



Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Allington Lane Solar Farm

16/11/2023



Disclaimer

Neo Environmental Limited shall have no liability for any loss, damage, injury, claim, expense, cost or other consequence arising as a result of use or reliance upon any information contained in or omitted from this document.

Copyright © 2023

The material presented in this report is confidential. This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of Locogen Consulting Ltd. The report shall not be distributed or made available to any other company or person without the knowledge and written consent of Locogen Consulting Ltd or Neo Environmental Ltd.

Neo Environmental Ltd	
Head Office - Glasgow: Wright Business Centre, 1 Lonmay Road, Glasgow. G33 4EL T 0141 773 6262 E: info@neo-environmental.co.uk	
Warrington Office: Cinnamon House, Crab Lane, Warrington, WA2 0XP. T: 01925 661 716 E: info@neo-environmental.co.uk	Rugby Office: Valiant Suites, Lumonics House, Valley Drive, Swift Valley, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV21 1TQ. T: 01788 297012 E: info@neo-environmental.co.uk
Ireland Office: C/O Origin Enterprises PLC, 4-6 Riverwalk, Citywest Business Campus Dublin 24, D24 DCW0, T: 00 353 (1) 5634900 E: info@neo-environmental.ie	Northern Ireland Office: 83-85 Bridge Street Ballymena, Co. Antrim BT43 5EN T: 0282 565 04 13 E: info@neo-environmental.co.uk

Prepared For:

Locogen Consulting Ltd



Prepared By:

Michael Doran BSc (Hons.)

Kathryn Blade BSc (Hons.) MSc

	Name	Date
Edited By:	Michael Doran	16/11/2023
Checked By:	Colleen Patterson	16/11/2023
	Name	Signature
Approved By	Paul Neary	

CONTENTS

Contents	4
Executive Summary	6
Introduction	8
Methodology	10
Guidance and other Information used in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	10
Development Description	11
Site Description	12
Establishment of the Receiving Environment.....	13
Assessment of Effects.....	13
Study Area.....	13
Effects Scoped Out.....	14
Landscape Effects.....	14
Visual Effects	19
Duration and Quality of Effects	25
Significance Criteria.....	25
Cumulative Effects	27
Fieldwork.....	29
Interaction of landscape and visual effects with other environmental factors including historic landscapes	29
Selection of Viewpoints.....	30
Photomontages.....	30
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).....	31
Regulatory / Policy Framework	33
Baseline Environment Condition & Constraints	39
Outline Methodology	39
Landscape Character Assessment	40
Landform.....	50
Land use and Settlement.....	53

Future Baseline	53
Impact Assessment (Construction & Operational Phases)	55
Construction Phase	55
Operational Phase	56
Cumulative Effects	62
Mitigation Measures	64
Residual Effects	65
Conclusion	66
Construction Effects	66
Landscape Effects (Operational Phase)	66
Visual Effects (Operational Phase)	67

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Neo Environmental Ltd has been appointed by Locogen Consulting Ltd (the “Applicant”) to undertake a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for a proposed solar farm (the “Proposed Development”) on lands at Allington Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire, England (the “Application Site”).
- 1.2. The LVIA considers the potential direct and indirect effects of the Proposed Development upon the landscape resources, views and visual amenity receptors within the existing landscape and visual baseline across a 5km study zone.
- 1.3. The Proposed Development will be located within agricultural land and is bound by a mixture of mature trees, hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing, with thick forestry adjacent to the southern boundary of the eastern section, and adjacent to the western boundaries of the western section.
- 1.4. Any removal of existing field hedgerows and trees within or around the periphery of the Proposed Development will be accommodated by the introduction of proposed infill and mitigation hedgerow planting within and along the outer boundaries where required.

Landscape Effects:

- 1.5. The Proposed Development is located within Landscape Character Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland as shown in **Figure 1.1 – Landscape Character Areas: Appendix 1A**
- 1.6. The main landscape effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the introduction of PV Panels within fields previously used for agricultural practices. The introduction of the solar farm will lead to a change of character within the confines of the Proposed Development boundary, i.e. where the Proposed Development is physically located. It is considered that the development will alter the landscape character within the confines of the site, adding an industrial character to the site and immediate site surroundings where views are possible.
- 1.7. Indirect change will occur outside of the Proposed Development boundary, where the visibility of the Proposed Development has an influence on the perception of the character of the landscape. The indirect change in landscape character is greatest in its immediate and close surroundings where open and partial views are possible within an approximately 1km radius from the development boundary.

- 1.8. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 1km and 5km from the Site boundary). Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development, the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in accessible views.

Visual Effects:

- 1.9. The majority of residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located mainly to the south and north of the Proposed Development in the form of one-off houses.
- 1.10. The highest visual effects will be experienced within an approximately 200m radius of the Proposed Development boundary, from locations with open or partial views of the Proposed Development. However, receptors experiencing visibility beyond 500m have been found to be extremely limited given the level of existing vegetation and landform screening the majority of views. Therefore, the possible views from many of these locations are often glimpsed and fleeting in nature.
- 1.11. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents, path and road users with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 200m are considered to range from **Medium to High** depending on the openness of views and intervening screening by vegetation.
- 1.12. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents, path and road users with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 500m are considered to be **Medium** due to views being mostly screened intervening landform and vegetation.
- 1.13. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents, path and road users with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 500m to 1km are considered to be **Low** due to views being mostly screened intervening landform and vegetation.
- 1.14. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents, path and road users with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 1km to 5km are considered to be **Negligible** due to views being mostly screened intervening landform and vegetation.
- 1.15. The Proposed Development will add an industrial feature to the view, however in time, introduced mitigation infill screen planting will reduce views towards the Proposed Development.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.16. This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) identifies and assesses the potential effects of the proposed Solar Farm (the “Proposed Development”) on the landscape and visual resource of the study area on lands at Allington Lane, Eastleigh, Hampshire, England. It identifies the mitigation and compensation measures that will be implemented to prevent, reduce or offset potential adverse landscape and visual effects or enhance potential beneficial effects, where possible. The proposed solar farm is located on lands circa 0.74km southeast of Eastleigh and circa 2km north of Southampton (the “Application Site”).
- 1.17. This report considers how:
- Landscape effects associated with a development relate to changes to the fabric, character and quality of the townscape resource and how it is experienced; and
 - Visual effects relate closely to landscape effects, but also concern changes in views as visual assessment is also concerned with people’s perception and response to changes in visual amenity.
- 1.18. Landscape and visual effects are interrelated with other environmental effects but are assessed separately. Whilst elements of cultural heritage such as heritage landscapes are important elements of the landscape and contribute to its character and influence its quality and value, effects on the significance of these designated features and their setting do not form part of this assessment.
- 1.19. The following figures are included in **Appendix 1A**;
- Figure 1.1 – Landscape Character Areas
 - Figure 1.2: Landscape Designations with ZTV;
 - Figure 1.3 – Viewpoints Locations with ZTV
 - Figure 1.4 – Viewpoints 1 & 2
 - Figure 1.5 – Viewpoints 3 & 4
 - Figure 1.6 – Viewpoints 5 & 6
 - Figure 1.7 – Viewpoint 1 PM

- Figure 1.8 – Viewpoint 2 PM
- Figure 1.9 – Viewpoint 3 PM
- Figure 1.10 – Viewpoint 6 PM
- Figure 1.11 – Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)

METHODOLOGY

GUIDANCE AND OTHER INFORMATION USED IN THE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1.20. The following sources and guidelines were used in the assessment:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)*,¹
- *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals*;²
- *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*;³
- *IEMA Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Guidance*⁴
- *Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)*⁵.
- *Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment*⁶.

¹ <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/notes-and-clarifications-on-aspects-of-the-3rd-edition-guidelines-on-landscape-and-visual-impact-assessment-glvia3-consultation/>

² <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/visualisation/>

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691184/landscape-character-assessment.pdf

⁴ <https://www.iema.net/download-document/236735#:~:text=Judgements%20should%20be%20based%20on,appeal%20hearings%20and%20public%20inquiries.>

⁵ <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/11806/to-be-published-final-local-plan-april-2022-v4.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-and-implementation/planning-policy-guidance/landscape-character-assessment>

- *Hampshire County Council Landscape Character Assessments*⁷.
- *Winchester County Council Landscape Character Assessment*⁸.
- *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*⁹.
- *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy*¹⁰.
- *National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure*¹¹.
- *Draft National Policy Statement for Electricity Network Infrastructure*¹².
- *Planning Practice Guidance*¹³.

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

- 1.21. The proposed solar farm will consist of the construction of PV panels mounted on metal frames, new access tracks, underground cabling, perimeter fencing with CCTV cameras and access gates, a temporary construction compound and all ancillary grid infrastructure and associated works.

7

https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/landscape/integratedcharacterassessment/character_areas

⁸ <https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/landscape---countryside/landscape-character-assessment/>

9

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

¹⁰ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79522de5274a2acd18bd53/1938-overarching-nps-for-energy-en1.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-policy-statements-for-energy-infrastructure>

¹² <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmbeis/1151/report.html>

¹³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy>

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.22. The Application Site lies at an elevation of approximately 7-17m AOD and covers a total area of c. 44.3 hectares. It is centred at approximate UK National Grid Reference (NGR) E 447754 N 116809 and the nearest town of Eastleigh is located c.0.74km northwest of the Proposed Development, with the city of Southampton located approximately 2km to the south, at its closest point. The Application Site is situated in a rural setting, surrounded by villages and settlements within the nearby area. The villages of Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke, and West End are situated c. 0.54km east, c.0.68km north, c.1.43km northwest, c.1.3km south, respectively.
- 1.23. The Application Site comprises of seven fields of agricultural land which is split into two sections, southwest and northeast, by a railway line situated c.10m from the Proposed Development boundary. The fields are bound by a mixture of mature trees, hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing, with woodland to the adjacent south-west and south-east. .
- 1.24. The Proposed Development is located 1.25km north of the M27 motorway and other A and B roads such as the B3354, B3037, and the A335 which are situated c. 1.24km south, c.0.92 east, c.1.3km north, and c.1.89km northwest, respectively. Local roads include Hogwood Lane, which is located adjacent to the southern boundary, and Allington Lane which runs north-south through the north-eastern section, . The site will be accessed from an entrance point off Hogwood Lane to the south ('Route A') and from Allington Lane ('Route B') to the north, as discussed in the accompanying Traffic and Transport Assessment.
- 1.25. The surrounding area comprises of the River Itchen, which at its nearest point is located c.0.51km northwest, and flows into a small water body located c. 8m south, and the Itchen Valley Country Park, situated c. 0.32km southwest. A series of local industrial units are located on the southwestern adjacent boundary and Chalcroft Business Park is located 260m southeast of the Proposed Development. Southampton Airport is located c. 1.84km west of the Application Site. The Proposed Development lies northwestern to the adjacent, consented Chalcroft Solar Park (Ref: 12/71539).

Assessment Process

- 1.26. The assessment is undertaken based on the following key tasks and structure:
- Establishment of the Baseline or receiving environment;
 - Appreciation of the Proposed Development; and

- Assessment of effects.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

- 1.27. A baseline study has been undertaken through a combination of desk-based research and site appraisal in order to establish the existing conditions, including landscape value, susceptibility and sensitivity of the landscape and visual resources of the study area. Desk based research has involved a review of mapping and aerial photography, relevant planning and policy documents, existing Landscape Character Assessments and other relevant documents and publications.

ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

- 1.28. The landscape and visual impact assessment seeks to identify, predict and evaluate the significance of potential effects to landscape characteristics and established views. The assessments are based on an evaluation of the value and susceptibility, and therefore sensitivity to change and the magnitude of change for each landscape or visual receptor.
- 1.29. The assessment acknowledges that landscape and visual effects change over time as the existing landscape evolves and proposed planting establishes and matures. The assessment therefore reports on likely effects during both construction and operation of the Proposed Development. The visibility of the Proposed Development in the landscape or view will vary according to the existing screening effects of local topography, structures and buildings, intervening existing vegetation and type and height of the proposed structures.

STUDY AREA

- 1.30. A core study area of a 5km radius has been set from the application site boundary for the assessment. The core study area has been selected to identify potential significant landscape and visual impacts within County Hampshire. The extent of the study area has been identified through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping (refer to **Figure 1.2: Appendix 1A**), a review of maps, aerial photography and site survey data. It is acknowledged that the Proposed Development may be visible from locations beyond the core study area of

5km and as such, it is important to note that the core study area defines the area within which potential effects could be significant, rather than defining the extent of visibility.

EFFECTS SCOPED OUT

- 1.31. It is envisaged that the Proposed Development will have a design life of at least 40 years. It will therefore become a long-term feature in the landscape following the completion of construction works. The assessment takes account of this in the determination of residual landscape and visual effects.
- 1.32. Effects arising from the process of decommissioning of the Proposed Development are considered to be of a similar nature and duration to those arising from the construction process and therefore have not been considered separately in this chapter. Where this assessment refers to potential construction effects of structures, these are also representative of predicted decommissioning effects.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 1.33. Landscape effects describe the impact on the fabric or structure of a landscape or landscape character.
- 1.34. The assessment of landscape effects requires the identification of the components of the landscape. The landscape components are also described as landscape receptors and comprise the following:
- Individual landscape elements or features;
 - Specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects; and
 - Landscape character, or the distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements (natural and man-made) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another.
- 1.35. The assessment identifies the interaction between these components and the Proposed Development during the construction and operational phases. The condition of the landscape and any evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape will also be documented and described.

Landscape Value

- 1.36. Landscape value is frequently addressed by reference to international, national, regional and local designations, determined by statutory and planning agencies. However, absence of such a designation does not necessarily imply a lack of quality or value. Factors such as accessibility and local scarcity can render areas of nationally unremarkable quality, highly valuable as a local resource. The quality and condition are also considered in the determination of the value of a landscape. The evaluation of landscape value is undertaken with reference to the definitions stated in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Landscape Value

LANDSCAPE VALUE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Nationally designated or iconic, unspoilt landscape with few, if any, degrading elements.
Medium	Regionally or locally designated landscape, or an undesignated landscape with locally important landmark features and some detracting elements.
Low	Undesignated landscape with few if any distinct features or with several degrading elements.

Landscape Susceptibility

- 1.37. Landscape susceptibility relates to the ability of a particular landscape to accommodate the Proposed Development. Landscape susceptibility is appraised through consideration of the baseline characteristics of the landscape, and in particular the scale or complexity of a given landscape.
- 1.38. The evaluation of landscape susceptibility is undertaken with reference to a three-point scale, as outlined in **Table 1.2**.

Table 1.2: Landscape Susceptibility Criteria

LANDSCAPE SUSCEPTIBILITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
--------------------------	-------------------------

High	Small scale, intimate or complex landscape considered to be intolerant of even minor change.
Medium	Medium scale, more open or less complex landscape considered tolerant to some degree of change.
Low	Large scale, simple landscape considered tolerant of a large degree of change.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.39. Landscape sensitivity to change is determined by employing professional judgement to combine value and susceptibility in order to determine landscape sensitivity, with reference to the table outlined below.

Table 1.3: Landscape Sensitivity to Change Criteria

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Landscape characteristics or features with little or no capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering their present character. Landscape designated for its international or national landscape value or with highly valued features. Outstanding example in the area of well cared for landscape or set of features that combine to give a particularly distinctive sense of place. Few detracting or incongruous elements.
Medium-High	Landscape characteristics or features with a low capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering their present character. Landscape designated for regional or county-wide landscape value where the characteristics or qualities that provided the basis for their designation are apparent or a landscape with highly valued features locally. Good example in the area of a well-cared for landscape or set of features that combine to give a clearly defined sense of place.
Medium	Landscape characteristics or features with moderate capacity to absorb change without fundamentally altering their present character. Landscape designated for its local landscape value or a regional designated landscape where the characteristics and qualities that led to the designation of the area are less apparent or are partially eroded or an

	undesigned landscape which may be valued locally – for example an important open space. An example of a landscape or a set of features which is relatively coherent, with a good but not exceptional sense of place - occasional buildings and spaces may lack quality and cohesion.
Medium-Low	Landscape characteristics or features which are reasonably tolerant of change without detriment to their present character. No designation present or of little local value. An example of an un-stimulating landscape or set of features; with some areas lacking a sense of place and identity.
Low	Landscape characteristics or features which are tolerant of change without detriment to their present character. An area with a weak sense of place and/ or poorly defined character/ identity. No designation present or of low local value or in poor condition. An example of monotonous unattractive visually conflicting or degraded landscape or set of features.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

1.40. Magnitude of change is an expression of the size or scale of change in the landscape, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and reversibility of the resultant effect. The variables involved are described below (from Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute and IEMA, 2013):

- The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost, the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;
- The extent to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or by addition of new ones;
- Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are integral to its distinctive character;
- The geographic area over which the landscape effects will be felt (within the site itself; the immediate setting of the site; at the scale of the landscape type or character area; on a larger scale influencing several landscape types or character areas); and

- The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary or partially reversible).

1.41. Changes to landscape characteristics can be both direct and indirect. **Direct change** occurs where the Proposed Development will result in a physical change to the landscape within or adjacent to the site. **Indirect changes** are a consequence of the direct changes resulting from the Proposed Development. They can often occur away from the site (for example, off-site construction staff parking) and may be a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway (for example, a new road or footpath construction may increase public access). Indirect changes may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects. The magnitude of change affecting the baseline landscape resource is based on the classification of criteria set out in **Table 1.4**.

Table 1.4: Magnitude of Landscape Change Criteria (Landscape Effects)

MAGNITUDE OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
None	No change.
Negligible	Little perceptible change.
Low	Minor change, affecting some characteristics and the experience of the landscape to an extent; and Introduction of elements that is not uncharacteristic.
Medium	Noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape; and Introduction of some uncharacteristic elements.
High	Noticeable change, affecting many key characteristics and the experience of the landscape; and Introduction of many incongruous developments.
Very High	Highly noticeable change, affecting most key characteristics and dominating the experience of the landscape; and Introduction of highly incongruous development.

VISUAL EFFECTS

- 1.42. Visual effects are determined by the extent of visibility and the nature of the visibility (i.e. how a development is seen within the landscape); for example, whether it appears integrated and balanced within the visual composition of a view or whether it creates a focal point.
- 1.43. Adverse visual effects may occur through the intrusion of new elements into established views, which are out of keeping with the existing structure, scale and composition of the view. Visual effects may also be beneficial, where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view, or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view.

Receptors

- 1.44. For there to be a visual impact, there is the need for a viewer. Views experienced from locations such as settlements, recognised routes and popular vantage points used by the public have been included in the assessment. Receptors are the viewers at these locations. The degree to which receptors, i.e. people, will be affected by changes as a result of the Proposed Development depends on a number of factors, including:
- Receptor activities, such as taking part in leisure, recreational and sporting activities, travelling or working;
 - Whether receptors are likely to be stationary or moving and how long they will be exposed to the change at any one time;
 - The importance of the location, as reflected by designations, inclusion in guidebooks or other travel literature, or the facilities provided for visitors;
 - The extent of the route or area over which the changes will be visible;
 - Whether receptors will be exposed to the change daily, frequently, occasionally or rarely;
 - The orientation of receptors in relation to the site and whether views are open or intermittent;
 - Proportion of the developments that will be visible (full, sections or none);

- Viewing direction, distance (i.e. short-, medium- and long-distance views) and elevation;
- Nature of the viewing experience (for example, static views, views from settlements and views from sequential points along routes);
- Accessibility of viewpoint (public or private, ease of access);
- Nature of changes (for example, changes in the existing skyline profile, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new man-made objects, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale, landform and change to the degree of visual enclosure); and
- Nature of visual receptors (type, potential number and sensitivity of viewers who may be affected).

Value of the View

- 1.45. Value of the view is an appraisal of the value attached to views and is often informed by tourist maps and in guidebooks, literature, or art. Value can also be indicated by the provision of parking or services and signage and interpretation. The nature and composition of the view is also an indicator. The value of the view is determined with reference to the definitions outlined in **Table 1.5**.

Table 1.5: Value of the View

VALUE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Nationally recognised view of the landscape, with no detracting elements.
Medium	Regionally or locally recognised view, or unrecognised but pleasing and well composed view, with few detracting elements.
Low	Typical or poorly composed view often with numerous detracting elements.

Visual Susceptibility

- 1.46. GLVIA3 outlines that the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is a function of:

- The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at a particular location; and
 - The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and visual amenity they experience at particular locations.
- 1.47. For example, where views are an important part of the experience often indicate a higher level of receptor susceptibility. Visual susceptibility is determined with reference to the three-point scale and criteria outlined in **Table 1.6**.

Table 1.6: Visual Susceptibility

SUSCEPTIBILITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Receptors for which the view is of primary importance and are likely to notice even minor change.
Medium	Receptors for which the view is important but not the primary focus and are tolerant of some change.
Low	Receptors for which the view is incidental or unimportant and are tolerant of a high degree of change.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.48. Sensitivity to change considers the nature of the receptor; for example, a person occupying a residential dwelling is generally more sensitive to change than someone working in a factory unit. The importance of the view experienced by the receptor also contributes to an understanding of the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change as well as the value attached to the view.
- 1.49. A judgement is also made on the value attached to the views experienced. This takes 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 appearance in guidebooks or on tourist maps, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (sign boards, interpretive material) and references to them in literature or art; and

- Possible local value; it is important to note that the absence of view recognition does not preclude local value, as a view may be important as a resource in the local or immediate environment due to its relative rarity or local importance.

1.50. The visual sensitivity to change is based on interpretation of a combination of all or some of the criteria outlined in **Table 1.7**.

Table 1.7: Sensitivity to Change Criteria

VISUAL SENSITIVITY	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
High	Users of outdoor recreational facilities, on recognised national cycling or walking routes or in nationally designated landscapes. Residential buildings.
Medium-High	Users of outdoor recreational facilities, in highly valued landscapes or locally designated landscapes or on local recreational routes that are well publicised in guidebooks. Road and rail users in nationally designated landscapes or on recognised scenic routes, likely to be travelling to enjoy the view.
Medium	Users of outdoor recreational facilities including public open space in moderately valued landscapes. Users of primary transport road network, orientated towards the site, likely to be travelling for other purposes than just the view.
Medium-Low	People engaged in active outdoor sports or recreation and less likely to focus on the view. Primary transport road network and rail users likely to be travelling to work with oblique views of the Proposed Development or users of minor road network.
Low	People engaged in work activities indoors, with limited opportunity for views of the Proposed Development.

Magnitude of Visual Change

- 1.51. The magnitude of the visual effect resulting from the development at any particular viewpoint or receptor is based on the size or scale of change in the view and the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The variables involved, as per the GLVIA3 (Page 115), Landscape Institute, IEMA, 2013, are described below:
- *“The scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the development;*
 - *The degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape form, scale, mass, line, height, skylining, back-grounding, visual clues, focal points, colour and texture;*
 - *The nature of the view of the Proposed Development, in relation to the amount of time over which it will be experienced and whether views will be full, partial or glimpses;*
 - *The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor, distance of the viewpoint from the development and the extent of the area over which the changes will be visible; and*
 - *The duration of the effects (short term, medium term or long term) and the reversibility of the effect (whether it is permanent, temporary or partially reversible).”*
- 1.52. The magnitude of visual effect from any particular viewpoint or receptor is based on the interpretation of the above range of factors and is set out in **Table 1.8**.

Table 1.8: Magnitude of Visual Change Criteria (Visual effects)

MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL CHANGE	CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA
None	No change in the existing view.
Negligible	The Proposed Development will cause a barely discernible change in the existing view.
Low	The Proposed Development will cause very minor changes to the view over a wide area or minor changes over a limited area.

Medium	The Proposed Development will cause modest changes to the existing view over a wide area or noticeable change over a limited area.
High	The Proposed Development will cause a considerable change in the existing view over a wide area or a significant change over a limited area.
Very High	The Proposed Development will cause significant changes in the existing view over a wide area or a change which will dominate over a limited area.

DURATION AND QUALITY OF EFFECTS

- 1.53. It is envisaged that the Proposed Development will have a design life of at least 40 years. It will therefore become a long-term feature in the landscape following the completion of construction works. The assessment takes account of the duration and quality of the landscape and visual effects during construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. **Table 1.9** provides the definition of the duration of landscape and visual effects.

Table 1.8: Definition of Duration of Effects

DURATION	DESCRIPTION
Temporary	Effects lasting one year or less.
Short Term	Effects lasting one to seven years.
Medium Term	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
Long Term	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years.
Permanent	Effects lasting over sixty years.

- 1.54. Both, landscape and visual effects, can be beneficial (positive), adverse (negative) or Neutral according to the definitions set out in the **Table 1.10**.

Table 1.9: Definition of Quality of Effects

QUALITY OF EFFECTS	DESCRIPTION
Neutral	This will neither enhance nor detract from the landscape character or view.
Beneficial (positive)	This will improve or enhance the landscape character or view.
Adverse (negative)	This will reduce the quality of the existing landscape character or view.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

- 1.55. The objective of the assessment process is to identify and evaluate the potentially significant effects arising from the Proposed Development. The assessment will identify the residual

effects likely to arise from the finalised design considering mitigation measures and the change over time.

- 1.56. The significance of effects is assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor and the predicted magnitude of effect in relation to the baseline conditions. In order to provide a level of consistency and transparency to the assessment and allow comparisons to be made between the various landscape and visual receptors subject to assessment, the assessment of significance is informed by pre-defined criteria as outlined in **Table 1.11**. When assessing significance, individual effects may fall across several different categories of significance and professional judgement is therefore used to determine which category of significance best fits the overall effect to a landscape or visual receptor.

Table 1.10: Categories of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

SIGNIFICANCE CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT
Profound	An effect that obliterates sensitive characteristics within the landscape and/ or visual environment.
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the landscape and/ or visual environment.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration, or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the landscape and/ or visual environment.
Moderate	An effect that alters the landscape in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/ or visual environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the landscape and/ or visual environment but without significant landscape and/ or visual consequences.
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant landscape and/ or visual consequences.

- 1.57. The significance of the effect is determined by considering the magnitude of the effect and the quality of the baseline environment affected by the Proposed Development. The basis for consideration of the significance of effects is included in **Plate 1.1**, overleaf.

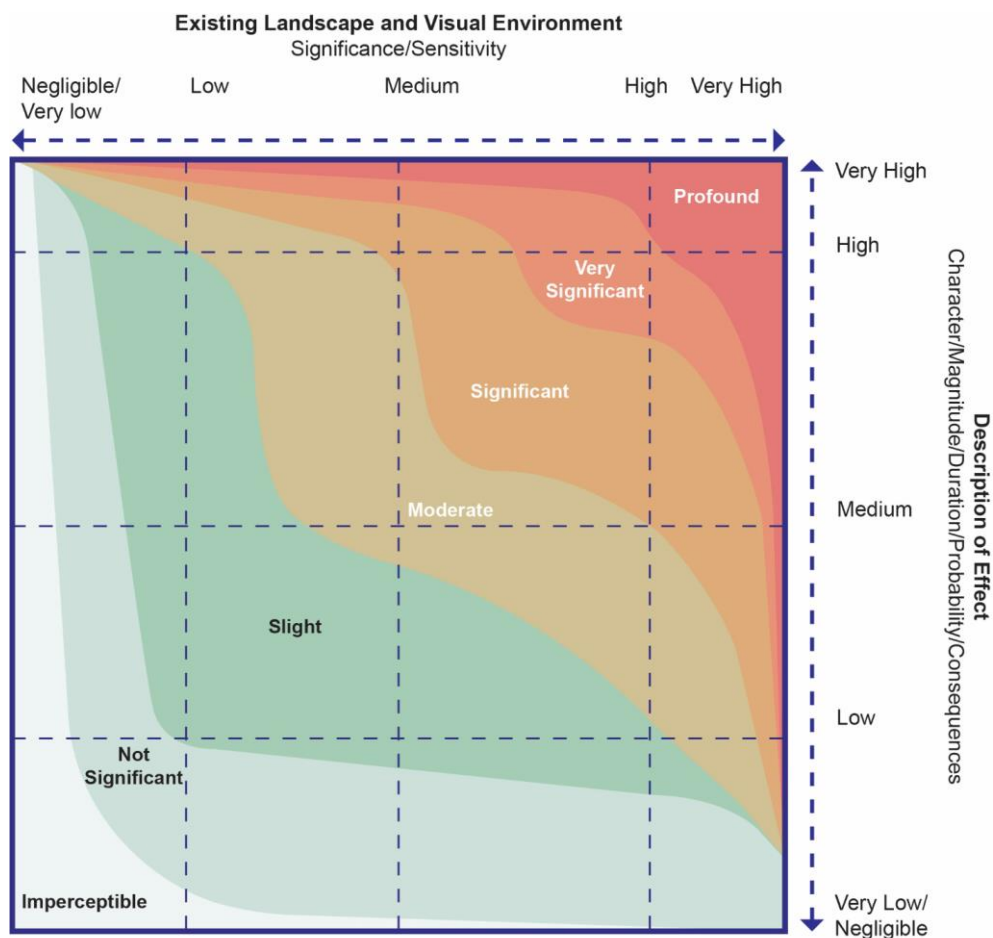


Plate 1.1 Basis for consideration of significance of effects

- 1.58. Effects will be assessed for all phases of the Proposed Development. Construction and decommissioning effects are considered to be temporary, short-term effects which occur during the construction and decommissioning phases only. Operational/ residual effects are those long-term effects, which will occur as a result of the presence or operation of the Proposed Development.
- 1.59. The quality of each effect is based on the ability of the landscape character or visual receptor to accommodate the Proposed Development, and the impact of the development within the receiving context. Once this is done, the quality of the effect is then assessed as being neutral, beneficial or adverse. A change to the landscape or visual resource is not considered to be adverse simply because it constitutes an alteration to the existing situation.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- 1.60. The approach used to determine cumulative effects has drawn on guidance on cumulative impact assessment published by the GLVIA3. Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or views as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of a similar type and scale.
- 1.61. Cumulative effects are those that accrue over time and space from a number of development activities. The impact of the Proposed Development is considered in conjunction with the potential impacts from other projects or activities which are both reasonably foreseeable in terms of delivery (i.e. have planning consent or relevant applications which have been submitted and are in the planning system) and are located within a realistic geographical scope, where environmental impacts could act together with the Proposed Development to create a more significant overall effect.
- 1.62. Combined effects are those resulting from a single development (the Proposed Development) on any one receptor that may collectively cause a greater effect.

Magnitude of Cumulative Effects

- 1.63. The principle of magnitude of cumulative effects makes it possible for the Proposed Development to have a major impact on a particular receptor, while having only a minor cumulative impact in conjunction with permitted developments of similar scale and nature as the Proposed Development.
- 1.64. The evaluation of the magnitude of cumulative change is based on the criteria outlined in the assessment methodology for landscape and visual effects as stated above as well as on the interpretation of the following parameters:
- The additional extent, direction and distribution of existing and other developments in conjunction with the Proposed Development;
 - The distance between the viewpoint, the Proposed Development and the cumulative developments; and
 - The landscape setting, context and degree of visual coalescence of the Proposed Development and cumulative developments.

Significance of Cumulative Effects

- 1.65. As for the assessment of landscape and visual effects, the significance of any cumulative effects follows a same classification as illustrated in Image 1 - Basis for consideration of significance of effects, as listed in **Table 1.11**, and will be assessed as Profound, Very Significant, Moderate, Slight, Not Significant, Imperceptible.
- 1.66. The cumulative assessment focuses on potential cumulative effects relating to the main permanent structure of a cumulative development. This is due to the uncertainty of the timing of construction activities for identified developments. As a result, temporary structures and activity relating to construction have not been considered within the cumulative assessment.

FIELDWORK

- 1.67. Site surveys of the study area were carried out in May 2023 identifying the potential visibility of the Proposed Development and key viewpoints within the study area. The extent of the study area has been identified through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping, refer to **Figure 1.3: Appendix 1A**, a review of maps and aerial photographs, and site survey data. Photomontages showing the existing view and the superimposed development on photomontages have been produced from key representative viewpoints, considering topography, existing buildings, screening vegetation and other localised factors. The viewpoints and photomontages are included in **Appendix 1A** (refer to **Figure 1.1 – Figure 1.11**).

INTERACTION OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS WITH OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INCLUDING HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

- 1.68. The landscape and visual impact assessment focuses on the physical and visual appearance and character of the landscape as it is experienced today.
- 1.69. Landscape is also a consideration under other environmental aspects and assessments, e.g. the natural landscape (biodiversity), the geological landscape, the cultural/historical landscape (cultural heritage) and the human landscape.
- 1.70. While it is evident that an interaction of effects exists between the landscape and visual environment and these other related landscape environments/environmental factors – not least in terms of potential for interactions of effects – assessments under these areas are

generally addressed separately by other competent specialists in separate appendices of this planning application. However, the presence/absence of such indicators can inform judgements on quality and therefore, sensitivity.

SELECTION OF VIEWPOINTS

- 1.71. It is not feasible to take photography from every possible viewpoint located in the study area. Photography has been taken from viewpoints, which are representative of the nature of visibility at various distances and in various contexts. Viewpoint photography is used as a tool to come to understand the nature of likely significant effects. The selection process of viewpoint locations is consistent with the Guidance Note; *'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'*, Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, 17 September 2019 and is as follows:
- Production of a 5km radius ZTV mapping from the solar panel area of the Proposed Development at a height of 3.5m;
 - Identification and selection of representative viewpoints showing typical open or intermittent views within a local area, which will be frequently experienced by a range of viewers; and
 - Identification and selection of specific viewpoints from key viewpoints in the landscape such as protected focal points and views.
- 1.72. Following dialogue with Tim Dyer the Urban and Landscape Design Team Leader for Eastleigh Borough Council on the 20th April 2023, the locations of the viewpoints within the study area were determined through desktop analysis and site surveys.

PHOTOMONTAGES

- 1.73. Photomontages are photorealistic visualisations produced using specialist software. They illustrate the likely future appearance of the Proposed Development from a specific viewing point. They are useful tools for examining the impact of the development from the following a number of critical viewpoint positions along the public road network within the study area.

- 1.74. However, photomontages in themselves can never provide the full picture in terms of potential effects, they can only inform the assessment process by which judgements are made. A visualisation can never show exactly what the Proposed Development will look like in reality due to factors such as; different lighting, weather and seasonal conditions which vary through time and the resolution of the image. As the photomontages are representative of viewing conditions encountered, some of them may show existing buildings or vegetation screening some or all parts of the developments. Such conditions are normal and representative.
- 1.75. The images provided give a reasonable impression of the scale of the development and the distance to the development, but it is recognised and understood within the industry that they can never be 100% accurate. It is recommended that decision-makers and any interested parties or members of the public should ideally visit the viewpoints, where visualisations can be compared to the 'real life' view, and the full impact of the Proposed Development can be understood.
- 1.76. The landscape and visual impact assessment identified a range of viewpoints located within the study area at varying distances from the Application Site to show the effect of the Proposed Development in key close, middle and distant views.
- 1.77. Photomontage images have been produced according to the following industry guidelines:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition, Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2013; and
 - 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals', Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, 17 September 2019.

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV)

- 1.78. Mapping the extent of the area from which a development is likely to be visible is commonly referred to as a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV).
- 1.79. ZTV mapping has been produced for a 5km radius from the solar panel area of the Proposed Development to illustrate the theoretical visual extent of the highest point of the Proposed Development. The zone of theoretical visibility has been assessed based upon an initial 3.5m panel height above the finished ground floor level.

- 1.80. It should be noted that ZTV mapping does not consider the effects of seasons, lighting, weather conditions or visibility over distance. Moreover, a ZTV does not consider the screening effects of existing vegetation or built structures and therefore indicates a 'worst case scenario'. Therefore, ZTV mappings' principal use was to assist during the desktop viewpoint selection process identifying viewpoints for further analysis on site.

REGULATORY / POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 1.81. A hierarchy of strategies, policies and legislation operates to underpin the management of both land and landscape. Some of these enable statutory designation at national level and others provide for local designations and appropriate management, with the aim of conserving and protecting the quality of the landscape.
- 1.82. The following section provides a summary of legislation and planning policy which is of direct relevance to the assessment of the landscape and visual effects.

National Planning Policy

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN1), adopted 2011¹⁴

- 1.83. EN1 sets out the Government's policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure, to help deliver the Government's climate change objectives. It clearly sets out the need for new low carbon energy infrastructure to contribute to climate change mitigation.
- 1.84. EN1 explains that "new energy infrastructure is likely to have some negative effects on landscape/visual amenity... and the impacts on landscape/visual amenity will sometimes be hard to mitigate". Projects should be "designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape".

NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN3), adopted 2011¹⁵

- 1.85. EN3 provides the primary basis for recommendations by the Planning Inspectorate on applications it receives for nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure. EN3 states that "*proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design in respect of landscape and visual amenity*".

NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN5), adopted 2011¹⁶

¹⁴ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79522de5274a2acd18bd53/1938-overarching-nps-for-energy-en1.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79c422e5274a684690bf53/1940-nps-renewable-energy-en3.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a74877840f0b61938c7e2d9/1942-national-policy-statement-electricity-networks.pdf>

- 1.86. EN5 provides the primary basis for recommendations made by the Planning Inspector on applications it receives for electricity networks infrastructure. EN5 sets out that “local landscape, topography and screening” should be considered, and that new planting for screening can reduce the impacts on visual receptors.

Draft Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (Draft EN1), 2021¹⁷

- 1.87. In the energy White Paper: ‘Powering our Net Zero Future’ (2020) the government committed to completing a review of the existing energy NPS to ensure they reflect current energy policy and that the policy framework can deliver investment in the infrastructure needed for the transition to net zero. Draft EN1 was issued for consultation in September 2021 to identify whether the revised document is fit for purpose.
- 1.88. Draft EN1 states that “applicants need to consider the importance of ‘good design’ criteria” and identifies key considerations for a landscape and visual assessment.

Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (Draft EN3)¹⁸

- 1.89. Draft EN3 was also issued for consultation in September 2021. It includes a new section on Solar Photovoltaic Generation and landscape, visual and residential amenity including the following relevant statements:

“Applicants should follow the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.6 of EN-1 when developing projects and will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape/visual impact of solar PV arrays. Whilst there is an acknowledged need to ensure solar PV installations are adequately secured, required security measures such as fencing should consider the need to minimise the impact on the landscape and visual impact”.

“The applicant should have regard in both the design layout of the solar farm, and future maintenance plans, to the retention of growth of vegetation on boundaries, including the opportunity for individual trees within the boundaries to grow on to maturity. The landscape and visual impact should be considered carefully at the pre-application stage. Existing hedges and established vegetation, including mature trees, should be retained wherever possible. Trees and hedges should be protected during construction. The impact of the Proposed

¹⁷ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ba4ca40f0b645ba3c5a56/9780108508493.pdf>

¹⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015236/en-3-draft-for-consultation.pdf

Development on established trees and hedges should be informed by a tree survey or a hedge assessment as appropriate”.

“Applicants should consider the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges. Efforts should be made to minimise the use and height of security fencing. Where possible projects should utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to screen security fencing and use natural features, such as vegetation planting, to assist in site security. Projects should minimise the use of security lighting. Any lighting should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises impact”.

Draft National Policy Statement for Electricity Network Infrastructure (Draft EN5)¹⁹

- 1.90. Draft EN5 includes reference to *“a degree of flexibility in the location of the development’s associated substations, and applicants should consider carefully their placement in the local landscape.”*

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), September 2023²⁰

- 1.91. The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these should be applied, and the environmental role of sustainable development. The NPPF sets out that development should be *“visually attractive and sympathetic to local character”*.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)²¹

- 1.92. PPG ‘Natural Environment’ sets out the benefits of landscape character assessments and the importance of considering Green Infrastructure in the early stages of schemes.
- 1.93. The section on ‘Renewable and Low Carbon Energy’ sets out that: *“The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.”*

¹⁹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1015238/en-5-draft-for-consultation.pdf

²⁰ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1182995/NPPF_Sept_23.pdf

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy>

Local Planning Policy

- 1.94. This section contains a review of related district planning policy which relate to the study area from Eastleigh Borough Council. Planning policy from the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), adopted in April 2022, which are relevant to the landscape and visual assessment, are outlined in detail below.

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)²²

Policy S1 – Delivering Sustainable Development.

- 1.95. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Policy S1 states:
- 1.96. *“To be sustainable, new development in the Borough should:*
- *Meet community needs without compromising the identity of the Borough or its individual settlements, or the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*
 - *Have regard to the potential impacts of climate change, and the need to limit greenhouse gas emissions including through carbon sequestration and by promoting measures to design buildings and spaces which are adaptable to predicted climate change, and restrict development in areas at risk from flooding, minimise energy use and encourage the generation of renewable energy, and by minimising emissions from motorised transport, industrial activity and domestic uses.*
 - *Maintain, enhance, extend and connect the natural habitats within and landscape value of the Borough, extending natural habitats into new and existing development to achieve an environmental net gain.*
 - *When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find*

²² <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/media/11806/to-be-published-final-local-plan-april-2022-v4.pdf>

solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area”.

1.97. *“Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:*

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or*
- Where specific policies in that Framework or other international or national legislation indicate that development should be restricted”.*

Policy S5: Countryside and Settlement gaps

1.98. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Policy S5 states:

1.99. *“In permitting new development in the countryside the Borough Council will seek to avoid adverse impacts on the rural, woodland, riparian or coastal character, the intrinsic character of the landscape including the avoidance of adverse landscape impacts on areas adjoining national parks and their settings, the significance of heritage assets and on the biodiversity of the area.”*

Policy S9: Green Infrastructure

1.100. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Policy S9 states:

1.101. *“Through new development and other initiatives, the Borough Council will seek to achieve the provision, retention and/or enhancement of the following forms of multi-functional green infrastructure, including provision of.*

- Interconnected urban green infrastructure within the fine grain of existing and new development including green, cycle ways, paths and linkages between community facilities and open spaces to link community facilities.”*

Policy S12: Strategic footpath, cycleway and bridleway links

- 1.102. The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Policy S12 states:
- 1.103. *“The Borough Council in partnership with the highway authority will seek to create new, and improve existing, footpath, cycle and bridleway links throughout the Borough, connecting key destinations including the country parks, increasing access along the coast and to the South Downs National Park and improving connections between the parishes and Eastleigh Town Centre.*
- 1.104. *New development should integrate with existing routes and public rights of way and wherever possible maintain, protect and enhance their function. Development that would sever, obstruct or otherwise have a detrimental impact on the existing or proposed network of green routes as shown on the policies map will not be permitted.”*

Policy DM4: Zero or low carbon energy

- 1.105. *“The Borough Council will permit the development of infrastructure to:*
- *Generate zero or low carbon energy.*
 - *Has no significant adverse impact on the landscape or landscape features, biodiversity or the significance of heritage assets.*
 - *Does not involve the loss of land in public recreational use.*
 - *Does not involve the permanent loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV).”*

BASELINE ENVIRONMENT CONDITION & CONSTRAINTS

OUTLINE METHODOLOGY

- 1.106. A baseline study has been undertaken through a combination of both desk-based research and site appraisal to establish the existing conditions of the landscape and visual resources of the study area. Desk based research involved a review of mapping and aerial photography, relevant planning, and policy documents, alongside other relevant documents and publications. Landscape Character Assessments (LCA) were obtained from Eastleigh Borough Council, Hampshire Council and Winchester City Council. A study area radius of 5km from the Application Site boundary has been selected to identify potential significant landscape and visual effects (refer to Landscape Designation **Figure 1.2: Appendix 1A**). The extent of the study area has been defined via a combination of a desktop survey, including a review of maps and aerial photographs of the Application Site, and site survey data.
- 1.107. The study area was defined to an area where landscape and visual effects could potentially be significant rather than defining the extent of the visibility of the Proposed Development. The extent of the study area has been identified through the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map (refer to **Figure 1.3: Appendix 1A**), a review of maps and aerial photographs and site surveys. Given the nature of the Proposed Development works and existing site context, the visual extent, in reality, is often far less than 5km, and significant effects are mainly confined to immediately adjacent locations.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

County and District Landscape Character

- 1.108. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011²³ states that the Application Site lies within Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

Horton Heath Undulating Farmland Character Assessment.

- 1.109. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 describes the Application Site as Horton Heath Undulating Farmland. *“The unifying characteristics of this predominantly agricultural landscape are the gentle undulation of the landform and the pattern of medium-size fields, generally bounded by good hedges with mature hedgerow trees. Small blocks of woodland and copses are dispersed throughout the area. Water courses are scattered through the character area. The northeast boundary of the character area is delineated by the River Hamble and associated Alder Carr woodland.”*
- 1.110. It goes on to note: - *“There are a number of quite intrusive elements, notably the often-prominent built edges of Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath that form the northern boundary and ribbon development along Allington Lane in the north, including a variety of poorly screened industrial sites. Chalcroft Distribution Park is an industrial site established sometime in the first half of the 20th century as a rail distribution park. It now serves as a road haulage distribution centre. Aside from its access onto Burnetts Lane in the southeast, it is surrounded on all sides by SINC. The railway is a prominent feature at points, but the area extends beyond it to the southwest to merge with the Oaklands Woodland and Parkland (Area 10) and meet a low, but visually significant ridge which divides it from the M27 Corridor (Area 11).”*
- 1.111. Typical characteristics of the **Horton Heath Undulating Farmland** include:
- *“Undulating landform with frequent low ridges.*

²³ Available at: <https://www.eastleigh.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy-and-implementation/planning-policy-guidance/landscape-character-assessment>

- *Medium size fields usually with good hedges and hedgerow trees rather than woodlands.*
 - *Intrusive urban edges in some areas.*
 - *Unmanaged or inappropriately managed agricultural land.”*
- 1.112. The LCA states the Landscape Character Sensitivity of the Horton Heath Undulating Farmland as: - *“The area is predominantly undulating farmland with strong hedgerows and small blocks of scattered woodland. It is relatively large, complex and rural in character.”*
- 1.113. The LCA states the Visual Sensitivity of the Horton Heath Undulating Farmland area as: - *“Trees belts and hedgerow trees are notable features; however, the area is largely open, with rural views normally ending at wooded horizons.”*
- 1.114. The LCA states the Key Issues within the Horton Heath Undulating Farmland area as: -
- *“The visual intrusion of existing settlement edges at Bishopstoke, Fair Oak and Horton Heath and Hedge End.*
 - *The erosion of the rural character of Allington Lane through poor quality land management and poor screening of development.*
 - *Future development and land management changes within the area increasing intervisibility between settlements.”*

Oaklands Woodland and Parkland Landscape Character Assessment.

- 1.115. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 describes the Application Site as Oaklands Woodland and Parkland; *“The west of the area consists primarily of Itchen Valley Country Park and the woodland within it. East of the country park there are smaller areas of scattered woodland. Between the woodland there are medium-sized fields, used as pasture, quite often with intermittent hedges and barbed wire fences. Parkland is present around Oaklands House and Winslowe House.”*
- 1.116. It goes on to note: - *“The western boundary of the area conforms approximately to the boundary of the River Itchen SAC to the west. The top boundary follows the railway line that runs northeast. The bottom of the character area is defined in part by Allington Lane which then runs through the middle of the area. It is along this land that the development within this area has occurred.”*

1.117. Typical characteristics of the **Oaklands Woodland and Parkland** include:

- *“Undulating landform contrasting with the character areas to the west*
- *Woodland cover of conifers and deciduous trees*
- *Strong woodland character in western part of character area*
- *Sense of enclosure and restricted views*
- *Attractive parkland character to eastern part.”*

1.118. The LCA states the Landscape Character Sensitivity of the Oaklands Woodland and Parkland as: - *“The wooded character of the land to the west and the parkland character to the east are both important. Despite the proximity of the airport/motorway and the popularity of the country park, the area retains a sense of quiet.”*

1.119. The LCA states the Visual Sensitivity of the Oaklands Woodland and Parkland area as: - *“The woodland of Itchen Valley Country Park has an enclosed feel. The parkland of Oaklands and Winslowe houses are generally enclosed, however the landform and gaps in the tree cover create narrow or filtered views outside this area. “*

1.120. The LCA states the Key Issues within the Oaklands Woodland and Parkland area as: -

- *“The erosion of the rural character of Allington Lane through low levels of management and poor screening.*
- *The need to maintain woodland cover.*
- *The conflict between priorities of facilitating public access and nature conservation.*
- *The fragmentation of the green network due to the removal of hedgerows.”*

1.121. Landscape Character Areas which traverse the 5km study area are shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.122. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 1: - Broom Hill Farmland and Woodland** c. 3.63km northwest of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.123. The LCA states the key characteristics of the **Broom Hill Farmland and Woodland** as.

- *“Local dominance of major roads*
- *Open character to agricultural land*

- *Prominent woodland throughout.”*
- 1.124. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 2: - Upper Itchen Valley** c.0.61km north of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A.**
- 1.125. The LCA states the key characteristics of the **Upper Itchen Valley** as.
- *“Flat uninterrupted pasture of floodplain with absence of tree cover*
 - *Contrast between open pasture and wooded and urbanised valley sides*
 - *Natural and man-made water courses crisscrossing the valley floor*
 - *Fragmented wetland habitats*
 - *The parkland associated with The Mount Hospital*
 - *The open floodplain and recreation grounds separate the two settlements of Eastleigh and Bishopstoke.”*
- 1.126. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 3: - Lower Itchen Valley Floodplain** c. 0.63km west of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A.**
- 1.127. The LCA states the key characteristics of the **Lower Itchen Valley Floodplain** as.
- *“Pasture and meadow of flood meadows*
 - *Tree cover from ditch sides, tree-belts and small copses*
 - *Physical and auditory presence of M27, railway and airport*
 - *Limited access to the centre of the area*
 - *Distant wooded horizons*
 - *Sense of isolation*
 - *High nature conservation interest.”*
- 1.128. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 4: - Southampton Airport** c. 1.03km west of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A.**
- 1.129. The LCA states the key characteristics of the **Southampton Airport** as.

- *“Dominance of airport buildings*
- *Flat expanse of runways and grassland*
- *Views out to wooded horizons*
- *Views from the M27 across open airfield toward Itchen Valley*
- *Limited access*
- *Importance of eastern tree belt.”*

1.130. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 5: - Itchen Valley Sports Pitches** c. 2.12km west of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.131. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 states the key characteristics of the **Itchen Valley Sports Pitches** as.

- *“Open recreation areas*
- *The stream corridor through the area and the lakes at Lakeside Country Park*
- *Enclosure provided by treebelts*
- *Influence of urban edges and M27 motorway Flat expanse of runways and grassland.”*

1.132. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 6: - North Stoneham Park** c. 2.86km west of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.133. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 states the key characteristics of the **North Stoneham Park** as.

- *“Mature parkland trees*
- *Open parkland character to central areas*
- *Landform rising to the rest of former parkland.*
- *Low hedges, barbed wire fences and post and rail fences associated with horse grazing*
- *Wooded horizons.”*

- 1.134. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 7: - Bishopstoke- Fair Oak Woodland and Farmland and Area 7a: - Stroudwood Levels** located c. 1.74km north and c. 3.33km northeast respectively of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.
- 1.135. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 states the key characteristics of the **Bishopstoke- Fair Oak Woodland and Farmland** as.
- *“Undulating ridge*
 - *Frequent woodland blocks*
 - *Rectilinear pattern of small fields with good hedgerow trees*
 - *Small copses add to wooded character*
 - *Views across rural landscape from the northern edge and to the south from woodland clearings • Prominent roadside residential development*
 - *Distinct sub-area with a very strong hedgerow pattern to the northeast.”*
- 1.136. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 8: - Knowle Hill Farmland and Woodland** c. 2.86km west of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.
- 1.137. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 states the key characteristics of the **Knowle Hill Farmland and Woodland** as.
- *“Enclosed undulating valley landform and ridge*
 - *Varied pattern of field sizes and cultivation*
 - *Clusters of buildings and small fields along lanes*
 - *Views across valley to wooded horizons north and east*
 - *Urban influence in the western edge.”*
- 1.138. Located within 5km of the study area is **Area 11: M27 Corridor** c. 0.74km south of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.
- 1.139. The Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 states the key characteristics of the **M27 Corridor** as.
- *“Presence of motorway*

- *Proximity of urban edge and large areas of significant woodlands*
- *High ground to the west of the motorway, undulating to the north and east*
- *Small pasture fields often with unmanaged hedges*
- *Pockets of relatively quiet rural areas shielded by woodland and landform “Mature parkland trees.”*

1.140. The Application Site lies east of the landscape managed by Hampshire County Council. The Hampshire County Council Landscape Character Assessment²⁴ states that within 5km of the Application Site is **3c – Itchen Vally Landscape Character Area** located c. 3.10 west of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.141. The Hampshire County Council Landscape Character Assessment states the key characteristics of the **Itchen Vally Landscape Character Area** as.

- *“The Itchen is a classic chalk stream, running through an area of soft permeable rock, supplied by underground aquifers.*
- *A valley of contrasts from a small stream to a fast flowing river and then deep estuary but the largely undeveloped floodplain is a unifying feature.*
- *The stream and some of floodplain is internationally designated as a SAC because of its chalk stream habitat, rich in plants, invertebrates and fish.*
- *Important concentration of remnant water meadows.*
- *The valley floor is mainly neutral grassland, a complex mosaic of fen species rich meadow and improved meadows, considered to be the largest assemblage of species rich neutral grassland in England.*
- *The small villages and scattered farms sit comfortably within the valley.*

²⁴<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/landscape/integratedcharacterassessment>

- *An extremely rich built heritage and setting to Winchester and developed valley sides in lower reaches.*
- *Frequent minor crossing points marked by white parapets to bridges.*
- *The upper reaches support the most important watercress industry in the country.*
- *There is fairly good access to the valley by rights of way, and the Itchen Valley path follows the former towpath from Cheriton to Southampton.*
- *Internationally renowned as a fly-fishing river especially for wild brown and rainbow trout.”*

1.142. The Application Site lies south of the landscape managed by Winchester City Council. The Winchester City Council Landscape Character Assessment²⁵ states that within 5km of the Application Site is **LCA13 – Lower Itchen Valley** located c. 3.42 north of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.143. The Winchester City Council Landscape Character Assessment states the key characteristics of the **Lower Itchen Valley LCA** as.

- *“Wide flat, low-lying floodplain with gently rising valley sides containing river with many meanders and braided sections.*
- *The area includes a transition in the underlying geology, with the northern valley sides lying on chalk and the southern ones lying on clay.*
- *The alluvium-based soils in the valley floor have provided for both improved and unimproved nutrient rich pasture for sheep, cattle and more latterly horse grazing.*
- *A well-treed character. Individual specimens and belts of trees are commonly located along the river and its tributaries and on the valley sides.*

²⁵ [file:///C:/Users/MichaelDoran/Dropbox%20\(Neo%20Environmental\)%20old/PC/Downloads/WCC%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%202022%20Main%20Document.pdf](file:///C:/Users/MichaelDoran/Dropbox%20(Neo%20Environmental)%20old/PC/Downloads/WCC%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%202022%20Main%20Document.pdf)

- *A fairly irregular field pattern largely made up of paddocks and pasture resulting from the enclosure of historic water meadows.*
- *Historic features associated with the presence of the river and the Itchen Navigation include water mills, locks, carriers and drains from the flood meadow system.*
- *Habitats of national and European ecological importance including the clear alkaline river, fen/carr/swamp/reedbed, unimproved neutral grassland, calcareous grassland, standing open water, ephemeral headwaters and ancient semi-natural woodlands. The watercourse and banks are designated as a SSSI and the watercourse has also been designated as a SAC. Unimproved neutral grassland at Shawford Down is designated as a SINC.*
- *An enclosed and sheltered feel, in stark contrast to the open arable landscape to the east and west of the character area.*
- *Important landmark buildings and views such as St Cross Hospital and Twyford Church and the view from Shawford Down across the river valley to Twyford. This landscape provides the immediate setting for Winchester.*
- *The river valley provides a transport corridor and includes several 'B' roads, a main line rail line, numerous footpaths including the Itchen Way and the historic course of the LCA13 Lower Itchen Valley. In particular, the Hockley viaduct is an important landmark.*
- *Valley side settlements include Shawford, a village which developed in with the advent of the railway station."*

1.144. Located within 5km of the study area is LCA23 - Durley Claylands c. 1.38km east of the Application Site as shown in **Figure 1.1: Appendix 1A**.

1.145. The Winchester City Council Landscape Character Assessment 2011 states the key characteristics of the Durley Claylands as.

- *"Relatively low lying, gently undulating landscape with a geology ranging from a narrow strip of Reading Beds and wider strip of London Clay in the north around Colden Common, Lower Upham, Durley Street and Bishop's Waltham to the mixed*

clays, sands and loams of Lower Bagshot Sand and Bracklesham Beds around Durley and Durley Mill.

- *Land in northern part of character area drains into the Itchen, whilst that to the south drains into the Hamble*
- *Numerous ponds, streams, springs, wells and associated wetland habitats and mills, particularly relating to the Hamble which originates in the area.*
- *Varied landscape of arable and pasture agriculture, copses (including ancient woodland) and scattered settlement, historically resulting from the clearance of the Forest of Bere woodland.*
- *Small irregular fields associated with informal and piecemeal enclosure cover much of the area, although fields with more regular boundaries associated with the 18th and 19th century parliamentary enclosure acts are found around Lower Upham and Colden Common.*
- *Hedgerow and woodland network dominated by oak, ash, hawthorn, hazel, and field maple. Woodland generally assarted, and river associated species along the River Hamble.*
- *Numerous ancient narrow winding lanes, except in areas of parliamentary enclosure where the roads are straight with wide verges and clipped hedges with standard oaks.*
- *Historic parkland including park pale associated with Marwell Manor and park lug associated with Bishop's Waltham Palace.*
- *Numerous scattered farms and dwellings centred around Durley, together with the nucleated clay- chalk spring-line settlements of Colden Common and Bishop's Waltham*
- *Buildings of contrasting ages, from the historic cores of Bishop's Waltham and Durley to the high proportion of 19th and 20th century buildings in Durley Street, Colden Common and the outskirts of Bishop's Waltham."*

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.146. The Proposed Development site is located within the Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland. Within both the LCA's there are comments regarding Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity of the Landscape Character Areas.
- 1.147. The Horton Heath Undulating Farmland LCA describes the Landscape Character Sensitivity as:
- *"The area is predominantly undulating farmland with strong hedgerows and small blocks of scattered woodland. It is relatively large, complex and rural in character."*
- 1.148. The Horton Heath Undulating Farmland LCA describes the Visual Sensitivity as:
- *"Trees belts and hedgerow trees are notable features; however, the area is largely open, with rural views normally ending at wooded horizons."*
- 1.149. The Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA describes the Landscape Character Sensitivity as:
- *"The wooded character of the land to the west and the parkland character to the east are both important. Despite the proximity of the airport/motorway and the popularity of the country park, the area retains a sense of quiet."*
- 1.150. The Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA describes the Landscape Character Sensitivity as:
- *"The woodland of Itchen Valley Country Park has an enclosed feel. The parkland of Oaklands and Winslowe houses are generally enclosed, however the landform and gaps in the tree cover create narrow or filtered views outside this area."*
- 1.151. Based on the descriptions of the Landscape Character Sensitivity and Visual Sensitivity of the LCA's it has been deemed that the Sensitivity Valuation of the site has been assessed and is deemed **Medium - Low**.
- 1.152. The above valuations take into consideration the setting of the Proposed Development within both the Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA's. There is existing electrical infrastructure present within the existing landscape due to the consented Chalcroft Solar Park (Ref: 12/71539) northwest of the site.

LANDFORM

- 1.153. As outlined within the Eastleigh Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment and from fieldwork undertaken on-site and within the surrounding study area, the immediate study area lies in a within a gently undulating agricultural landscape, containing wooded areas, enclosed with well-established treelined hedgerow along the boundaries of the Proposed Development. The fields within the landscape are open in nature, however there is a presence well-established treelined hedgerows helping to enclose the Proposed Development as shown in **Image 1**. Looking northwest from the northeast section of the Proposed Development, established hedgerows require infill mitigation planting to further screen views towards the Proposed Development as shown in **Image 2**. The view looking north from the Public Right of Way (PRoW) shows the clear open view experienced by path users as shown in **Image 3**. Located east of Proposed Development is the existing Solar Farm and residential receptors. Glimpsed views of the Solar Farm are possible through the established treelined hedgerow as shown in **Image 4**.
- 1.154. Proposed mitigation planting noted on the **LEMP Figure 1.11 of Appendix 1A** will help further reduce views of the Proposed Development from residential, road and path using receptors.

Image 1: - View looking west from the northwest section of the Proposed Development (Field 4).



Image 2: - View looking northwest from the northeast section of the Proposed Development (Field 6).



Established treelined hedgerow.

Image 3: View looking north from the Public Right of Way (Field 6).



Image 4: View looking northeast towards the existing Solar Farm (Field 7).



LAND USE AND SETTLEMENT

- 1.155. The Proposed Development will be located within agricultural land and is bound by a mixture of mature trees, hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing, with woodland adjacent to the southeast and southwestern boundaries. Industrial features within the landscape are located southwest along Hogwood Lane and Chalcroft Business Park southeast of the Proposed Development.
- 1.156. The Application Site is situated in a rural setting, surrounded by villages and settlements within the nearby area. The villages of Horton Heath, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke, and West End are situated c. 0.54km east, c.0.68km north, c.1.43km northwest, c.1.3km south, respectively.
- 1.157. The immediate land-use which surrounds the site is mainly agricultural and pastureland. The medium to large field systems are enclosed with fence lined and hedgerow boundaries as well as pockets of woodland within the landscape.

FUTURE BASELINE

- 1.158. In landscape terms, if the works did not go ahead, the site and agricultural character will remain unchanged.

- 1.159. In visual terms, the content in available views will remain the same, although changes will occur to existing vegetation due to maturing, pruning or natural decay.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT (CONSTRUCTION & OPERATIONAL PHASES)

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

- 1.160. Areas experiencing landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will vary, depending on active construction works. During the temporary construction phase, there would be a notable increase of construction activity within the confines of the Application Site. The works will have a localised temporary disturbance to a small portion of the semi-rural landscape within the Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA's.
- 1.161. Construction phase effects will result in:
- Likely effects to landscape character or visual amenity within the locality or the wider study area as a result of the visibility of construction activities such as, the movement of construction vehicles along local roads, and other tall equipment such as machinery on site;
 - Effects of temporary site infrastructure, such as site traffic; and
 - Likely physical effects arising from the construction of the development will be confined to the Site and the area of the temporary construction compound.
- 1.162. The highest landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced in the vicinity of the development site, from locations with open or partial views of the site. Principal views of construction works will likely be experienced within a radius of up to approximately 500m from the boundary of the site from the north and south.
- 1.163. More distant views at the construction works, beyond 500m will be unlikely, given the amount of screening provided by the vegetation within the immediate context of the site. Views may be possible through gaps in the existing hedgerow. Considering the distance of these views, 500m and beyond, visibility is considered not significant due to the effects of distance, the scale of the project and views of existing electrical infrastructure within the landscape. While discernible, the construction effects in long distance views are not considered significant as they form part of a wide panoramic view in which they form one visible component of many.

- 1.164. The landscape and visual effects and their significance at construction stage will be temporary adverse and range from **Not Significant** to **Slight Adverse** in the wider study area and from **Moderate** to **Slight Adverse** for areas in close proximity, up to approximately 500m radius from the boundary of the Application Site, where intervening existing vegetation does not fully screen views of the Proposed Development.

OPERATIONAL PHASE

- 1.165. **Figure 1.3: Appendix 1A** illustrates viewpoints from locations selected as 'Representative Viewpoints' for the assessment of landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development.
- 1.166. Operational effects will result in:
- Likely effects of the development on views and visual amenity such as the potential for the development to alter (beneficial or adverse) the composition of the view from a viewpoint; and
 - Likely cumulative effects of the development in conjunction with other committed developments of similar type and scale upon the landscape and visual resource of the study area.

Landscape Effects

- 1.167. The following likely direct and indirect landscape effects have been identified (along with their duration and nature) arising from the Proposed Development. Direct or indirect landscape effects on the fabric of the landscape and its receptors are closely related to the nature and extent of visibility.
- 1.168. The Proposed Development is located within Landscape Character Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA's as indicated in **Figure 1.1 – Landscape Character Areas: Appendix 1A**.
- 1.169. The main landscape effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the introduction of PV Panels within fields previously used for agricultural practices. The introduction of the solar farm will lead to a change of character within the confines of the Proposed Development boundary, i.e. where the Proposed Development is physically located. It is considered that the development will alter the landscape character within the confines of the site, adding an industrial character to the site and immediate site surroundings where

views are possible. The magnitude of landscape change is considered **Medium to High** and the resulting significance **Significant to Moderate Adverse** as the site is used for agricultural purposes and is in area of some industrial/electrical character features.

- 1.170. Indirect change will occur outside of the Proposed Development boundary, where the visibility of the Proposed Development has an influence on the perception of the character of the landscape. The indirect change in landscape character is greatest in its immediate and close surroundings where open and partial views are possible within approximately 200m to 500m radius from the development. The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Medium**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Moderate Adverse**.
- 1.171. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 500m and 1km from the Site boundary) to **Low**. Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development, the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in available views. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Slight Adverse**.
- 1.172. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 1km and 5km from the Site boundary) to **Not Significant**. Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development, the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in available views. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Not Significant**.
- 1.173. A summary of landscape effects on receptors located within the study area is provided in **Table 1.14**.

Table 1.1: Summary of Landscape Effects

RECEPTOR	SUSCEPTIBILITY	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS	SIGNIFICANCE / QUALITY OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS
Landscape Character Area – within 200m of the Site.	Medium	Medium	Medium to High	Significant to Moderate/ Adverse.
Landscape Character Area – within 500m of the Site.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate/ Adverse

Landscape Character Area – within 1km of the Site.	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight / Adverse
Landscape Character Area – within 5km of the Site.	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight / Adverse

Summary of Visual Effects

- 1.174. The nearest major towns are Eastleigh located c. 0.74km northwest and Southampton located c. 2km south of the Proposed Development. There are a number of residential dwellings located along the local road network which surround the Application Site. The local road network consists of Allington Lane, which runs adjacent to the western, eastern and southern sections of the Proposed Development. Hogwood Lane runs along the southern boundary of the southern section of the site and a local unnamed road off Allington Lane that runs along the northern boundary of the western section of the Proposed Development.
- 1.175. The main visual receptor groups are local residents, including road users and pedestrians. Local residents and pedestrians will have a higher sensitivity to change than the road users. Vehicle travellers will focus primarily on traffic and not on available views, however, if seen, the Proposed Development will be seen in transit making the views fleeting in nature.
- 1.176. The majority of residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located mainly to the north and south in the form of one-off houses. These houses are frequently located alongside or within immediate views of the existing industrial units and Business Parks.
- 1.177. The highest visual effects will be experienced by local residents, path and road users within a radius of approximately 200m of the Proposed Development boundary, from locations with open or partial views of the Proposed Development. The magnitude of visual change for views up to 200m will range from **Low – High** and the significance **Significant - Moderate**.
- 1.178. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents, path and road users with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 500m are considered to be **Medium** with effects considered to be **Moderate** depending on the openness of views and intervening screening by vegetation, topography or built structures.
- 1.179. Views ranging from 500m – 1km particularly from Horton Heath from the east effects will be **Low** and their significance to be **Slight Adverse**.

- 1.180. In long distance views ranging between approximately 1km – 5km, effects will vary from **Negligible** to **None** and their significance from **Not Significant** to **Imperceptible**. While the Proposed Development will add an industrial element to the landscape, views are unlikely from long distance due to land cover and existing established vegetation.
- 1.181. Both viewpoints and photomontages shown in **Figures 1.3 – 1.11 (Appendix 1A)** illustrate views from representative viewpoints within both, the core study area and the wider study area.

Viewpoint 1 - View south from Allington Lanes north of the Proposed Development.

- 1.182. Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.7**) is representative of views south from Allington Lane north of the Proposed Development. The distance to the nearest section of the main development area from this viewpoint is c. 0.21km. The road is well screened by vegetation with only partial views of the site for residential receptors looking south through gaps in the existing hedgerow.
- 1.183. The value of this view is considered to be Medium. The visual receptors are local residents, visitors and road users travelling south. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered **Medium**, as the main receptor groups will be residents who experience this or similar views on a daily basis.
- 1.184. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing hedgerow along the northern boundary of the eastern section of the site (Fields 6 & 7). This will result in a **Low** magnitude of visual change resulting in a **Slight Adverse** change to the landscape and visual significance.

Viewpoint 2 - View looking south from local road, from the northern boundary of the western section of the Proposed Development.

- 1.185. Viewpoint 2 (**Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.8**) is representative of views south from along the local road north of the Proposed Development. The distance to the main development area from this viewpoint is c. 0.01km. The road is well screened by vegetation with only partial views of the site for residential receptors looking south through gaps in the existing hedgerow.
- 1.186. The value of this view is considered to be **Medium**. The visual receptors are local residents located within close proximity to the viewpoint and visitors, road users travelling along the local unnamed road. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered **Medium** as the main receptor groups will be residents who experience this or similar views on a daily basis.

- 1.187. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing hedgerow along the northern boundary of the eastern section of the site. This will result in a **Medium** magnitude of visual change resulting in a **Moderate to Slight Adverse** change to the landscape and visual significance.

Viewpoint 3 - View north from Hogwood Lane from the southern boundary of the western section of the Proposed Development

- 1.188. Viewpoint 3 (**Figure 1.5 and Figure 1.9**) is representative of views looking north from Hogwood Lane south of the Proposed Development. The distance to the main development area from this viewpoint is c. 0.01km. The road is mostly screened by existing vegetation however partial views of the site for road users are likely through gaps in the existing hedgerow.
- 1.189. The value of this view is considered to be **Medium**. The visual receptors are visitors and road users travelling along Hogwood Lane. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered **Medium** as the main receptor groups will be visual receptors who experience this or similar views on a daily basis.
- 1.190. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing hedgerow along the southern boundary of the western section of the site. However, infill mitigation planting where required along the Proposed Development boundaries and allowing the existing hedgerow to mature will screen views further. This will result in a **Low** magnitude of visual change resulting in a **Slight Adverse** change to the landscape and visual significance.

Viewpoint 4 - View looking north from PRoW: - 241 3/1 south of the eastern section of the Proposed Development .

- 1.191. Viewpoint 4 (**Figure 1.5**) is representative of views looking north from PRoW: - 241 3/1. The distance to the nearest section of the of the main development area from this location is c. 0.06km. The immediate context is rural and agricultural in character with large trees and hedgerow vegetation defining the view.
- 1.192. The value of this view is considered to be **Medium**. The visual receptors are visitors using the PRoW. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered **Medium** as the main receptor groups will be visual receptors who experience this or similar views on a daily basis.
- 1.193. The Proposed Development will be mostly screened by existing treelined hedgerow along the southern boundary of the eastern section of the site. However, infill mitigation planting where required along the Proposed Development boundaries and allowing the existing hedgerow to mature will screen views further. This will result in a **Low** magnitude of visual change resulting in a **Slight Adverse** change to the landscape and visual significance.

Viewpoint 5 - View looking west from PRoW: - 085 7/2 east of the eastern section of the Proposed Development.

- 1.194. Viewpoint 5 (**Figure 1.6**) is representative of views looking west from along the PRoW: - 085 7/2. The distance to the nearest section of the of the main development area from this location is c. 0.23km. The immediate context is rural and agricultural in character with open fields, trees and hedgerow vegetation defining the view.
- 1.195. The value of this view is considered to be **Medium**. The visual receptors are local residents and visitors. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered **Medium** as the main receptor groups will be residents who experience this or similar views on a daily basis.
- 1.196. The Proposed Development will be screened in its entirety by intervening landform and existing mature vegetation found within the landscape. The Proposed Development will result in **no visual change** and **no significant** visual effects.

Viewpoint 6 - View looking north from PRoW: - 241 3/1 taken from within the Proposed Development.

- 1.197. Viewpoint 6 (**Figure 1.6 and Figure 1.10**) is representative of views looking north from PRoW: - 241 3/1. The PRoW is located within the Proposed Development. The distance to the nearest section of the main development area from this viewpoint is 0.0km. The immediate context is rural in character with open grassland and areas of woodland located to the east of the view.
- 1.198. The value of this view is considered to be **Medium**. The visual receptors are path users of the PRoW. The sensitivity and susceptibility to change is considered **Medium** as the main receptor groups will be path users who experience this or similar views on a daily basis.
- 1.199. The Proposed Development will be visible from this viewpoint. This will result in a **Medium** magnitude of visual change resulting in a **Moderate Adverse** change to the visual significance.

Table 1.15 Summary of Visual Effects from representative viewpoint locations

RECEPTOR	SUSCEPTIBILITY	SENSITIVITY	MAGNITUDE OF VISUAL EFFECTS	SIGNIFICANCE / QUALITY OF VISUAL EFFECTS
Viewpoint 1	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight Adverse
Viewpoint 2	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate/Slight Adverse

Viewpoint 3	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight Adverse
Viewpoint 4	Medium	Medium	Low	Slight Adverse
Viewpoint 5	Medium	Medium	No Change	No Change
Viewpoint 6	Medium	Medium	Medium	Moderate Adverse

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- 1.200. Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or views as a result of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments of a similar type and scale.
- 1.201. A search was conducted of relevant planning applications within the vicinity of the Application Site, using the Eastleigh Borough Council, Winchester County Council and the Hampshire County Council planning portals online search. These are listed in **Table 1.16**

Table 1.16 Cumulative Projects

Planning Reference	Brief Project Description	Distance and Direction	Planning Status	Date Granted
F/12/71539	Solar photovoltaic panel farm (7.3MW) and associated works	0.12km northeast	Permitted	28/12/2012
F/13/71880	Installation of two ground mounted solar arrays.	0.23km southeast	Permitted	19/03/2013
S/13/73507	Energy Recovery Centre including 1MW solar photovoltaic array	1.29km northwest	Approved	25/10/2013
F/13/73809	Construction of solar photovoltaic farm (1MW)	1.32km southwest	Permitted	20/03/2014

- 1.202. The above Planning Applications have all been considered in this cumulative assessment. **Planning Application Reference: F/12/71539** will result in partial combination views of the Proposed Development and this Application. **Planning Application Reference: F/13/71880** and the Proposed Development, while in close proximity to the site, cumulative effects are unlikely given visibility is limited due to intervening established vegetation. **Planning Application References: S/13/73507** and **F/13/73809** are unlikely to experience cumulative views due to distance, landform and established vegetation within the landscape.

Cumulative Landscape

- 1.203. All developments have been largely designed to consider the existing field hedgerow boundaries. Mitigation planting has been proposed along the Proposed Development boundaries where required helping to enhance their boundaries and help to further enclose the development.
- 1.204. Overall, views towards the Proposed Development are most significant for Residential Receptors and Path Users located within 1km of the current application. Current cumulative views for receptors are mostly likely from Horton Heath village to the east of the Proposed Development within 1km of the site.
- 1.205. The addition of the Proposed Development, together with the adjacent solar farm, will collectively have a **Low** cumulative effect upon the landscape character of Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA's during the construction and operational phases. It is anticipated that the lifespan and subsequent decommissioning phase of all developments will occur around the same period.
- 1.206. Overall, the magnitude of change to the landscape would be **Low**.
- 1.207. Given the sensitivity of the receiving LCT the cumulative landscape effect will be **Low**.

Cumulative Visual

- 1.208. The potential for cumulative views of the Proposed Development with the approved planning references above from the six viewpoints and local area was found to be limited, as many potential views are hindered by distance, localised variations in the topography and screening by natural and built elements across the local landscape.
- 1.209. Combined views of the solar farms with the Proposed Development are anticipated from some Residential Receptors and Path Users from Horton Heath village due to the close proximity of the existing application and slightly elevated position of the receptor in relation to the Proposed Development. Overall, views towards the Proposed Development are most

significant for Residential Receptors and Path Users located within 0.5km of the Proposed Development site.

- 1.210. Here, the addition of the Proposed Development will result in **Low Change** cumulative views.
- 1.211. Current views for Residential Receptors, Road and Path Users beyond 0.5km are unlikely due to the Proposed Development being screened by landform, and natural and built elements across the local landscape.
- 1.212. Here, the addition of the Proposed Development will result in **No Change** cumulative views.

MITIGATION MEASURES

- 1.213. Mitigation is a term used to describe the measures or actions that may be taken to minimise environmental effects. The purpose of mitigation is to avoid, reduce and where possible remedy or offset, any significant adverse direct and indirect effects on the environment arising from the Proposed Development. The following main landscape and visual mitigation categories have been defined and are outlined below:

Mitigation Planting-

- 1.214. A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan outlining the mitigation planting proposals has been included within **Figure 1.11: Appendix 1A**. The main interventions are outlined below;
- 1401m Native Hedgerow Planting
 - 453m Native Infill Hedgerow Planting
 - 423m Screen Planting Mix

RESIDUAL EFFECTS

- 1.215. Given the scale and location of the Proposed Development, the main landscape and visual mitigation measures focus on design elements which soften or help integrate the Proposed Development into its surroundings. These measures will be implemented immediately and come into effect following the completion of construction works. The existing vegetation, while retained (i.e. it is off site and outside the control of the applicant), will screen the lower parts of the existing and Proposed Development.
- 1.216. Considering the possible often localised nature of available views, landscape mitigation will further reduce landscape and visual effects. There may be a slight increase in visual effects during the winter season due to the absence of foliage. The majority of differences in visibility will be experienced locally within an approximate 500m radius depending on the pruning status of intervening hedgerows, as well as the amount of other intervening vegetation. Overall, the difference in visibility is considered not material.

CONCLUSION

CONSTRUCTION EFFECTS

- 1.217. Landscape and visual effects and their significance at construction stage will be temporary adverse and will result in:
- Likely effects to landscape character or visual amenity within the locality or the wider study area as a result of the visibility of construction activities such as, scaffolding, cranes, the movement of construction vehicles along local roads, and other tall equipment such as machinery on site;
 - Effects of temporary site infrastructure such as site traffic and temporary site construction compounds; and
 - Likely direct effects arising from construction of the development will be confined to the existing Solar Site.
- 1.218. The highest landscape and visual effects during the construction stage will be experienced in the vicinity of the Site, from locations with open or partial views. Construction works will not be visible beyond 1.5km or within the 5km core study area. While discernible, the construction effects in long-distance views are not considered significant as they form part of a wide panoramic view in which they form one visible component of many.

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS (OPERATIONAL PHASE)

Landscape Effects

- 1.219. The Proposed Development is located within Area 9: Horton Heath Undulating Farmland and Area 10: Oaklands Woodland and Parkland LCA's as shown in **(Figure 1.1, Appendix 1A)**. The main landscape effects of the Proposed Development will be associated with the introduction of PV Panels within fields previously used for agricultural practices. The introduction of the solar farm will lead to a change of character within the confines of the Proposed Development boundary, i.e. where the Proposed Development is physically located. It is considered that the development will alter the landscape character within the confines of the site, adding an

industrial character to the site and immediate site surroundings where views are possible. The magnitude of landscape change is considered **High** within the confines of the Proposed Development and the resulting significance **Moderate Adverse** as the site is used for agricultural.

- 1.220. Indirect change will occur outside of the Proposed Development boundary, where the visibility of the Proposed Development has an influence on the perception of the character of the landscape. The indirect change in landscape character is greatest in its immediate and close surroundings where open and partial views are possible within an approximate 0.5km radius from the development boundary. The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Medium**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Moderate Adverse**.
- 1.221. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area (between approximately 0.5km to 1km from the Site boundary). The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Low**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Slight Adverse**.
- 1.222. Indirect change and the significance of landscape effects will reduce with increasing distance from the Application Site in the remaining study area between approximately 1km to 5km from the Site boundary. The magnitude of change in these areas is considered **Negligible**. The significance of landscape effects on the landscape character is therefore considered to be **Not Significant**. Given the nature, scale and setting of the Proposed Development the change in character will not be recognised over long distances throughout the wider study area in available views.

VISUAL EFFECTS (OPERATIONAL PHASE)

- 1.223. The majority of residential dwellings in the immediate environment of the Proposed Development are located within 1km in the form of one-off houses and farmsteads.
- 1.224. The highest visual effects will be experienced within an approximate 200m radius of the Proposed Development boundary, from locations with open or partial views of the Proposed Development. However, areas experiencing visibility have been found to be extremely limited given the level of existing vegetation screening the majority of views. Therefore, the possible views from many of these locations are often glimpsed and fleeting in nature. The magnitude of visual change for views up to 200m is considered **High** and the significance **Moderate Adverse**.

- 1.225. The magnitude of visual effects on local residents and residential areas with views of the Proposed Development within approximately 500m are considered to range from **Medium** with effects considered to **Moderate Adverse** depending on the openness of views and intervening screening by vegetation, topography or built structures.
- 1.226. Views between approximately 500m – 1km will comprise mainly of the taller elements of the Proposed Development, such as fencing or mitigation planting. However, they will be seen in conjunction with the existing field structure and field pattern components. The magnitude of visual change is considered **Low** and the significance **Slight Adverse**.
- 1.227. In long distant views between approximately 1km – 5km, whilst the Proposed Development will add an industrial element to the landscape, the magnitude of visual change is considered **Negligible** and the significance **Not Significant - Slight Adverse**.