would be visible.

2.1.2 Two ZTVs have been prepared, presented on LVIA Figures 2 and 3. Figure 2 is a 'bare-earth' ZTV, and Figure 3 includes the effect of existing screening such as buildings and vegetation.

### ***Data Source***

2.1.3 The bare-earth ZTV on Figure 2 was produced using Ordnance Survey (OS) Terrain 50 data, which provides a Digital Terrain Model (DTM) only, not accounting for features such as buildings and vegetation in the landscape.

2.1.4 The ZTV with screening was produced using a commercial 2m Photogrammetric Digital Surface Model (DSM) obtained from Bluesky International. This is derived from aerial photography captured in June 2019 and April 2020, and takes account of screening features such as building and vegetation.

2.1.5 This DSM data consists of a series of spot levels at 2m intervals. The horizontal 'root mean square error' (RMSE) of the data is 1m, and the vertical RMSE is 1.5m.

### ***ZTV creation***

2.1.6 The ZTVs were calculated and created using QGIS open source software. The ZTV calculation process takes account of the curvature of the earth's surface and light refraction. The eye height of the receptor in the computer model was set at 1.7m above ground level in accordance with guidance set out in GLVIA.

2.1.7 The ZTVs were generated to illustrate the theoretical visibility of the proposed solar panels (height 3m above existing ground level), using a series of marker points distributed evenly across the area where the panels would be located. A total of seventy-nine markers were placed.

2.1.8 The ZTVs are displayed on Figures 2 and 3 of the LVIA. Colour banding is used to indicate the proportion of marker points visible.

### ***Limitations***

- 2.1.9 A ZTV, as use of the term theoretical implies, is not an absolute indication of the extent of visibility but rather a computer-generated aid that utilises available relative data to indicate areas of inter-visibility and screening in relation to a specific modelled object. ZTVs are tools to assist the LVIA. The technique aims to give a better understanding of the areas where visibility is likely and unlikely but imperfections in data are such that it must only be seen as an aid to understanding. This limitation needs to be recognised when interpreting the ZTVs.
- 2.1.10 A further caveat is that the ZTVs simply illustrates that part of a structure would be theoretically visible. As such, it makes no distinction between a clear view of all or most of a proposed feature and a view of a very small proportion of a feature (for example one corner of a building roof, or the top of a stack). This is especially relevant in the case of the Proposed Development, where views from the surrounding area are often limited by localised changes in vegetation cover and landform.
- 2.1.11 The ZTV produced using the DSM does reflect the presence of screening features in the landscape. However, it should be recognised that the DSM reflects a single moment in time. In reality, the extent and / or height of vegetation cover is dynamic and changes as vegetation inevitably increases in stature over time and / or is planted, trimmed or removed. Similarly, there is potential for buildings to have been erected, demolished or modified, subsequent to the data being captured.
- 2.1.12 Additionally, the DSM tends to assume that vegetation captured forms a solid visual barrier, when in reality views can sometimes be available through leaves and branches, especially in winter when deciduous foliage is absent. As such, the real-world visibility of the Proposed Development may be underestimated in places.
- 2.1.13 The DSM does not distinguish between the ground surface and the surface of structures and vegetation. As a consequence, the ZTV output may indicate visibility from areas known to be occupied by woodland and buildings. Whilst in theory it may be possible for people to experience the views from such locations (by climbing onto roofs, or into the tops of trees), this is not representative of typical day to day visibility, and as such there is the potential to overstate the actual visibility of the Proposed Development. Ordnance Survey open mapping data (OS Zoomstack Buildings, and OS Zoomstack Woodland) have been added to the ZTV figures, to mask out mapped areas of development and tree cover.

### 3.0 Viewpoint Selection

#### ***Introduction***

- 3.1.1 The aim of this Section is to present, in a transparent format, the process that has been followed in arriving at an appropriate number and range of viewpoints.
- 3.1.2 When considering which viewpoints to include as part of an assessment it is important to not assess too few or too many viewpoints. A proportionate approach to viewpoint selection is necessary, in line with the recommendations of the GLVIA (*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2013, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment).
- 3.1.3 The absence of a viewpoint from any location does not imply that there would be no view of a proposed development, nor that views from such a location have not been considered in the LVIA.

#### ***Viewpoints***

- 3.1.4 Following pre-application consultation with North Hertfordshire District Council, and after initial analysis of the ZTVs, a total of nine viewpoints were proposed, as per the below table:

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>Viewpoint Details</b>
1: Graveley Lane, adjacent to Site boundary	<i>Representative</i> of views available to road users, who would be located in close proximity to the development
2: Hertfordshire Way, adj to north-eastern boundary of Site	<i>Representative</i> of the views available to users of the Hertfordshire Way, in close proximity to the development
3: Hertfordshire Way, adj. to north-west boundary of Site	<i>Representative</i> of the views available to users of the Hertfordshire Way, in close proximity to the development
4: Public footpath, edge of Graveley	<i>Representative</i> of the views available to footpath users and local residents
5: Minor road, north of St Ippolyts	<i>Representative</i> of the views available to road users. The viewpoint is located at a high point along the road
6: Hertfordshire Way, south of Great Wymondley	<i>Representative</i> of the views available to available to users of the Hertfordshire Way, west of the Site
7: B197, north of Graveley	<i>Representative</i> of the views available to road users, with similar views likely to be available from properties at the caravan park to the north

Viewpoint	Viewpoint Details
8: Public bridleway north of Hexton Road	<i>Specific</i> view from an elevated location along public right of way within the Chilterns AONB
9: Public bridleway south of Hexton Road	<i>Specific</i> view from an elevated location along public right of way within the Chilterns AONB

3.1.5 North Hertfordshire District Council reviewed these viewpoints and provided the following comments, which we have addressed as per the below table:

NHDC Comment	Response
No.6 Hertfordshire Way, south of Great Wymondley – slightly further north along the path the slop increases as does the view of the site, move the point more within the green shaded area of the plan;	The viewpoint location selected and included in the assessment (final viewpoint number: VP 7, Figure 15a) was found to be the most open part of this PRow. North of this location the footpath is in a field to the west such that there is an additional hedgerow / tree belt filtering views towards the Site.
Add three points as shown on my attached scribbles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one from the A1 passing the southern parcel;</li> <li>• one additional point along Graveley Lane; and</li> <li>• one additional point along Hertfordshire Way as it goes around the northern boundary.</li> </ul>	<p>A viewpoint could not be included from the A1(M) due to the risks in trying to stop on a major A road. Views from the A1(M) have however been assessed as part of the LVIA.</p> <p>An additional point along Graveley Lane has been included (final viewpoint number: VP 4).</p> <p>An additional point along the Hertfordshire Way has been included (final viewpoint number: VP 2).</p>

3.1.6 The precise location of the proposed viewpoints was then determined in the field, as part of the site visit to shoot the photography. This identified that:

- The Site was potentially visible from a number of additional locations in the wider landscape which warranted inclusion within the visual assessment; and
- There was no view available towards the Site from the two proposed viewpoints in the Chilterns AONB, and therefore a different location was chosen at Deacon Hill (final viewpoint number: VP 16).



3.1.7 In total, sixteen viewpoints have been included with the LVIA, as illustrated on Figure 8. These viewpoints are set out in the following table along with a note setting out the source:

<b>Viewpoint</b>	<b>Source</b>
1: View west from the Hertfordshire Way, along the eastern Site boundary	Originally proposed to NHDC
2: View south from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary	Requested by NHDC
3: View east from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary	Originally proposed to NHDC
4: View east from Graveley Lane	Requested by NHDC
5: View east from Graveley Lane	Originally proposed to NHDC
6: View east from Great Wymondley	Additional view included following field work
7: View east from the Hertfordshire Way, south of Great Wymondley	Originally proposed to NHDC
8: View north from Stevenage Road	Additional view included following field work
9: View south from PRow Letchworth Garden City 002	Additional view included following field work
10: View west from Graveley	Originally proposed to NHDC
11: View west from Jacks Hill, north of Graveley	Originally proposed to NHDC
12: View west from PRow Graveley 008, part of the Hertfordshire Way	Additional view included following field work
13: View north from PRow Wymondley 022	Additional view included following field work
14: View north-east from PRow Langley 001, part of the Chiltern Way	Additional view included following field work
15: View east from Hitchin Lane, north of St Ippolyts	Additional view included following field work
16: View east from Deacon Hill in the Chilterns AONB	Additional view included following field work

3.1.8 Appendix 10 of TGN 06/19 sets out details of what should be included in the Technical Methodology for Viewpoint Visualisations (i.e. in this Methodology document). The list of required information is stated to be indicative.

3.1.9 Part of the required information is a 'Visualisation Type Methodology' including

- The anticipated purpose/ users of the viewpoint visualisations;
- The indicative assessment of sensitivity and magnitude, and resulting likely indicative overall degree or level of effect; and
- Other factors influencing the selection of the visualisation type.

3.1.10 The purpose of the Viewpoint Visualisations is to inform the LVIA and the decision-making process. Users are likely to be landscape professionals, other environmental professionals and planning officers, consultee bodies and interested members of the public.

3.1.11 On the basis that the LVIA includes a detailed assessment of visual effects from each viewpoint, including a description of the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of change in view that would occur, and the resultant effect, it is considered that there is little benefit in providing an indicative assessment in this Methodology document.

3.1.12 The LVIA and the accompanying Appendix 4 that addresses effects on Viewpoints, both include details of the type of receptors that each viewpoint seeks to represent, and a brief description of the viewpoint location. It is considered that this information should be sufficient to indicate the factors that have influenced the selection of the viewpoint.

3.1.13 Baseline photography is provided from each viewpoint, which is annotated where deemed appropriate to highlight key features. Photomontages illustrating how the Proposed Development would appear are also included from selected viewpoints.

## **4.0 Viewpoint Visualisations**

### ***Photography***

4.1.1 All photography for this assessment was taken using a Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with a full-frame sensor, using a 50mm lens. The camera was mounted on a tripod to ensure a stable support and minimise camera shake. The camera was mounted on a panoramic tripod head with built-in spirit level (Nodal Ninja 3 MkII), which allows for the rotation of the camera at fixed intervals around a fixed point in vertical alignment with the camera lens, thereby eliminating parallax error. The camera was levelled using an auto-leveller device (Nodal Ninja EZ-Leveler II). Camera height was 1.5 m above the ground.

4.1.2 Photographs were taken over a full 360 degree sweep from each viewpoint location. The precise location of each photograph was recorded using a hand-held Garmin Oregon 600 GPS device (which has an accuracy of approximately 3m). Following the Site visit, the GPS data was loaded into Google Earth, and the GPS waypoints were moved manually where necessary to reflect the tripod location. A spreadsheet was completed recording information about the viewpoint.

### ***3D Model***

4.1.3 A digital model of the Proposed Development was created using industry standard software (Autodesk 3DStudioMax), along with the viewpoint data recorded on site (as discussed above). This enables a series of 'camera' points to be created within the model, reflecting the view from each viewpoint towards the Proposed Development.

4.1.4 A series of markers were added to the model, representing real-world locations such as topographic features, electricity pylons, vegetation and buildings. The locations of these markers were determined via the use of aerial imagery (e.g. Google Earth) and by the Environmental Agency 1m Digital Surface Model (DSM) LIDAR data.

4.1.5 For those viewpoints where photomontages have been produced, the models were then lined up with the individual photographs that focus on the Site. The markers were used to ensure that the model lines up both horizontally and vertically as accurately as possible with the photograph (by matching the markers with the real-world equivalent), and to assist with identifying which features in the photograph would appear 'in front' of the Proposed Development, which would appear 'behind' and which, if any would be removed.

4.1.6 Once the models are lined up as accurately as possible, the Proposed Development was rendered, having regard to the particular materials and colours that are to be used, and to reflect light conditions typical of the time and date of the photography.

### ***Photo Stitching***

4.1.7 The full sweep of photos taken from each viewpoint were stitched together using the software package PTGui. The software reads the exif data attached to each individual photograph file to identify the specifications of the camera and lens, ensuring accurate production of the stitched panoramic image.

### ***Photomontages***

- 4.1.8 Photomontages are computer generated images, showing images of the Proposed Development superimposed upon the existing photography, with the aim of producing a visualisation that should give a realistic impression of how the Proposed Development would appear within the landscape. Photomontages have been produced from four of the LVIA viewpoints, these being locations where the Proposed Development would be visible, and where the photomontage would help the reader understand the level of effect from different parts of the landscape.
- 4.1.9 In some instances, where new planting is proposed in order to mitigate against adverse visual effects, a series of photomontages are produced, which illustrate the anticipated height of proposed vegetation approximately 10 years after planting. Where planting is included, it is shown at the following heights:
- Hedgerows: approximately 3m high; and
  - Woodland: approximately 7m high (based on growth of approximately 0.5m per annum).
- 4.1.10 The resulting stitched viewpoint image was loaded into Adobe Photoshop. Any parts of the Proposed Development that would not be visible from an individual viewpoint due to the presence of intervening features were cropped out.

### ***Limitations***

- 4.1.11 It should be understood that viewpoint visualisations can never provide an exact match to what is experienced in reality. Visualisations are tools in the assessment process but independent from it. They illustrate the likely change in view in the context of a specific date, time and weather conditions, that would be seen within a photograph and not as seen by the human eye. As such, visualisations need to be used in conjunction with site visits and should be considered in the context of the totality of views experienced from the viewpoint and not just focussed on the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.12 Photography was taken in September 2021. The photographs reflect the level of foliage present at that time of year.
- 4.1.13 The software (3DStudioMax) used to produce the model of the Proposed Development from each Viewpoint does not take account of the curvature of the earth's surface, and assumes a flat horizon. The effects of the earth's curvature do

influence what is visible, especially in longer range views. If a flat horizon is assumed, then a feature located approximately 5km away from any viewpoint would appear approximately 1.7m higher than in reality. As such the model slightly exaggerates the height that the Proposed Development would appear in each view. As all of the viewpoints are located within 2.5km of the Proposed Development, it is considered that this is not material to the conclusions of the LVIA.

### ***Presentation & Viewing***

- 4.1.14 Once the final viewpoint images have been produced, they are inserted into a Figure template, which also includes information about the viewpoint, including the date and time of photography, details of the camera used, and British National Grid coordinates.
- 4.1.15 In relation to the viewpoint visualisations, these are displayed as follows.
- 4.1.16 For each Figure, the existing baseline view is displayed as the first sheet, annotated with the location of notable features including the approximate extents of the Site.
- 4.1.17 Where photomontages have been produced, further sheets show rendered photomontages of the Proposed Development (including with and without proposed planting).
- 4.1.18 The Proposed Development would occupy a wide field of view. The images presented are displayed at 100% of the original size, in a cylindrical projection. This accords with the guidance set out paragraph 4.5.22 of TGN 06/19 and in Table 5 of the same document. For Viewpoints 1 and 4, the baseline image and both photomontage views are displayed over two sheets each, due to the horizontal field of view that would be occupied by the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.19 Each sheet should be printed at the size stated on it. In some instances, this may require unconventional paper sizes (e.g. A1 width and A3 height). All printed sheets should be viewed held **flat at a comfortable arm's length**.

## Appendix 3: Effects on Landscape Character

North Hertfordshire Landscape Study: Arlesey / Great Wymondley Landscape Character Area					
Susceptibility to Change: Medium to Low		Lower	↔	Higher	Value: Medium to Low
Scale	Medium- to large-scale landscape with perception of open landscape from elevated areas, but a sense of enclosure in lower-lying positions and around settlement edges.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No landscape designations;</li> <li>Limited recreational access, but including the Hertfordshire Way and National Cycle Route 12;</li> <li>Local cultural interest including conservation area at Great Wymondley and a former Augustinian Priory;</li> <li>Listed buildings concentrated in settlements; and</li> <li>Limited nature conservation interest.</li> </ul>
Pattern/ Complexity	Simple pattern of large-scale fields divided by hedgerows or tree belts. Many hedgerows are gappy / declining and in poor condition.				
Development/ Human Influence	Widespread evidence of human settlement and development. Settlement is located in lower-lying positions, including the village of Great Wymondley which has a designated conservation area. Hitchin to the west and Stevenage to the south are apparent from elevated positions across the area. Noise of the A1(M) and mainline railway somewhat degrades the character. A number of high voltage pylons cross the landscape which contribute to the perception of infrastructure across the area.				
Connections with adjacent areas	Connected by major roads and public rights of way, but sense of severance and separation formed by A1(M) and mainline railway. Landscape east of A1(M) is more steeply rising and elevated. Perceived connection with broader valley to west.				
Visual Interruption	Views are varied between long-range and short-range in response to the elevation of the underlying landform and extent of vegetation cover; however, views are generally short- to mid-range. High voltage pylons and the A1(M) interrupt and detract from views.				
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium to Low</b></p> <p>A medium- to large-scale undulating arable landscape with a moderate level of tree cover. The landscape has a simple pattern with a sense of remoteness or tranquillity reduced by major transport corridors including the A1(M), and by the number of high voltage pylons across the landscape. Susceptibility is judged to be medium to low.</p> <p>There are no landscape designations present, but the landscape does have some cultural value through a conservation area designation, listed buildings and scheduled monuments. The Hertfordshire Way and National Cycle Route 12 cross the area, but otherwise there is limited recreational access to the landscape.</p> <p>Overall, landscape sensitivity is judged to be medium to low.</p>					
<b>Size/ Scale of Effect:</b>			<b>Geographical Extent:</b>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of solar panels and associated infrastructure would result in a change in land use at a Site level;</li> <li>• No loss to existing landscape elements, such that there would be no change to landscape fabric;</li> <li>• Increase in the perception of built development at a localised level;</li> <li>• Improvements to the hedgerow network and introduction of woodland belts would improve the condition of the landscape fabric, and accord with the stated landscape objectives for the landscape by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the creation of buffer zones, improving semi-natural habitat, and linking habitat areas;</li> <li>• Restoring hedgerow boundaries;</li> <li>• Encouraging small scale blocks of woodland planting;</li> <li>• Increasing planting alongside the A1(M); and</li> <li>• Conserving the character of Great Wymondley by providing an appropriate offset from the village.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localised change that would not be widely perceived as a result of landform and vegetation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reversible (40-year lifespan)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Magnitude: Medium</b></p> <p>The introduction of the Proposed Development would result in a direct impact through the change in land use from arable field to solar electricity generation, and the introduction of solar panels, associated infrastructure, perimeter fencing and new boundary planting. The Proposed Development would not alter the landscape pattern or result in a loss to landscape fabric through a change in vegetation or landform. There would be an increase in the perception of built development, which would have a degrading influence at a localised level, in the short-term. In the medium- and long-term the proposed mitigation planting would provide a greater level of landscape integration and screening, and improve the condition of local landscape elements.</p> <p>The magnitude of change is judged to be medium in the short- and long-term.</p>	
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>The Proposed Development would result in a moderate to minor level of effect on the landscape character area, with moderate to major landscape character effects being limited to the fields occupied by the Proposed Development</p>	
<p><b>Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:</b></p> <p>The introduction of the Proposed Development would be adverse.</p>	

## Appendix 4: Effects on Viewpoints

<p><b>Viewpoint 1 (VP 1):</b> Hertfordshire Way, along the eastern Site boundary  <b>Grid Ref:</b> 522844, 228465</p> <p>The view is from a bridleway along the eastern boundary of the northern part of the Site. The field boundary between the Site and the bridleway is intermittently lined by vegetation, with views west across the Site available from gaps in the vegetation.</p> <p>Views west from this bridleway are across the Site in the foreground, with the landscape falling towards Great Wymondley and Hitchin, with the rolling wooded hills of the Chilterns forming the backdrop to the view in the distance. Great Wymondley is nestled in the valley amongst trees and woodland such that the settlement is not readily identifiable. Settlement at Hitchin is more visible across the mid ground of the view. High voltage pylons are notable as a linear feature across the view.</p> <p>The A1(M) is parallel to the bridleway, approximately 25m to the east. The noise and proximity of the road has a bearing on the appeal of this viewpoint as a location to pause and take in the view.</p>	
<p><b>Susceptibility to Change: Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkers / cyclists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are judged to be incidental to the receptor's use of the route.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Value: Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a recognised viewpoint;</li> <li>• Part of the Hertfordshire Way and National Cycle Network Route 12;</li> <li>• High voltage pylons across the view;</li> <li>• Distant views of the Chilterns AONB.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium</b></p> <p>The viewpoint is part of a sequence of views (VP 1 to VP 3) from the Hertfordshire Way between Graveley Lane and Willian Road, and representative of views north for road users along the A1(M). The view takes in intensively farmed arable fields in the foreground. The elevated aspect in relation to the valley landscape to the north and the backdrop of the Chilterns has some value. The view is not from a recognised viewpoint and is not of unspoilt countryside, with high voltage pylons a detracting feature across the view. Due to proximity with the A1(M), it is unlikely this location is visited specifically to experience the views available, despite being part of a recognised recreational trail.</p> <p>The sensitivity is judged to be medium, based on the medium susceptibility to change and medium value of view.</p>	
<p><b>Size / Scale of Effect:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale of Change in view:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct views of the Proposed Development to the west;</li> <li>• Solar panels would form a new horizontal feature that would interrupt views of the lower-lying parts of the valley;</li> <li>• The foreground of views would change from arable field to species-rich grassland;</li> <li>• As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographical Extent:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Angle:</b> Oblique to bridleway</li> <li>• <b>Distance to Proposed Development:</b> 60m</li> <li>• <b>Extent of area over which changes would be visible:</b> Similar views intermittently at gaps in the vegetation for an approximately 100m stretch of the bridleway to the north</li> </ul>



<p>would be screened in the view. However, views of the lower-lying parts of the valley would remain interrupted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Degree of contrast / integration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built development is sparse in the view, but with pylons a notable linear feature.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermittent view from gaps in vegetation alongside the bridleway.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Duration:</b> Long-term.</p>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).</p>
<p><b>Magnitude: Medium</b> (short-term); <b>Medium</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>There would be direct views of the Proposed Development to the west. The new solar panels and associated structures would form a new horizontal feature across the foreground of the view, and interrupt views of the lower-lying part of the valley. Views of solar infrastructure would be inconsistent with the existing features of the view.</p> <p>The change in view is intermittently experienced by receptors, and oblique to their direction of travel, such that the impact is transient. In the medium- and long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the solar infrastructure such that the change in view would not be inconsistent with the existing features of the view, although views of the lower-lying parts of the valley would be screened.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would be medium in the short-term and remain medium in the long term.</p>	
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>In the short-term, the Proposed Development would result in a moderate to major level of effect as a result of the introduction of solar infrastructure within the foreground of the view, and the consequent loss of views towards the lower-lying part of the valley.</p> <p>In the long-term, once the mitigation planting is established then views of the solar infrastructure would be softened, and although there would still be a change to the view, the effect is judged to reduce to between a moderate and minor effect.</p>	
<p><b>Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:</b></p> <p>The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.</p>	

**Viewpoint 2 (VP 2):** Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary

**Grid Ref:** 522628, 228916

The view is from a bridleway along the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site. The field boundary between the Site and the bridleway is intermittently lined by vegetation, with views south and west of the Site available from gaps in the vegetation. Views south from this bridleway are principally of the Site, which forms the foreground and middle ground of the view. There are partial views of the rolling wooded hills of the Chilterns in the distant background of the view. High voltage pylons are notable as a linear feature across the view.

**Susceptibility to Change: Medium**

- Walkers / cyclists
  - At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are judged to be incidental to the receptor's use of the route.

**Value: Medium**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Part of the Hertfordshire Way and National Cycle Network Route 12;
- High voltage pylons across the view;
- Distant views of the Chilterns AONB.

**Sensitivity: Medium**

The viewpoint is part of a sequence of views (VP 1 to VP 3) from the Hertfordshire Way between Graveley Lane and William Road. The view south-west from this part of the bridleway is of large-scale intensively farmed arable fields. As a result of distance and the intervening landform and vegetation, the backdrop of the Chilterns is not a prominent feature in the view. Views from this bridleway are more open towards the east (away from the Site) where the bridleway is open onto the field and there is no intervening vegetation. High voltage pylons are a subtly detracting feature across the view. Overall, the view is judged to be an ordinary, but not unattractive view which from this location is unlikely to be visited specifically to experience the views available, despite being part of a recognised recreational trail.

The sensitivity is judged to be medium, based on the medium susceptibility to change and medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Direct views of the Proposed Development to the south and west;
  - Solar panels and associated infrastructure would form a new dominant feature of views to the south and west;
  - As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be screened in the view. However, all views to the south and west would be screened by this planting.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Built development is somewhat sparse in the view, but with pylons a notable linear feature.
- **Nature of the View:**

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Direct views
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 10m
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** Similar views intermittently at gaps in the vegetation for an approximately 100m stretch of the bridleway to the south. There are very limited or no views into the Site from the PRow to the north and west.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intermittent view from gaps in vegetation.</li> </ul>	
<b>Duration:</b> Long-term.	<b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).
<p><b>Magnitude: Large</b> (short-term); <b>Medium</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>There would be direct views of the Proposed Development to the south and west, which would be a dominant feature given the close proximity of the Site. Views of solar infrastructure would be inconsistent with the existing features of the view. The change in view is intermittently experienced by the receptor, and slightly oblique to their direction of travel.</p> <p>In the medium- and long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the solar infrastructure such that the Proposed Development would not be visible, but all views south and west would be screened from this section of footpath. This level of screening would be consistent with the adjoining sections of footpath to the north and west.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would be large in the short-term but reduce to medium / small in the medium- and long-term.</p>	
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>In the short-term, the Proposed Development would result in a major to moderate level of effect as a result of the introduction of solar infrastructure within the foreground of the view, and the consequent loss of views towards south and west.</p> <p>In the long-term, once the mitigation planting is established then views of the solar infrastructure would be screened; however all views south and west would also be screened by the planting from this section of the footpath. This would not be wholly inconsistent with the existing sequence of views from along this route, and therefore is judged to result in a moderate to minor level of effect.</p>	
<p><b>Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:</b></p> <p>The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.</p>	

<p><b>Viewpoint 3 (VP 3):</b> View east from the Hertfordshire Way, along the northern Site boundary  <b>Grid Ref:</b> 521660, 229083</p> <p>The view is from part of the Hertfordshire Way along the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site.</p> <p>The field boundary along the northern edge of the northern part of the site is generally enclosed by woodland or vegetation, such that for the most part there are limited or no views out from the Hertfordshire Way between VP 2 and VP 3. Views from the Hertfordshire Way do however open up on the approach to Willian Road, where VP 3 is located.</p> <p>Views east from this location are across gently rising large-scale arable fields with intermittent scattered trees and sections of hedgerow. Blocks of woodland frame views of the Site. The A1(M) sits along a ridgeline in the background of the view, with a wooded skyline beyond. High voltage pylons are notable as a linear feature across the background of the view.</p>	
<p><b>Susceptibility to Change: Medium to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape form part of the experience.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Value: Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a recognised viewpoint;</li> <li>• Part of the Hertfordshire Way; and</li> <li>• High voltage pylons and A1(M) in the view.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium to High</b></p> <p>The viewpoint is part of a sequence of views (VP 1 to VP 3) from the Hertfordshire Way between Graveley Lane and Willian Road. The view east is of large-scale arable fields extending towards the A1(M), framed by woodland and with a wooded backdrop. The view is not from a recognised viewpoint and is not of unspoilt countryside, with a simple pattern of fields and intermittent trees and hedgerows.</p> <p>The sensitivity is judged to be medium to high, considering the medium to high susceptibility to change and the medium value of view and that this location is one of the few sections along the Hertfordshire Way north of the Site that has open views.</p>	
<p><b>Size / Scale of Effect:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale of Change in view:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct views towards the Proposed Development to east;</li> <li>• Solar panels and associated infrastructure would form a new horizontal feature in views;</li> <li>• The Proposed Development would not interrupt the skyline due to their limited height;</li> <li>• As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be screened in the view.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Degree of contrast / integration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built development is somewhat sparse in the view, but with pylons a notable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographical Extent:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Angle:</b> Direct views</li> <li>• <b>Distance to Proposed Development:</b> 200m</li> <li>• <b>Extent of area over which changes would be visible:</b> Similar views available from approximately 75m either side of the viewpoint to the east and west.</li> </ul>

<p>linear feature, and the A1(M) a kinetic feature along the skyline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear and open view.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p><b>Duration:</b> Long-term.</p>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).</p>
<p><b>Magnitude: Medium</b> (short-term); <b>Small</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>There would be direct views of the Proposed Development to the east, which would form a new horizontal feature in the middle ground of the view and extending back towards the A1(M), and would sit below the skyline. Views of solar infrastructure would be inconsistent with the existing features of the view.</p> <p>In the medium- and long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the solar infrastructure, with the proposed planting reflecting the existing views of woodland, intermittent trees and hedgerows. The open aspect to the Hertfordshire Way would remain. The magnitude of change would be medium in the short-term, but reduce to small in the medium- and long-term.</p>	
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>In the short-term, the Proposed Development would result in a moderate to major level of effect as a result of the extent of solar infrastructure introduced within the middle ground of the view.</p> <p>In the long-term, once the mitigation planting is established then the Proposed Development would be screened such that whilst there would be a change in the view, it would be compatible with the existing view. The effect is judged to reduce to moderate to minor as the foreground of the view and skyline would be largely unchanged.</p>	
<p><b>Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:</b></p> <p>The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.</p>	

<p><b>Viewpoint 4 (VP 4):</b> View east from Graveley Lane  <b>Grid Ref:</b> 521812, 228447</p> <p>The view is from Graveley Lane heading east from Great Wymondley towards the A1(M). Graveley Lane is a slightly sunken lane in relation to the adjoining fields, and lined intermittently by tall hedgerows. The viewpoint is from a gap in the vegetation on the northern side of the road,</p> <p>Views east from Graveley Lane are focused along the road, with partial views into the arable field to the north, and more open views across the fields to the south where there is more limited vegetation in the verge. The view comprises a simple pattern of fields and intermittent trees and hedgerows.</p>	
<p><b>Susceptibility to Change: Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a medium susceptibility to change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Value: Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a recognised viewpoint;</li> <li>• Not part of a scenic route;</li> <li>• Limited views out from the road.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium</b></p> <p>The viewpoint is part of a sequence of views (VP 4 to VP 5) from Graveley Lane. Views from this part of Graveley Lane are contained by the adjoining landform and vegetation, such that views are generally only into the neighbouring fields. The view is simple in nature and has few detracting features.</p> <p>The sensitivity is judged to be medium to low, considering the medium susceptibility to change and the low value of view.</p>	
<p><b>Size / Scale of Effect:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale of Change in view:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partial views towards the Proposed Development to north through brief gap in vegetation;</li> <li>• Limited or no views of the Proposed Development to the south and east;</li> <li>• As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened in the view.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Degree of contrast / integration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built development is sparse.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A glimpsed view.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographical Extent:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Angle:</b> Oblique views</li> <li>• <b>Distance to Proposed Development:</b> 50m</li> <li>• <b>Extent of area over which changes would be visible:</b> Similar views to the south for approximately 500m stretch of Graveley Lane. This is the only location along this stretch with a view north through the gap in the hedgerow.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration:</b> Long-term.</p>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).</p>
<p><b>Magnitude: Small</b> (short-term); <b>Small</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>There would be partial views of solar panels through the gap in the hedgerow to the north, where the panels would be glimpsed briefly. The open aspect to the south side of the road would be maintained, with the Proposed Development to the south of Graveley Lane located further east than the viewpoint. The panels and associated infrastructure to the south side of Graveley Lane would be seen above the existing intervening hedgerow boundary, but below skyline vegetation.</p> <p>In the medium- and long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the Proposed Development from this part of Graveley Lane to the north, such that there would be a barely perceptible change in the view. The southern area would remain visible above</p>	

boundary hedgerows, but the screening lower parts of the development would be increased by maintaining hedgerows at a minimum of 3m.

The magnitude of change would be small in the short-term, as although the Proposed Development would be visible, it would be glimpsed from a very short section of Graveley Lane obliquely from the direction of travel. In the medium- and long-term once mitigation planting has established the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened and the impact would reduce to negligible to the north and small to the south.

**Effect:**

In the short-term, the Proposed Development would result in a minor level of effect as a result of the introduction of solar infrastructure into the view, but with these views being brief and glimpsed. In the medium- to long-term the effect would reduce to negligible in views to the north and minor in views to the south once planting is established.

**Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:**

The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.

<p><b>Viewpoint 5 (VP 5):</b> View east from Graveley Lane  <b>Grid Ref:</b> 522190, 228558</p> <p>The view is from Graveley Lane heading east from Great Wymondley towards the A1(M). Graveley Lane is a slightly sunken lane in relation to the adjoining fields and lined intermittently by tall hedgerows. The viewpoint is from a short stretch of the road not lined by hedgerows on either side, such that there are more open views to the adjoining fields.</p>		
<p><b>Susceptibility to Change: Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road users <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a medium susceptibility to change.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<p><b>Value: Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a recognised viewpoint; and</li> <li>• Not part of a scenic route.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium</b></p> <p>The viewpoint is part of a sequence of views (VP 4 to VP 5) from Graveley Lane. Views from this part of Graveley Lane are more open into the neighbouring fields. The view is simple in nature comprising arable fields with intermittent hedgerows and trees, with high voltage pylons and traffic along the A1(M) partially visible on the skyline.</p> <p>The sensitivity is judged to be medium, considering the medium susceptibility to change and the low value of view.</p>		
<p><b>Size / Scale of Effect:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale of Change in view:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct views towards the Proposed Development to north of Graveley Lane, partial views of Proposed Development south of Graveley Lane;</li> <li>• Close proximity would make solar panels a prominent feature in the short-term;</li> <li>• As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be screened in the view.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Degree of contrast / integration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built development is sparse.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An open view, partially filtered by vegetation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographical Extent:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Angle:</b> Direct views</li> <li>• <b>Distance to Proposed Development:</b> 15m</li> <li>• <b>Extent of area over which changes would be visible:</b> Similar views for approximately 250m stretch of road to the east, before Graveley Lane is in cutting and lined by vegetation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Duration:</b> Long-term.</p>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).</p>	
<p><b>Magnitude: Large</b> (short-term); <b>Medium</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>There would be direct views of solar panels and associated infrastructure to the north, where the Proposed Development would be in the foreground of views as road users pass the Site. To the south of Graveley Lane, there would be partial views of the Proposed Development beyond an existing hedgerow. As Graveley Lane passes the southern part of the Site (not at viewpoint) it transitions into a cutting such that the change in elevation would reduce the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>In the medium- and long-term, the proposed mitigation planting would screen the Proposed Development from along Graveley Lane, such that the view would comprise the road lined by a hedgerow to the north and open to the south. This would represent a change from the</p>		



existing views onto fields, but would be consistent with wider views from along Graveley Lane and the wider rural road network.

The magnitude of change would be large in the short-term, as a result of the close, direct of views solar panels to the north of Graveley Lane. Solar panels to the south would be largely screened by the existing intact boundary hedgerow. In the medium- and long-term once mitigation planting has established the Proposed Development would be screened, and as such views would reflect wider views from along Graveley Lane and the magnitude of change would therefore reduce to medium / small.

**Effect:**

In the short-term, the Proposed Development would result in a major to moderate level of effect due to the visibility of the northern part of the site. In the medium- to long-term the effect would reduce to moderate to minor once hedgerow planting along Graveley Lane is established and existing hedgerows to the south are grown to a minimum of 3m.

**Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:**

The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.

**Viewpoint 6 (VP 6):** View east from Great Wymondley

**Grid Ref:** 521529, 228475

The view is from a public footpath (PRoW Wymondley 005) as it crosses the former Motte and Bailey of Wymondley Castle in Great Wymondley, looking east towards the Site. The view illustrates that the extent of tree cover within and around Great Wymondley is such that there are very limited or no views towards the Site. During winter views would be filtered by the coalescence of twigs and branches of the layers of existing vegetation.

**Susceptibility to Change: High**

- Residents
  - Have a high susceptibility to a change of view.
- Walkers
  - In this location the views available are a part of the experience of the route.

**Value: Medium**

- View from a conservation area;
- Cultural association with Wymondley Castle; and
- Not a recognised viewpoint.

**Sensitivity: High**

The view is representative of residents and people walking in Great Wymondley. The viewpoint demonstrates the extent of tree cover within Great Wymondley, such that views from the village are enclosed by vegetation. There are partial views towards high voltage pylons and a stack on the skyline in the distant background of the view. In winter, it is likely that there will be slightly more open views out towards the east; however the extent of vegetation cover is such that it is expected these views would remain heavily filtered. The sensitivity is judged to be high, considering the high susceptibility to change and the medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Proposed Development would be screened by intervening vegetation.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Built development is sparse, but with high voltage pylons partially visible along the skyline.
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An enclosed view, with vegetation screening the Site.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** No view of Site.
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 330m
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** The view is representative of views from within the central and northern part of Great Wymondley

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Negligible** (short-term); **Negligible** (medium and long-term)

The Proposed Development would be screened by intervening vegetation during summer months, and in winter months is expected to be predominantly screened with views heavily filtered by vegetation.

The magnitude of change would be negligible from the short-term through to the long-term.

**Effect:**

The Proposed Development would result in a negligible level of effect.

Adverse/ **Neutral**/ Beneficial:

The Proposed Development would not be visible and therefore the effect would be neutral.

**Viewpoint 7 (VP 7):** View east from the Hertfordshire Way, south of Great Wymondley  
**Grid Ref:** 521527, 228124

The view is from a public footpath (PRoW Wymondley 002) looking east towards the Site. The viewpoint is located at a point along the footpath where it emerges to the east side of a hedgerow / tree belt. To the west of this hedgerow / tree belt, the tree belt intermittently screens or filters views out towards the east. From the viewpoint location there are more open views eastwards, including towards the northern part of the Site.

The view comprises gently undulating large-scale arable fields, interspersed with intermittent hedgerows and scattered trees. The landform rises towards the east away from the viewpoint to a wooded ridgeline which forms the skyline, with the A1(M) partially visible along this ridgeline. The Site is partially visible, with the part of the Site north of Graveley Lane visible in the background; and the part of the Site to the south of Graveley Lane predominantly screened by vegetation around Wymondley Priory, apart from a narrow glimpsed view into the Site.

**Susceptibility to Change: Medium to High**

- Walkers
  - At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape form part of the experience;

**Value: Medium**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Part of the Hertfordshire Way;

**Sensitivity: Medium**

Overall, the view is judged to be an ordinary, but not unattractive view which from this location is unlikely to be visited specifically to experience the views available, despite being part of a recognised recreational trail.

The sensitivity is judged to be medium to high, considering the medium to high susceptibility to change and the medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Partial views of Proposed Development in the background of the view;
  - As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be slightly more screened in the view, but would still be visible.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Built development is sparse.
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An open view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Direct, wide angle view with substantial screening of the southern part of the Site;
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 500m at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** Similar views for short stretch of Hertfordshire Way to the south

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Medium** (short-term); **Medium** (medium and long-term)

The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the background of the view as a new horizontal feature following the landform. The Proposed Development would sit below the skyline and relate to the existing field pattern in the view.

<p>In the medium- and long-term the proposed mitigation planting would slightly increase screening but would not fundamentally alter the visibility or impact of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would be medium in both the short- and long-term.</p>
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>In the short- and long-term, the Proposed Development would result in a moderate level of effect.</p>
<p><b>Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:</b></p> <p>The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.</p>

**Viewpoint 8 (VP 8):** View north from Stevenage Road

**Grid Ref:** 522082, 227173

The view is from Stevenage Road looking north towards the Site, from east of Little Wymondley.

Views from Stevenage Road are enclosed by tall boundary hedgerows on the approach into Little Wymondley, and close to the A1(M); however, there is a gap in the vegetation opposite the junction to Chantry Lane where there are more open views out from the road. Views here are of the adjoining arable field, with intermittent trees and blocks of woodland. The rising landform to the north curtails any longer-distance views towards the Site. The view is representative of views for local road users, and representative of views for residents at Little Wymondley.

**Susceptibility to Change: Medium to High**

- Residents at Little Wymondley
  - Have a high susceptibility to a change of view.
- Road users
  - Have a medium susceptibility to a change of view.

**Value: Medium to Low**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Not a scenic route; and
- Simple view onto arable fields.

**Sensitivity: Medium**

The view comprises undulating arable fields with intermittent trees along the skyline. The view is not from a recognised viewpoint and is not of unspoilt countryside, with a simple pattern of fields and intermittent trees and hedgerows.

The sensitivity is judged to be medium, considering the medium to high susceptibility to change and the medium to low value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Proposed Development predominantly screened by intervening landform and vegetation;
  - As the hedgerow around the site boundary increases in height, in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be screened in views.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Built development is sparse.
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An open view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Oblique, wide angle view;
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 400m at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** Similar views for approximately 200m stretch of Stevenage Road

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Small to negligible** (short-term); **Negligible** (medium and long-term)

In the short-term the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened by intervening landform and vegetation, such that the magnitude of change would be small to negligible.

In the medium- to long-term the management of the hedgerow along the southern boundary to increase its height would increase the screening of the Proposed Development, such that the magnitude of change would be negligible.

<b>Effect:</b> In the short-term and long-term the Proposed Development would result in a minor to negligible level of effect.
<b>Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:</b> The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.

<p><b>Viewpoint 9 (VP 9):</b> View south from PRow Letchworth Garden City 002  <b>Grid Ref:</b> 522649, 229512</p> <p>The view is from a bridleway north of the Site, looking south towards the Site. The viewpoint is representative of views from other public rights of way north of the Site. Public rights of way through this area are along field margins, with fields lined by mature hedgerows such that views tend to be only across the adjoining field.</p> <p>Views west from this bridleway are across an arable field in the foreground, with hedgerows and woodland limiting long-distance views. High voltage pylons are intermittently visible in the distance. The background of the view includes a distant wooded skyline to the south. There are glimpsed views of the north-east corner of the Site through gaps in the vegetation.</p>	
<p><b>Susceptibility to Change: Medium to High</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape form part of the experience.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Value: Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a recognised viewpoint;</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium</b></p> <p>The view comprises an arable field with mature hedgerows and trees curtailing wider views. The view is judged to be an ordinary, but not unattractive view which from this location is part of the experience of the route.</p> <p>The sensitivity is judged to be medium, considering the medium to high susceptibility to change and the medium value of view.</p>	
<p><b>Size / Scale of Effect:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale of Change in view:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Development predominantly screened by intervening vegetation;</li> <li>• Glimpsed views of solar infrastructure through gaps in vegetation within a narrow part of the view;</li> <li>• As the proposed mitigation planting establishes it would partially screen the Proposed Development by reinforcing the existing belt of vegetation that filters views into the Site.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Degree of contrast / integration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Built development is sparse, but includes high voltage pylons in the direction of the Site</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An open view.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographical Extent:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Angle:</b> Direct view;</li> <li>• <b>Distance to Proposed Development:</b> 600m at closest point</li> <li>• <b>Extent of area over which changes would be visible:</b> Similar views for approximately 300m stretch of bridleway</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration:</b> Long-term.</p>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).</p>
<p><b>Magnitude: Small to negligible</b> (short-term); <b>Negligible</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be partially visible in a glimpsed view to the south, forming a horizontal feature that would be a narrow part of the overall view. From this distance the change in view would not alter the overall characteristics or perception of the</p>	



view. In the short-term the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened by intervening vegetation, such that the magnitude of change would be small to negligible. In the medium- to long-term the planting of a new woodland strip along the northern boundary would increase the screening of the Proposed Development, such that the magnitude of change would be negligible.

**Effect:**

In the short-term and long-term the Proposed Development would result in a minor to negligible level of effect.

**Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:**

The presence of the Proposed Development in the view would be adverse.

<p><b>Viewpoint 10 (VP 10):</b> View west from Graveley  <b>Grid Ref:</b> 522936, 227986</p> <p>The view is from a public footpath (PRoW Graveley 15) on the western edge of Graveley, looking west towards the Site. The footpath has an open boundary onto the field to the west.</p> <p>Views west from the footpath are across a rising arable field in the foreground towards the A1(M) which sits along a low ridgeline between Graveley and the Site, with traffic and highway infrastructure seen along the A1(M). There are trees intermittently visible alongside the A1(M) but it is otherwise open onto fields. High voltage pylons are visible along part of the skyline to the south.</p> <p>The Site is located on the opposite (west) side of the A1(M) and is therefore screened by the intervening landform.</p>	
<p><b>Susceptibility to Change: High to Medium</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a high susceptibility to change</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Walkers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are judged to be incidental to the receptors use of the route.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Value: Low</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not a recognised viewpoint; and</li> <li>• View degraded by prominence of motorway corridor.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sensitivity: Medium</b></p> <p>The view comprises an arable field and the A1(M) which due to the traffic along the route is a detracting and degrading feature in the view. Highway infrastructure associated with the A1(M) sits along the skyline, along with high voltage pylons to the south.</p> <p>The sensitivity is judged to be medium, considering the medium to high susceptibility to change and the low value of view.</p>	
<p><b>Size / Scale of Effect:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Scale of Change in view:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Development screened by intervening landform.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Degree of contrast / integration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A1(M) is a linear highway feature across the skyline of the view.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An open view.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Geographical Extent:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Angle:</b> Direct view (residents); Oblique view (walkers)</li> <li>• <b>Distance to Proposed Development:</b> 200m at closest point</li> <li>• <b>Extent of area over which changes would be visible:</b> Similar views for approximately 300m stretch of footpath / local road</li> </ul>
<p><b>Duration:</b> Long-term.</p>	<p><b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).</p>
<p><b>Magnitude: No change</b> (short-term); <b>No change</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>The Proposed Development would be screened by the intervening landform, such that there would be no change to views as a result of the Proposed Development.</p>	
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>The Proposed Development would have a neutral effect on views.</p>	

Adverse/ **Neutral**/ Beneficial:  
There would be no change in view.

**Viewpoint 11 (VP 11):** View west from Jacks Hill, north of Graveley

**Grid Ref:** 523199, 228623

The view is taken from Jacks Hill road which is part of the B197 north of Graveley. The viewpoint is taken from the pavement looking west towards the Site. This section of road has an open boundary along its western boundary.

Views west are across an arable field in the foreground towards the A1(M) where traffic and other highway infrastructure is notable in the view. The Chilterns are visible in the distant background, beyond the A1(M). There are high voltage pylons and a telecommunications mast across the skyline of the view.

The Site is located on the opposite (west) side of the A1(M) and the ground level of the Site is screened by intervening landform and vegetation.

**Susceptibility to Change: Medium**

- Road users
  - Have a medium susceptibility to change

**Value: Medium to Low**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Not part of a scenic route;
- View degraded by prominence of motorway corridor;
- Brief glimpsed view.

**Sensitivity: Medium**

The view takes in an intensively farmed arable field in the foreground, with the A1(M) a visible and degrading feature due to the traffic along the route. The Chilterns are visible in the background of the view, although an appreciation of the Chilterns is reduced by the prominence of traffic along the A1(M). The view is judged to be a not unattractive view, but one which is unlikely to be visited specifically to experience the views available and one which is incidental to the receptors use of the road.

The sensitivity is judged to be medium to low, based on the medium susceptibility to change and medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Proposed Development predominantly screened by intervening landform and vegetation;
  - Upper parts of closest panels to the eastern boundary of the northern part of the Site may be slightly visible, but seen behind traffic along the A1(M);
  - No change to visibility of the Chilterns in the background;
  - As the proposed mitigation planting establishes in the medium- and long-term, the Proposed Development would be screened in the view.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - A1(M) is a linear highway feature across the middle ground of the view;
  - Proposed Development seen in the context of intervening highway infrastructure such as signage;

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Oblique, wide-angled view
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 400m at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** Similar views for approximately 300m stretch of local road

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nature of the View:</b></li> <li>• An open view.</li> </ul>	
<b>Duration:</b> Long-term.	<b>Reversibility:</b> Reversible (40 year lifespan).
<p><b>Magnitude: Negligible</b> (short-term); <b>Negligible</b> (medium and long-term)</p> <p>The upper parts of solar panels may be visible across part of the view but would be seen below the height of traffic along the A1(M). The panels would not interrupt views towards the Chilterns in the background of the view. The Proposed Development would be predominantly screened by the intervening landform and vegetation. Views from this route would be transient and glimpsed at an oblique angle.</p> <p>In the medium- to long-term once the proposed mitigation planting has established, it is expected to screen the upper parts of panels, such that there would be no views of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would be negligible in both the short- and long-term.</p>	
<p><b>Effect:</b></p> <p>The Proposed Development would have a negligible effect on views.</p>	
<p>Adverse/ <b>Neutral</b>/ Beneficial:</p> <p>The presence of the Proposed Development in the view is judged to result in a neutral effect.</p>	

**Viewpoint 12 (VP 12):** View west from PRoW Graveley 008, part of the Hertfordshire Way  
**Grid Ref:** 524193, 227533

The viewpoint is from an elevated position on the Hertfordshire Way to the east of the Site, looking west across the low-lying landscape towards the Chilterns. The view is representative of views towards the Site from the east.

Views west are far-reaching and have an open aspect as a result of the elevated position. The view is across large-scale open arable fields, with the broad valley appearing extensively wooded, and with high voltage pylons across the view. Part of the Chilterns hills form the backdrop of the view across the skyline. Stevenage is notable in the view to the south, with the Lister Hospital a prominent building.

The Site is not visible in the view as a result of the extensive intervening vegetation.

**Susceptibility to Change: High**

- Walkers
  - At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are an important part of the experience

**Value: Medium**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Part of the Hertfordshire Way;
- High voltage pylons across the view;
- Distant views of the Chilterns AONB.

**Sensitivity: High**

Views from along this ridgeline are far-reaching across the low-lying valley landscape, with the Chilterns visible in the background of the view. Detracting elements include the high number of high voltage pylons across the view, and prominence of the Lister Hospital in Stevenage, but these elements do not degrade the overall quality of the view.

The sensitivity is judged to be high, based on the high susceptibility to change and medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Proposed Development screened by intervening vegetation.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Energy infrastructure (high voltage pylons) visible across the view;
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An open view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Direct, panoramic view
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 1.5km at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** The location is representative of views from elevated positions east of the A1(M).

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: No change** (short-term); **No change** (medium and long-term)

The Proposed Development would not be visible as a result of the intervening tree cover across the view. There would therefore be no change to the view.

**Effect:**

The Proposed Development would have no effect.

Adverse/ **Neutral**/ Beneficial:

The Proposed Development would not be visible.

**Viewpoint 13 (VP 13):** View north from PRow Wymondley 022

**Grid Ref:** 521607, 225624

The viewpoint is taken from an elevated position on a bridleway (PRow Wymondley 022) south of the Site, south of Titmore Green, and west of Stevenage.

The view demonstrates that mature hedgerow cover alongside the footpath limits the availability of views out towards the north, but that intermittently there are views available. Views are across an undulating landscape principally in arable use, and with hedgerows, woodland and intermittent trees limiting any long-distance views. High voltage pylons are a prominent feature across the middle ground and background of the view, being the dominant feature of the skyline.

The Site is not readily distinguishable as a result of distance, the angle of view, and intervening vegetation and landform.

**Susceptibility to Change: Medium to High**

- Walkers
  - At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are a part of the experience.

**Value: Medium**

- Not a recognised viewpoint; and
- High voltage pylons across the view.

**Sensitivity: Medium**

Views from this part of the landscape are relatively contained by landform and vegetation. The view includes high voltage pylons across the middle ground and background of the view which detract from its scenic quality.

The sensitivity is judged to be medium, based on the medium to high susceptibility to change and medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - Potentially glimpsed views of the Proposed Development in the distance, but the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened by intervening landform and vegetation.
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Built development within the view, and energy infrastructure (high voltage pylons) visible across the skyline;
- **Nature of the View:**
  - A partly enclosed view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Oblique, narrow view
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 2.3km at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** The location is representative of views from elevated south of Titmore Green

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Negligible** (short-term); **Negligible** (medium and long-term)

A narrow part of the Proposed Development would potentially be glimpsed in the background of the view, but the Site is not easily distinguishable in the existing view, and is not a focus of the background of the view. The limited visibility of the Proposed Development is such that the change in view would be negligible in the short- and long-term.

**Effect:**

The Proposed Development would have a negligible effect on views.

Adverse/ **Neutral**/ Beneficial:

The presence of the Proposed Development in the view is judged to result in a neutral effect.



**Viewpoint 14 (VP 14):** View north-east from PRow Langley 001, part of the Chiltern Way  
**Grid Ref:** 519217, 224817

The viewpoint is from an elevated position along the Chiltern Way located approximately 4.5km south-east of the Chilterns AONB. From south of the viewpoint, views are more enclosed by vegetation, but as the Chiltern Way emerges onto the steep north-east facing slopes there are panoramic views across the landscape.

Views are of an undulating arable landscape interspersed with belts of trees and vegetation. Settlement is evident across the view, with the towns of Stevenage and Hitchin visible. There are high-voltage pylons across the middle ground of the view which often break the skyline, and a wind farm in the distance to the north on the horizon.

The Site is partially visible between the middle ground and background of the view.

**Susceptibility to Change: High**

- Walkers
  - At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are an important part of the experience

**Value: Medium**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Part of the Chiltern Way;
- High voltage pylons across the view;
- Expansive and panoramic views.

**Sensitivity: High**

Views from along this part of the Chiltern Way are far-reaching and panoramic across an undulating arable landscape in the foreground, with the middle ground and background of the view including settlement and extensive energy infrastructure. The view has an expansive quality due to the extent of visibility.

The sensitivity is judged to be high, based on the high susceptibility to change and medium value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the distant part of the middle ground of the view;
  - The Proposed Development would form a thin horizontal band of uniform appearance in the view, and would be perceived at this distance as a tonal change in colour assimilated within trees and woodland in the view, which are of a similar darker tonal colour;
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Proposed Development would be seen beyond and between high voltage pylons
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An open and panoramic view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Direct, panoramic view
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 4km at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** The location is representative of views from a short section of the Chiltern Way.

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Small** (short-term); **Small** (medium and long-term)

The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the distance, forming a thin horizontal band of uniform appearance across a small proportion of the overall view. The

Proposed Development would be assimilated within the woodland in the background of the view and whilst visible would not be prominent as at this distance it would not appear obviously utilitarian or industrial in character. The impact would be experienced across a short section of the Chiltern Way.

In the short- and long-term the magnitude of change is judged to be small.

**Effect:**

The Proposed Development would have a minor effect in the short- and long-term as a result of distance and the small proportion of the overall view impacted, such that the Proposed Development would be broadly compatible with the view.

**Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:**

The presence of the Proposed Development would be a subtle change to the view, but would be adverse.

**Viewpoint 15 (VP 15):** View east from Hitchin Lane, north of St Ippolyts  
**Grid Ref:** 519636, 227621

The viewpoint is from a local road north of St Ippolyts, between the Site and Hitchin. The view is representative of views from this part of the landscape west of the Site, from which views are only intermittently available.

Views are of an undulating landscape, with the A602 prominent in the middle ground of the view, and high voltage pylons prominent across the skyline of the view. The view is fairly well-wooded with tree belts and woodland across the view providing integrating the settlement and infrastructure in the view.

The Site is partially visible in the background of the view, identifiable in front of the A1(M) which is distinctive due to the visibility of traffic along the road.

**Susceptibility to Change: Medium**

- Road users
  - Have a medium susceptibility to change.

**Value: Medium to Low**

- Not a recognised viewpoint;
- Not part of a scenic route;
- View degraded by prominence of A road and high voltage pylons across the view;
- Brief glimpsed view.

**Sensitivity: Medium**

The view comprises undulating fields with intermittent tree belts. The A602 and high voltage pylons along the skyline are prominent degrading features within the view. The sensitivity is judged to be medium, considering the medium susceptibility to change and the medium to low value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the background of the view;
  - The Proposed Development would form a thin horizontal band in the view;
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Proposed Development would be seen beyond and between high voltage pylons, and in the context of linear highway infrastructure and traffic.
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An open view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Direct view
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 2.5km at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** Intermittent locations within this part of the landscape west south-east of Hitchin.

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Small** (short-term); **Small** (medium and long-term)

The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the distance, forming a thin horizontal band across a small proportion of the overall view. The Proposed Development would be assimilated within the woodland in the background of the view and whilst visible would not be prominent. The impact would be experienced briefly from the route. In the short- and long-term the magnitude of change is judged to be small.

**Effect:**

The Proposed Development would have a negligible effect in the short- and long-term as a result of distance and the small proportion of the overall view impacted, such that the Proposed Development would be broadly compatible with the view.

**Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:**

The presence of the Proposed Development would be a subtle change to the view, but would be adverse.

**Viewpoint 16 (VP 16):** View east from Deacon Hill in the Chilterns AONB  
**Grid Ref:** 512682, 229799

The viewpoint is from Deacon Hill, a prominent hill in the Chilterns AONB and an area of open access land close to the Chiltern Way and Icknield Way long distance trails. The view is taken as representative of views towards the Site from the AONB.

Views from this location are far-reaching and panoramic from the chalk scarp in the Chilterns AONB, with the aspect of views generally across the lower-lying landscape to the north as opposed to the direction of the Site in the east. Views east are of a rolling wooded arable landscape, with settlement at Hitchin and Stevenage visible across the background of the view.

The Site is not easily distinguishable from this distance, but is partially visible beyond Hitchin within a part of the view characterised by settlement.

**Susceptibility to Change: High**

- Walkers
  - At this location, the views available over the surrounding landscape are an important part of the experience

**Value: High**

- Prominent open access land in the Chilterns AONB;
- Expansive and panoramic views.

**Sensitivity: High**

Views from this part of the Chilterns are far-reaching and panoramic, but with the focus of views generally towards the north away from the Site. The view has an expansive quality due to the extent of visibility.

The sensitivity is judged to be high, based on the high susceptibility to change and high value of view.

**Size / Scale of Effect:**

- **Scale of Change in view:**
  - The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the distant background of the view;
  - The Proposed Development would form a thin horizontal band in a narrow part of the view;
- **Degree of contrast / integration:**
  - Proposed Development would be seen in a part of the view characterised by settlement and energy infrastructure.
- **Nature of the View:**
  - An open and panoramic view.

**Geographical Extent:**

- **Angle:** Direct, panoramic view
- **Distance to Proposed Development:** 9km at closest point
- **Extent of area over which changes would be visible:** The location is representative of views from the Chilterns, which are infrequent towards the Site.

**Duration:** Long-term.

**Reversibility:** Reversible (40 year lifespan).

**Magnitude: Negligible** (short-term); **Negligible** (medium and long-term)

The Proposed Development would be partially visible in the distance, forming a thin horizontal band across a small proportion of the wide, panoramic views. The Proposed Development would be assimilated within the woodland in the background of the view and whilst visible would not be prominent, and seen in the context of intervening settlement at Hitchin.

In the short- and long-term the magnitude of change is judged to be negligible.

**Effect:**

The Proposed Development would have a negligible effect in the short- and long-term as a result of distance and the small proportion of the overall view impacted, such that the Proposed Development would be compatible with the view.

**Adverse/ Neutral/ Beneficial:**

The presence of the Proposed Development would be a subtle change to the view but would be adverse.