Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment



Ford Oaks Solar and Green Infrastructure Facility

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been prepared by Steele Landscape Design on behalf of Taiyo Power & Storage Limited and examines the existing landscape and visual baseline conditions and the potential impacts of the proposed 30MWp solar and green infrastructure facility during construction, completion and over the following 15 years (with the aid of photomontages).

This report and accompanying appendices must be read together with the Design and Access Statement and Planning Statement, which details how the facility has been designed following the Guiding Principles of the Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy, Ecology Assessment (detailing complementary mitigation and habitat enhancements aligning with the *Building with Nature* standards) Report and Heritage Assessment (detailing settings of heritage assets) Reports.

The main development site forms part of Marsh Green Farm, New Ford Farm (County Farm) and two further neighbouring fields, and is located to the south and west of Marsh Green village. A desk survey analysis was utilised to identify the following - potential areas and potentially sensitive public venues from which the proposed development would be visible; define the area of landscape which may be influenced by the proposed development; analyse the landscape character area descriptions of relevance to the scheme; and identify the presence of any sensitive designated landscapes within or in close proximity to the development site.

This baseline analysis formed the foundation for a number of site visits, during which a representative series of photographs were taken from public viewpoints. These photographs have been included as 'viewpoints' and some have been used as 'photomontages' that portray the potential visual impacts of the proposed development.

Pre-application correspondence with the Planning officer and Landscape officer at East Devon District Council (EDDC) confirmed that there are several other solar facilities within the 2.5km radius study area yet neither a requirement for a Cumulative Solar Facility Impact Assessment (a focused analysis is within this report) neither a Residential Amenity Assessment. The impact on heritage assets, including listed buildings, are addressed within the Heritage Assessment potential and glare impact on road users and residential dwellings are addressed within the Glint and Glare Assessment Report submitted alongside the Planning Application.

The main development site is located within National Character Area **NCA 148: Devon Redlands** and within the landscape type LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes and LCT 3E (formerly 4D): Lowland Plains as defined within East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment (March 2019). These describe the landscape character of the site and surrounding area as having a relatively high proportion of tree cover with views enclosed by woodland and the local landform.

The development site cannot be described as pristine landscape as there are several significant manmade adverse structures including large agricultural farm sheds, elevated road bridges, A30 dual carriageway and five large steel electricity pylons, with oversailing cables that bi-sect the Westcott Lane valley. The assessment identified that the direct impacts during construction and the long term 40-year operation phase on the landscape use/cover would be moderate adverse for the site. However, the proposed mitigation measure of 74 hectares of biodiverse grassland, riparian and woodland habitat creation and other landscape and ecological infrastructure measures would reduce this impact to slight adverse. In-direct Impacts on the wider landscape type LCT 3b and LCT 3E and all other landscape types within the study area would not generally be experienced from vantage points greater than 260 metres (generally) from the development site

boundary, due to limited inter-visibility with the development site and the wider countryside of the study area.

Visual impacts from a very short stretch of the A30 Exeter to Honiton (dual carriageway) adjacent to the site would be minimal adverse due to the collaborative layout design process ensuring that only ecological enhancements are proposed on land abutting the A30 and a new hedge that would screen the nearest solar arrays. Visual impacts to users on Westcott Lane would be at completion of the development seen as Medium -High, however, from year five onwards and after ecological management of the trackside hedges has taken shape those impacts would reduce to minimal adverse. Visual impacts on views from within both Marsh Green and the East Devon AONB would be Neutral due to development site being screened by intervening landform, buildings and dense and tall trees/hedgerows.

Although the Pre-Application response from EDDC states that no cumulative assessment is require, a field study was undertaken to assess the local existing solar facilities. Cumulative effects of similar solar facilities within the study area would be seen to have a negligible direct cumulative increase in impact to the landscape character. The overall impact to the character fabric of the landscape within the study area as a result of changes by the proposed and operational solar facility would be considered to be minimal and the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the solar sites would still be recognisable and consistent with the key landscape characteristics

The cumulative impacts on the visual amenity of the study area would be Neutral as there are limited 'in combination' or 'sequential' intervisibility of the proposed development site and any of the other existing solar facilities due to screening provided by trees, hedgerow boundaries and changes in topography. There is a single exception that would see a minimal adverse impact as seen from farm gate off the public highway at the Withybed Lane/Quarter Mile Lane – refer to Photomontage VP11.

Similarly, local topography and existing trees, hedges and woodland all contribute to effectively screen these vitally important renewable power facilities from one another as well as views from local roads that lead to and from Marsh Green village.

With the exception of the moderate adverse landscape impacts within the development site and with the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures that would ensure that existing trees and hedges are retained, protected and managed (for wildlife) the resulting visual impacts would not exceed minimal adverse.

There are neither landscape nor visual impacts of any adversity from the proposed temporary construction traffic 'Reception Compound' use of a peripheral field (4km west, adjacent to Exeter Airport).

INTRODUCTION

Steele Landscape Design Consultants were commissioned by Taiyo Power & Storage Limited to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for land south and west of Marsh Green village; this will be referred to as the development site throughout the document.

The development site forms part of Marsh Green Farm, New Ford Farm (County Farm) and two further neighbouring fields with the majority of fields located within the small and contained Westcott Lane valley. The proposed ground mounted solar development and green infrastructure (45 ha) facility is sited with 29 agricultural field parcels across 74 hectares with PV arrays (29 ha) generating 30 MWp serviced by access tracks to substations and transformers units.

This assessment will identify the specific impacts raised by the proposal; consider the effects of these impacts on the landscape character and the visual amenity of the area. The report outlines appropriate landscape enhancement/mitigation measures and where appropriate has provided meaningful input into the layout design for the solar and green infrastructure to reduce the impact to the physical landscape and features of the site as well as the landscape character and visual amenity of the study area.

This report has been prepared as part of a full planning application for a proposed groundmounted solar power station and green infrastructure facility to be submitted to East Devon District Council (EDDC).

LOCATION

The context maps in the Figure Document (035_120 Ford Oaks Figure Sheet) show the location and context of the main application site as well as the extent of the study area. The main development site is located at central grid reference 303668,93458 and situated to the east of the A30 dual carriageway. The land within the development site is currently under agricultural cultivation – grassland with two fields in rotation with the cultivation of arable crops.

A single field some 4km west, adjacent to Exeter Airport, is a peripheral site, to be used only during the construction phase as the reception compound for construction traffic.

STUDY AREA

The proposed main development site forms part of the local landscape with a landform of low rolling hills and shallow valleys. The study area covers not only the development site but has been extended to cover a 2.5km radius, radiating out from the outermost edge of the development site boundary, as shown in the Figure Document (035 120 Ford Oaks Figure Sheet). This distance has been defined from a desk top survey and local maps and was confirmed through the site evaluation visit and subsequent communications with the EDDC Landscape Officer as an appropriate scoping distance.

The solar and green infrastructure development site is located on 29 grass fields ranging between 48 - 90 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The development site forms part of three working agricultural businesses set within a rural landscape that is close to two small villages and is approx. 6.5km east of the main urban area of Exeter. The agricultural fields and countryside within the study area also consists of the A30 dual carriageway as well as numerous large pylons (and oversailing cables) spread out throughout the Westcott Lane valley.

The study area is mainly agricultural land with numerous roads and lanes linking small settlements, villages and towns. The landform within the study area is made of small hills,

ridgelines and valleys. Located to the south-east (approx. 1km) is the edge of the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposals seek to develop the existing grassland fields into a solar facility integrated with enhanced wildlife grassland, riparian and woodland habitats. The proposed transformer and substation buildings, fence and solar arrays (parallel rows) will be no higher than approx. 3m in height, whilst the hedgerows throughout the site would variably be managed at 3m and 4m heights, as well as being allowed to grow up unmanaged. New native trees would be planted at strategic locations around the site, reaching approx. 10m in height by Year 15.

The ancillary equipment items that would be housed in containers (2.9 m tall and 14 meters long). The perimeter fence around the solar development would be approximately 2m high with c400mm tall CCTV cameras located on top of appropriate fence posts.

The grassland beneath the solar arrays would be retained as grassland enhanced with local provenance seed mixes and extensively grazed by sheep as part of the on-going management regime.

The development would seek consent for the solar and green infrastructure development for a long term 40-year period after which time the solar development could be removed without difficulty and the land returned to agricultural fields.

KEY ISSUES

In terms of landscape and visual impacts the key issues relate to the following:

- Potential impacts on the character of the surrounding landscape
- Potential impacts on the purpose and function of locally designated landscape areas or identified sensitive receptors.
- Potential impacts on the visual amenity and character of the adjacent landscape receptors
- Potential impacts on the visual amenity of the adjacent publicly accessible roadways and footpaths

SCOPE

This assessment has been set out as follows:

Guidance and Policy

- A description of the latest Landscape Institute guidance LVIA (edition 3) with methodologies and techniques applied throughout the assessment
- Understanding of the relevant landscape related policies and guidance (NPPF and East Devon District Council 2013 to 2031) and their bearing on the proposals
- Identification of other resources used within the assessment

Baseline

- An assessment of the existing baseline through desk top analysis and site visits to identify whether or not there are significant landscape elements within the wider area including context, character and views into and out of the site are visible from key publicly accessible vantage points
- An assessment of key features within the site, including their quality and influence upon the sites character

- Identification of the extent and range of potential receptors and views.
- Desktop and site evaluation of Landscape designated areas and other sensitive receptors.

Predicted Effects

- Description of the likely effects of the proposals on landscape elements/features; character; and views into and out of the site from the public viewpoints
- Mitigation measures that should be employed to: avoid, reduce or remove significant adverse impacts; the residual effects that will remain; and measures that are being provided in compensation for effects that cannot be effectively removed or that will enhance the development site beyond its existing condition.

METHODOLOGY

While intrinsically linked, landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIA's) are essentially separate procedures. It is often the case that an impact on one will give rise to or be related to an impact on the other. The assessment process relies on a combination of objective and subjective judgment through evaluating quantitative and qualitative data and it is fundamental to the creditability of the work, therefore a structured, consistent and recognised approach is used.

The assessment has been undertaken by fully qualified, trained and experienced landscape professional using techniques and best practice guidance in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' Landscape Institute & the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013 (Third Edition),
- Devon Landscape Policy Group Advice Note No. 2: Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in Devon's Landscape 2013
- Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, (2002), Countryside Agency in conjunction with Scottish Natural Heritage.

A full methodology including assessment techniques and criteria are given in Appendix A.

A desk top analysis was carried out to identify potential sensitive view locations in the study area.

Potential views of the site have been identified on the Figure Sheet - Viewpoint Locations Map and are publicly accessible roadways or footpaths within the study area. These locations include vantage points such as the Bridge over A30 (north), Rockbeare Lane, Rockbeare Hill, Quarter Mile Lane, Withybed Lane and Westcott Lane. Also, a digital plan (Zone of Theoretical Visibility – ZTV) was prepared to assist in the identification of potential viewpoint locations. The ZTV is based on layering the proposed pv layout design on the existing ground terrain and including buildings and large blocks of woodland to generated a 'graphic' plan. The ZTV and general desk top study were used to prepare a 'Viewpoint Location Plan'(VLP) with an initial list of marked locations within the study area that may have a potential view.

The VLP was shared with East Devon District Council Landscape Officer (C. Hariades) and over the forth coming months further discussions were held to confirm the viewpoint location list. Also, confirmation was agreed as to which of the numerous viewpoint locations were to be used to create photo-realistic photomontages of the proposed pv arrays.

The field work entailed visiting each viewpoint location and where possible a photograph has been taken that represents a typical view from public views where access is freely available. The initial photographs were taken with a Nikon D40 Digital SLR camera and the image incorporated within the set of photo sheets of the LVIA.

The photographic equipment that was used to capture the images for the subsequent photomontages are as follows;

- Nikon D600 digital SLR camera (35mm) with Nikon 50mm f/1.8 and Nikon 28mm f/1.8 ,
- Nikon 24mm tilt-shift f/3.5, Manfrotto 190 tripod, Tripod indexed pan head,
- Levelling base with bubble level, Digital Level, Laser plumb bob.

2 LANDSCAPE PLANNING CONTEXT

POLICY CONTEXT

This section has been structured to provide an overview of national, regional and local landscape policy considered relevant to the location and nature of the proposed development. These have been considered as part of the landscape parameters.

Relevant Landscape Policy - sets out all landscape policies which are specifically relevant to the redevelopment of the site.

NATIONAL POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied, it was updated in July 2021. The NPPF states that the 'purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development'. There are three objectives in achieving sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. Those relevant in this case are [Section 2 -Para 8]:

- A) an economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that <u>sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time</u> to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- C) an environmental objective <u>to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment</u>; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.'

It goes on to explain that 'planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to <u>reflect the character</u>, needs and opportunities of <u>each area</u>' [Para 9].

So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (Para 11).

In discussing "Strategic Policies" the NPPF states that policies should 'make sufficient provision for...

D) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation' [Section 2, Para 20].

Section 14, Para 152 of the NPPF sets out key considerations in respect of "Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change", stating that: <u>The planning system should</u> <u>support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate</u>, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. <u>It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions</u>, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and **support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'**.

Paragraph 157 explains that 'in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development (renewable energy) to:

- a) Comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and
- b) Take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption'.

Paragraph 158 considers 'When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas <u>emissions;</u> and

b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

On "Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment" paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) <u>protecting and enhancing valued landscapes</u>, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) <u>recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from</u> <u>natural capital and ecosystem services</u> – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of tree and woodland;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

On the importance of designations paragraph 171 states that 'plans should: <u>distinguish between the</u> hierarchy <u>of international, national and locally designated sites</u>; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries'.

The weighting of landscape designations is discussed in paragraph 176 which states that 'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads'. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.

National Planning Practice Guidance: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Guidance (18 June 2015)

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.

Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include:

 encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed land and non agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value; or agricultural land that is not 'Best and Most Versatile';

- the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses;
- the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;
- the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Adopted Local Plans in the East Devon District Council 2013 to 2031 (Adopted – 28 January 2016) are used to guide new development and determine planning applications.

LOCAL POLICY

Strategy 5 – Environment

All development proposals will contribute to the delivery of sustainable development, ensure conservation and enhancement of natural historic and built environmental assets, promote ecosystem services and green infrastructure and geodiversity.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the appearance and intrinsic landscape quality of these areas and to prevent development which would be inconsistent with, and detrimental to, their visual and landscape quality.

Strategy 39 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Projects

Renewable or low-carbon energy projects in either domestic or commercial development will in principle be supported and encouraged subject to them following current best practice guidance and the adverse impacts on features of environmental and heritage sensitivity, including any cumulative landscape and visual impacts, being satisfactorily addressed. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have;

1. taken appropriate steps in considering the options in relation to location, scale and design, for firstly avoiding harm;

2. and then reducing and mitigating any unavoidable harm, to ensure an acceptable balance between harm and benefit.

Where schemes are in open countryside there will be a requirement to remove all equipment from the site and restore land to its former, or better, condition if the project ceases in the future.

'The presumption will be made in favour of sustainable development for community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas, being taken forward through neighbourhood planning.'

Policy D2 Landscape Requirements

Landscape Requirements Landscape schemes should meet all of the following criteria:

1. Existing landscape features should be recorded in a detailed site survey, in accordance with the principles of BS 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Construction' (or current version)

2. Existing features of landscape or nature conservation value should be incorporated into the landscaping proposals and where their removal is unavoidable provision for suitable replacement should be made elsewhere on the site. This should be in addition to the requirement for new landscaping proposals. Where appropriate, existing habitat should be improved and where possible new areas of nature conservation value should be created.

3. Measures to ensure safe and convenient public access for all should be incorporated.

4. Measures to ensure routine maintenance and long term management should be included.

5. Provision for the planting of trees, hedgerows, including the replacement of those of amenity value which have to be removed for safety or other reasons, shrub planting and other soft landscaping.

6. The layout and design of roads, parking, footpaths and boundary treatments should make a positive contribution to the street scene and the integration of the development with its surroundings and setting

TC4 Footpaths, bridleways and cycleway

Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways Development proposals will be required to include measures to provide, improve and extend facilities for pedestrians and cyclists commensurate with the scale of the proposal. Footways and routes for pedestrians and cyclists within and through new development schemes will be encouraged. These measures may include both shared and exclusive surfaces to provide safe, convenient and attractive routes, and must be designed to take account of the needs of persons with restricted mobility. Wherever possible the opportunity should be taken to join, upgrade and extend existing or proposed networks.

Development which would result in the loss, or reduce the convenience or attractiveness of an existing or proposed footpath, cycleway or bridleway, will not be permitted unless an acceptable alternative route is provided.

Green Infrastructure Strategy (Devon County Council)

Green infrastructure is a term used to describe the network of natural spaces and corridors in a given area. Green infrastructure assets include open spaces such as parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, playing fields, coastal habitats, as well as footpaths, cycleways or rivers. These provide areas for recreation and education, habitats for wildlife and also provide environmental services such as flood defence or absorption of air pollution. If these areas did not exist, then our lives would be very different.

Guiding principle 4: Conserving, enhancing and strengthening links with landscape

To protect, manage and plan an attractive green infrastructure network that conserves and enhances:

- the distinctive character, special qualities and features of Devon's landscapes
- the distinct identity, character and landscape setting of settlements
- the cultural ecosystem services provided by green infrastructure
- access to and enjoyment of valued landscapes for recreation, education and lifelong learning

Actions that strengthen the connections between people and their neighbourhood are to be supported.

3 **Baseline and Evaluation**

STUDY AREA

3.1. The main solar and green infrastructure development site forms part of Marsh Green Farm, New Ford Farm (County Farm) and two fields of a third farm which are all located just to the south and of Marsh Green Village. The development site occupies 29 field parcels, maintained as grassland for livestock and arable crops. Within the field network there are many individual veteran trees, several tree clumps as well as a mature field boundary hedge which include numerous tall trees. There are no residential buildings within the development site red line boundary but there are timber frame barns situated in fields D17 and in D2. Cutting centrally across the development site and within the northern quadrant there are high voltage electricity cables and both large steel towers and smaller timber posts.

Beyond the northern development fields, the countryside is gently undulating and used as grassland or arable production. Within the 2.5km radius of the site, there are several scattered and small groups of housing located on small local lanes. There are numerous blocks and linear belts of woodland that have mature and tall (18m+ tall) native deciduous trees. The A30 passes the northern-western perimeter of the main development site and is located within a deep cutting that is surrounded by mature trees and further to north of the A30 there is the Strete solar facility at approx. 350 metres.

To the south of the development site, the countryside rises to a ridgeline around Aylesbeare Common and is mainly an agricultural landscape for grazing or arable production. There are few settlements with only Aylesbeare village of any note. Within this rural landscape there are many scattered groups of housing located on small rural lanes.

To the west of the development site, the countryside gently rolls down toward Exeter with many small clusters of housing and farmsteads located along small local lanes. Rockbeare House and gardens is located to the west of the A30 and is surrounded within a mature and dense woodland setting. The operational Saundercroft solar facility is located approx. 3.5km further to the northwest but outside the study area.

To the east of the development site the rural landscape continues to rise up to a low ridgeline that forms the western edge of the urban area of West Hill. Located within the 2.5km radius from the development site there is the operational Houndsbeare solar facility and to the west of Furzy and Scarlet woodland copse. A similar solar facility project has been consented but not constructed on land to the east of Furzy and Scarlet woodland copse.

The development site is not located within any landscape designated area, however a very small part of the western edge of the 'East Devon' Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located within the 2.5km radius of the Development site.

In order to establish the degree of change arising from the proposed development and the extent to which that change will affect the area, it is important to understand the existing situation in terms of the local landscape character and its value.

A desktop review of the study area was undertaken including analysis of Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) data sets East Devon LDS. The review identified that the following receptors and statutory landscape designations fall within the 2.5km radius study area. Locations are shown in 035 120 Ford Oaks Viewpoint Figure Sheet.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

National Landscape Character

3.2. The 'Character of England Landscape, Wildlife and Cultural Features Map' was produced in 2005 by The Countryside Agency. This map subdivides England into Joint Character Areas (JCA's) providing a picture of the differences in landscape character at the national/regional scale. These have since been reviewed and updated by Natural England (2012-2015) and categorised into National Character Area (NCA) Profiles. These profiles do contain Key Characteristics but at this broad scale the site proposals would have little effect on NCA 61, so will not be taken forward into the assessment. They have been included for reference.

The site and the study area are located within **NCA 148: Devon Redlands** and the key characteristics are:

- Hilly landscape of villages, hamlets, farmsteads, hedgebanks and winding sunken lanes, rising in height towards the fringes of the NCA.
- Mixed farming predominates, but as the land rises in the transitional areas towards Dartmoor and Exmoor pasture becomes widespread.
- Fields tend to be small and irregular with dense hedgerows on top of earth banks in the transitional areas, while there is a larger, more open field pattern elsewhere.
- A high frequency of designed landscapes

Regional/County Landscape Character

Devon Character Types

3.3. Devon's landscape character assessment (DLCA) describes the variations in character between different areas and types of landscape in the county. There are 68 Devon Character Areas, and 37 Character Types named to an area sharing a unique and distinct identity recognisable on a county scale.

Devon Character Areas (DCAs) are geographically unique areas, each with a distinctive 'sense of place'. They are often formed of groups of LCTs, and are called by a descriptive place-based name.

Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are generic types of landscape which can occur in different places. They have similar characteristics wherever they occur, and are called by a descriptive name.

East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment (March 2019) has identified that there are three separate LCT's located with the study area, these are listed below and the susceptibility to change on each identified receptor area assessed (refer to Landscape Character Methodology within the Appendix;

3.4. LCT 1C: Pebblebed heaths – Key Characteristics

This LCT is located within the south-eastern sector of the study area but does not from part of the development site.

Description: This LCT is unique within Devon, and forms a north-south ridge running north from Budleigh Salterton. It is defined by its distinctive sand-and-gravels geology. Soils are poor, and the area was traditionally used as common land. Much of the area remains open, with extensive areas of heath and grassland, as well as pockets of forestry plantation and farmland (particularly in the north). Since the 1930s the majority of the area has been managed for recreation and wildlife conservation,

Landscape Value: A small part of the East Devon AONB forms part of this LCT and the following characteristics are of note when considering value:

- Conifer plantations and some beech woods, with areas of more scattered trees including oak and birch.
- Former common land, now used for extensive recreation and conservation. Pockets of farmland in the north and at peripheries, also quarrying and military use.
- Panoramic views along the ridge, and also across surrounding lower land. The ridge itself forms a prominent feature in views.
- A strong sense of place, and of detachment from the surrounding area.

Effected: No

The development site would not cause direct changes to the landscape character of this LCT as the small area of the LCT is located on the periphery of the 2.5km study area radius.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

3.5. LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes

This LCT is located within the central sector of the study area forms part of the development site.

Description: It occurs on the lower slopes of the valley sides, and is generally a medium scale landscape, often with long views. It is predominantly agricultural, with pastoral and arable land uses (associated with distinctive red soils in the west of the Study Area). Patches of woodland, copses, and hedgerow trees give the landscape a well-treed character. It is a well-settled landscape, with farms, hamlets and villages (some of which have expanded).

Landscape Value: No value or sensitivity guidance has been given within this published document but the following characteristics are of note when considering value:

Conifer plantations and some beech woods, with areas of more scattered trees including oak and birch.

- Gently rolling landform, sloping up from valley floor. Numerous shallow valleys contain small streams. Red sandstone geology apparent in cuttings and soils in west of study area.
- Many hedgerow trees, copses and streamside tree rows. Oak and ash predominate, and there are small blocks of woodland.
- Predominantly pastoral farmland, often with a wooded appearance. Variable sized fields with wide, low hedged boundaries and a mostly irregular pattern, reflecting different phases of enclosure.
- Semi-natural habitats include streams and ditches, grassland, woodland and trees.
- Winding, often narrow sunken lanes, with tall earth banks.
- A relatively enclosed and sheltered landscape. Some parts of the LCT feel well settled, whilst others feel exceptionally remote, with very little traffic.

Effected: Yes

The development site would cause direct changes to the landscape character of this LCT, in particular within the enclosed and sheltered landscape of the main development site. However, the development site is located in a pocket of landscape that can be described as remote as it is cut off by the A30.

Receptor Type:	Landscape
Susceptibility:	LOW-MEDIUM

The level which the proposed development impacts on this LCA is considered to be within the lower end of the ability of this LCA's ability to accommodate change. The effects are detailed as ranging between 'unlikely' to 'may' cause undue consequences on the existing site and surrounding LCA. However, this development site is located within a small and enclosed Westcott Lane valley only experienced by very few adjacent residents and walkers and therefore the effects would be limited and confined to a restricted extent within the whole LCA area.

Value: Community

The site and the surrounding landscape of the study area are considered reflect and conforms to the landscape character description in the Regional LCT profile.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.6. LCT 3E (formerly 4D): Lowland Plains

This LCT is located within the north-western sector of the study area and mostly covers the countryside to the north. However, this LCT forms part of the main development site.

Description: It comprises the gently sloping/ undulating land which surrounds the valley floors. This is a medium-large scale settled landscape, with villages and farms displaying a variety of building materials, ages and styles. Much of the LCT remains rural but parts are influenced by new development at Cranbrook and Exeter Airport, and along transport routes. Fertile red soils are a characteristic and are particularly noticeable where arable land use is dominant. There are surviving pockets of traditional orchards, and areas of pasture, paddocks and small woodlands. Fields are generally surrounded by wide hedgerows, often with mature hedgerow oaks, although some hedgerow loss has occurred.

Landscape Value: No value or sensitivity guidance has been given within this published document but the following characteristics are of note when considering value:

- Level to gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides.
- Small discrete woodland blocks, and pockets of orchard planting, particularly around Whimple.
- Mixed farmland, often in arable cultivation. Regular medium to large field pattern with local variation, particularly around settlements. Contains some of the most fertile farmland in the study area.
- Semi-natural habitats include roadside hedges and hedgerow trees particularly oaks streams and pockets of grassland.
- Surprising feeling of remoteness in some parts. Despite local impacts of development and infrastructure, much of the area retains a pleasant, rural feel.
- Long views over low hedges. Some views marred by pylons and other infrastructure.

Effected: Yes

The development site would cause minor and direct changes to the landscape character of this LCT as the small area of the LCT is located within the main development site.

Receptor Type:	Landscape
Susceptibility:	LOW-MEDIUM

The level which the proposed development impacts on this LCA is considered to be within the lower end of the ability of this LCA's ability to accommodate change. The effects are detailed as ranging between 'unlikely' to 'may' cause undue consequences on the existing site and surrounding LCA. However, this development site is located within a small and enclosed valley only experienced by very few local residents and therefore the effects would be limited and confined to a restricted extent within the whole LCA area. Value: Community

The site and the surrounding landscape of the study area are considered reflect and conforms to the landscape character description in the Regional LCT profile.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

Landscape Character Summary - SITE

3.7. The development site is located to the south-east of the A30 dual carriageway between Exeter and Honiton. The proposed development site covers 29 field parcels and these make up part of the rolling landscape of the study area. The topography of the fields within the development site consists of south and north facing slopes as well as some fields that are relatively flat.

The fields are used for grazing and some arable as well as feedstock with landscape features that are confined to hedgerow boundaries with mature and tall trees. The development site is not located in any landscape designation.

The development site contains several of the key characteristics as described in the LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes and LCT 3E (formerly 4D): Lowland Plains and is considered to be a good example of these local landscape LCTs.

The development site is located within two local LCT's that which would both be directly affected by the proposed solar and green infrastructure facility. The LCTS are not considered to have any formal landscape designation and valued as part of the community landscape experience and therefore both LCTs have a **Low – Medium** sensitivity to change.

INDIVIDUAL LANDSCAPE RECEPTORS

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

3.8. The East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Approx. distance from Site: 2kms to the south-east

Description: The East Devon AONB is located to the south-east periphery of the development site. The western edge of this AONB forms a small part at the of the study area and also forms part of the Aylesbeare Common and heathland.

This AONB is the largest single block of lowland heathland west of the New Forest, and includes the East Devon Pebble Beds, (Woodbury and other East Devon Commons). Elsewhere within the AONB, on high ground woodland tends to dominate with both deciduous and coniferous species. East Devon AONB is one of the more wooded AONBs in the South West of England.

Natural England is responsible for advising on AONB designation. In its 1991 policy statement on AONBs they identified the following three aims for AONBs:

- 1. The primary purpose of AONB status is to **conserve and enhance** natural beauty.
- 2. When carrying out the above duty, account should be taken of the needs of agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and of the economic and social needs of the local communities. In particular, sustainable forms of social and economic development, that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment, should be promoted.
- 3. Recreation is not a purpose of designation but demand should be met if this does not harm conservation of natural beauty or the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses.

Effected: No

As posited by the ZTV plan, there are small areas within Aylesbeare Common (part of AONB) that suggest that the development site maybe visible. However, from field observations, it has been established that the development site would not be experienced from any part of the AONB due to the intervening rolling hills, ridgeline trees and hedges. The landscape character of the East Devon AONB would not be affected by the proposed development.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

3.9. Open Access Land - Aylesbeare Common

Approx. distance from Site: 2kms to the south-east

Description: Located to the south-east of Manor Farm and west of the B3180, the small parcel of registered common land is an elevated (143 m AOD) vantage point with panoramic views to the west and to the north. The common is mainly mature heather with some small trees (8m tall) growing within and around the remnant ditch and earthwork located at the central high point. The northern, western and eastern boundaries have mature tall trees which screen views of the foreground countryside and therefore attention is given to the distant countryside and high ground to the north and north-west.

The area is 'open' in that, recreation walkers are permitted to roam over the area, however, the mature heather restricts most walkers to the informal and circular route footpaths.

Effected: No

From desktop and field observations it has been established that the development site would not be experienced from the common due to the surrounding rolling hills with intervening ridgeline

trees and hedges. The landscape character of the Aylesbeare Common would not be affected by the proposed development.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

3.10. Rockbeare House – Registered Park and Gardens

Approx. distance from Site: 350 metres to the north-west

Description: Rockbeare Manor is situated to the north-west of the western edge of the proposed development site. The c 60ha of registered house and gardens comprises c 10ha of pleasure grounds around the house, and c 50ha of parkland and woodland. The house and gardens are bounded to the north by traditional banks and hedges on the outer side of evergreen shrubbery planting, to the east by enclosing hedges and to the south of the drive by a brick wall c 3.5m high. To the south the house and gardens are adjoined by the route of the A30 and by enclosed woodland. To the west of the parkland, are open lawns that allow views over the meadows which adjoin Silver Lane with distant views of the Haldon Hills.

Effected: No

The main house and pleasure gardens are both physically and visually separated from the landscape of the development site both by the A30 and the woodland blocks within the gardens as well as along the cutting of the main A30 dual carriageway.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

Listed Buildings

There are several listed buildings within 200 metres of the development site, however, form desk top and fields studies observations these buildings would not be affected as they are screened by neighbouring properties as well as intervening woodlands, trees and hedgerows. As part of the associated Heritage Report the various listed buildings have been detailed and assessed. Also, EDDC planning team did not request that a residential and amenity assessment to be undertaken.

3.11. Name: The Knoll (grade II), Marsh Green village

Approx. distance from Site: 90 metres to Field D17

Description: The proximity of this property to the southern edge of the two small development field (D17) is sufficient basis for it to be considered.

Effected: No

This property is not publicly accessible as it is set away from Rockbeare Lane and from onsite field observations the property is screened from the proposed development by surrounding mature hedges and tall trees.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

3.12.Name:Rose Cottage, Old Post Office & Lower Marsh Farmhouse (grade II), Marsh GreenDescription:A number of residential properties located along Rockbeare Lane, Marsh Greenwithin 220 metres of the development site.

Effected: No

From fields observations, views from these properties are heavily restricted by the neighbouring properties and hedges and trees within the adjacent gardens. There may be windows within these properties that face toward the proposed development, again, the intervening boundary vegetation screens most views of the development site.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

SITE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Use/Land Cover

3.13. At the time of writing the LVIA, the fields within the development site were a mix of grazing, commercial maize and winter feed grass production.

Receptor Type:Landscape (site)Susceptibility:LOW-MEDIUM

The proposed development is located in a slightly 'degraded' landscape that has existing industrial elements in the form of A30 dual carriageway and numerous tall steel pylons with overhead cables crossing both ridges of the Westcott Lane valley. Therefore, the Land Use and Land Cover 'may experience undue consequences' arising from a noticeable new and uncharacteristic 'renewable energy development'.

However, the proposed development is unlikely to cause a considerable alteration to the existing farming activity as the intention is to maintain and continue the development site for sheep grazing.

The local policy stipulates that the temporary aspect of the development site should ensure provision for the site to be returned to agricultural status after the solar development is decommissioned (approx. 40 years).

Value: COMMUNITY

The development site forms part of the wider rural landscape which contribute to what is currently a good example of the character described in both the **'LCT 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes'** and **3E LCT: Lowland Plains.**

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

Topography/Landform

3.14. The topography of the numerous fields that make up the development site are varied and range from either flat fields or fields within hillsides and are also either north or south facing. The elevation of the fields ranges from 90 m AOD along Withybed Lane and 48 m AOD in fields along the stream. Generally, fields on the northern side of Westcott Lane make up the majority of the 'main development area'. Westcott Lane runs along the lowland with the fields of the main development site contained within this single discreet valley with surrounding low hillside and ridge. There are several other 'out-lying' fields set within their own separate landscapes these include fields D10-13 which are east of the main development site and fields D2-3 which are south facing slopes and form an isolated cluster within their own undulating landscape to the south of the main site.

Receptor Type:	Landscape (site)
Susceptibility:	LOW

The proposed development seeks to construct the pv array tables within the gently undulating landscape. Although the pv array tables would not require any groundworks whilst the additional ancillary buildings including substation buildings, electrical transformers and access track would require minimal ground alteration. Therefore, there would be very little change to the topography of the site due to the proposed development.

Value:

COMMUNITY

No formal recognition of value through landscape designations and the existing landscape features of the site contributes to what is currently a good example of the character described in the **'LCT 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes'** and **LCT 3E: Lowland Plains.**

Sensitivity to Change: LOW

Landscape Features

- 3.15. The development site has a number of grassland field mainly used for grazing, arable crops and winter feed production. The numerous fields have mature hedgerows and trees that are typical of the local study area. Five tall steel pylons and overhead cables dominate both ridges and the valley with additional high voltage electricity cables on wooden poles also cross the northern ridge NNE to SSW and extend south through the valley bottom and up to the southern ridge.
- 3.16.

Receptor Type:Landscape (site)Susceptibility:LOW

All the veteran trees, boundary trees and hedges will be protected, maintained and managed throughout the lifetime of the development. There is a requirement for minor works to hedges located at gateways to accommodate the construction traffic activities which will be restored following completion of the construction phase.

Within the low lying fields adjacent to Westcott Lane there is a small stream, this would be protected, enhanced and maintained.

Value: COMMUNITY

Sensitivity to Change: LOW

SITE LANDSCAPE SUMMARY: CONDITION, VALUE & SENSITIVITY

CONDITION

3.17. As noted from the site field survey the condition of the landscape within the site is a collection of mainly grass fields and seen as a working landscape, plus five tall steel pylons and overhead cables dominate both ridges and the valley with additional high voltage electricity cables on wooden poles also cross the northern ridge NNE to SSW and extend south through the valley bottom and up to the southern ridge.

The development site is located to the west and south east of the Marsh Green Farm which has several buildings including farmhouse and large farm sheds, however, these buildings do not form part of the planning application red line boundary.

Soilscapes (<u>http://www.landis.org.uk/SoilScapes/index.cfm</u>) describes the landcover of the development site and immediate local area is identified as having two soil area types;

Spoilscape 8: Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage with moderate to high fertility and located throughout the majority of the development site.

Spoilscape 18: Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils with moderate Fertility and located along the small stream and the south facing slopes to the main development site.

VALUE

3.18. The character of the study area is in general representative of the agricultural landscape described in the East Devon and Blackdown Hills Landscape Character Assessment (March 2019). The development site is not located within any landscape designation although the national important designated Landscapes East Devon AONB is located to the east.

It is considered that the site is part of a wider landscape of **LOW-MEDIUM** Value.

Sensitivity

3.19. Sensitivity is categorised as high, medium, or low, according to the degree to which a particular landscape or area can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its character and visual amenity. This is judged by considering the susceptibility of receptors against the value placed on it. Refer to methodology Table 'B' in the Appendix of the document for sensitivity levels and definitions. The general judgement on sensitivity given below is a result of the combined individual judgements established during the Baseline and Evaluation.

Character is based on the following factors: landform, sense of openness, field pattern and scale, land cover, perceptual qualities, historic landscape character, distinctive landscape features and scenic quality.

Landscape Study Area - Sensitivity

3.20. The study area is mainly rural with the majority of the area is a working agricultural countryside for grazing, arable crop and winter feed production. There are several small villages/farmsteads settled along small country lanes. The study area is bisected by the A30 dual carriageway which is set within a deep cutting and lined with numerous ridgeline trees. The A30 acts as both a visual and physical barrier screening all vantages points to the north of the development site.

Located to the north-west of the A30 and the development site is Rockbeare Manor, a grade II listed building set within a 'Registered Park and Gardens' landscape.

The small, gently undulating hills and vales are reflective of field pattern which are considered small/medium.

A very small section of the study area is designated as 'Open Access Land' and is also within the East Devon AONB. This open land is located approx. 2km to the south-east of the development site is a patchwork of upland grass fields and scrub land. Within a small section of this scrubland is there a vantage point with views west toward the development site, Exeter and surrounding hills.

The condition of the countryside within the wider study is comparable to the landscape descriptions of the 'LCT 3B: Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes.

The study area has various landscape character types, open access land/AONB. However, these areas are peripheral to the study area and have limited sensitivity to the development site, as they are at considerable distance with intervening topography with woodland belts and tree lines along ridges and therefore has a Low-Medium Sensitivity.

Site (Characteristics/Features) – Sensitivity

3.21. The receptors that make up the development site character have a general Low-Medium Sensitivity. The gently rolling hill and vale topography of the site is consistent with the agricultural working landscape of the surrounding countryside. The small/medium scale of agricultural fields and their boundary trees and hedgerows contribute to the agrarian nature of the development site and local countryside, however the various industrial elements of the A30 and plus five tall steel pylons and overhead cables dominate both ridges and the valley with additional high voltage electricity cables on wooden poles also cross the northern ridge NNE to SSW and extend south through the valley bottom and up to the southern ridge and therefore this landscape has a Low-Medium Sensitivity.

Any proposed development should seek to provide mitigation measures to ensure that the proposed development actively plans and continues to 'embrace' the long term aims of the farmstead to become more diversified.

VISUAL RECEPTORS WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

3.22. It is also important to understand and identify the existing users (or visual receptors) of the landscape within the study area to establish the potential changes to the visual amenity of those users as a result of the proposed solar and green infrastructure development.

The radial distance for the study area has been defined from a desk top survey using local Ordnance Survey explorer maps and was confirmed through the site evaluation visit. Subsequent communications with the EDDC Landscape Officer confirmed that this radial distance was as appropriate for the study area. Also, a plan-based Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared to assist in the targeted identification of sensitive visual receptors. The ZTV is a computer-generated map using landform data to project the greatest extent that proposal would be visible within the study area. This was tested over a 2.5km radius from the periphery of the development site and imposed multiple points set at 3m high in the location of the proposed pv array tables. The ZTV was used as a desktop tool as it uses bare ground data and local data sets to map intervening tall woodland blocks and buildings which contribute to reducing visibility which would considerably affect the visual amenity of the study area.

The ZTV and general desk top study were used to prepare a 'Viewpoint Location Plan' (VLP) with an initial list of marked locations within the study area that may have a potential view. The VLP was shared with East Devon District Council Landscape Officer (C. Hariades) and over the forth coming months further discussions were held to confirm the viewpoint location list.

To ensure a complete and accurate representation of the possible effects of the development several field surveys were undertaken between 24 May 2021 and 05 March 2022. The fieldwork analysis of the visibility of the site from the surrounding landscape took into account all the existing landscape features such as hedges, woodlands, buildings, tall steel pylons/electricity poles, topography that could screen or considerably reduce visibility of the site.

Field studies are always recommended as there are occasions where the ZTV wasn't possible to account for all possible vantage points due to in sufficient availability of digital or paper-based information for rural areas. A comprehensive list of potential viewpoint locations was proposed and tested on site and a photographic record was taken from each relevant location. The object of the field study was to determine which publicly accessible locations would offer the clearest views of the site.

The Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) has been defined after the field survey was undertaken and the photographs carefully reviewed to ascertain the extent of where the majority or only elements of the proposed development are visible and not screened by local topography and existing landscape features. The area that has been coloured orange on the ZVI illustrates the extent of visibility.

The ZVI shows that there are a limited number of publicly accessible vantage points that will have either, a full or partial view of the site, the PV array tables or ancillary buildings within the development site. Vantage points with views of the site are from publicly accessible locations either from the PRoW or local highpoints/landmarks.

Visual Environment and Nature of Views

3.23. Field work has then been used to confirm (by photograph) the visibility of the development site and also lack of visibility due to landscape visual barriers. The photographic survey is shown within 035 120 Figure Sheet. The overall visibility of the development site can be summarised as:

From within the study area, the development site is screened from public views from the north by the A30 with adjacent ridgeline trees. Views from the east, south and west; there are views but

most are screened by the adjacent low-lying countryside, woodlands and trees with mature hedgerows.

The majority of views are only from the local lanes and footpaths that are either adjacent or within 260 metres of the boundary of the proposed development site with a few other viewpoint locations that are between 1.5-2.2km of the site boundary. From vantage points with views toward the development site there are typically only small numbers of development fields visible and these tend to be partially screened and with only small sections of individual development fields. The majority of recorded views of the site and are experienced in context within the local and constrained Westcott Lane valley rather than the wider countryside.

Further descriptions of the views are given on 035 120 Figure Sheet, Photo-panels 01-11 with an extra viewpoint location included to provide photographic evidence to demonstrate that none of the proposed development fields are visible from key notable locations – such as VP B: Aylesbeare Common (AONB).

Settlement Pattern

3.24. Name: Marsh Green village

Approx. distance from Site: Marsh Green is located approx. 200 metres to the eastern edge of Field D17 and north of Field D10 of the proposed development.

Description: Marsh Green village is a cluster of residential housing located along Rockbeare Lane and along the northern section of Quarter Mile Lane.

Effected: No

Although residential properties are relatively close to the proposed development, the existing mature tall trees, hedges and buildings to the west of the village screen most views of the proposed development.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

3.25. Name: Aylesbeare Villages

Approx. distance from Site: Aylesbeare Villages is located adjacent to the east and Aylesbeare is located approx. 1km to the south.

Description: Aylesbeare Villages village is a small collection of houses clustered along Village Lane.

Effected: No

The majority of the village is located around the low point and small stream. Residential properties within this part of the village would not be affected by the proposed development due to intervening topography, buildings and tall vegetation etc.

The northern part of the village adjacent to Marwood Lane are similarly screened from views of the development site by intervening tall trees and roadside hedges.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

Local Roads

3.26. Although there are several main roads within the study area including the A30 (north) and A3052 (south) the other vehicle routeways are few and are mostly rural country lanes connecting outlying farmsteads and villages.

Views from many of the local lanes to the north of the development site are screened by the mature roadside hedges or the woodland blocks and belts along the A30 corridor. Also, views from the majority or lanes to the south, west and east are screened by the roadside devon bank, hedge and trees as well the local undulating topography of the local countryside.

3.27. Name: A30 – Dual carriageway Between Exeter and Honiton

Approx. distance from Site: Located directly north and adjacent to Fields DC02.

Description: As the A30 passes the north-western edge of the proposed development site, the roadway cuts into the local topography and therefore views to the south are screened. Views can only be 'theoretically assessed' as it is not safe to stop on the A30 dual carriageway and photographically record views into the development site.

Effected: YES

It is not possible to fully assess the view as seen from the A30 (dual carriageway) due to safety aspects. However, it should be assumed that vehicles travel north-east (only) along the A30 may see only small parts of the nearby field DC02. The main development site would be screened by the undulating landform and the boundary tree and hedgerows.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value: Local/National

Users: People travelling in vehicles at speeds of up to 70mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting, oblique and partial view toward the site set amongst the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW

3.28. Name: Rockbeare Lane (bridge over A30) - Refer to VP 01

Approx. distance from Site: Located adjacent to Fields DC01 of the development site.

Description: Rockbeare Lane crosses over the cutting to the A30 dual carriage way before continuing along a tree and hedge lined lane toward Marsh Green village. At the bridge, there is an elevated view over the A30 with glimpsed and oblique views of small parts of the adjacent fields DC01, the most proximate northwest area of the field will not include any development due to identified buried archaeological assets The majority of the main development site would be screened by the undulating topography and the boundary trees and hedgerows.

Effected: YES

Only parts of the adjacent fields DC01 would be in view as the main development site would be screened by the undulating hills and vales and the boundary tree and hedgerows.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value: Community

Users: People travelling in vehicles at speeds of up to 60mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting and oblique views toward the site set amongst the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.29. Name: Rockbeare Lane, west of Marsh Green village - Refer to VP 02

Approx. distance from Site: Adjacent to Fields D17.

Description: After crossing the Rockbeare Lane bridge over the A30 dual carriage way the lane slopes down and along a tree and hedge lined lane toward Marsh Green village. From a short section of roadway there is a glimpsed view of a small part of the adjacent D17 development field.

Effected: YES

Only parts of the adjacent fields (D17) would be in view as the main development site is screened by the existing undulating landform and the boundary tree and hedgerows.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value: Community

Users: People travelling in vehicles at speeds of up to 60mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving around the blind bend and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting and oblique views toward the site set amongst the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.30. Name: Houndbeare Farmhouse, Rockbeare Hill, east of Marsh Green village - Refer to VP 03 Approx. distance from Site: 1.5 km.

Description: Rockbeare Hill road descends into Marsh Green and at Houndbeare Farmhouse on an elevated section of the roadway there is a single view toward the development site from a field gateway. Fields D4-D6 and D9 may just been visible approx. 1.5km to the south-west.

Effected: YES

Only parts of the fields D4-D6 and D9 may be in view as the majority of these fields would be screened by boundary trees. The main development site would also be screened from the viewpoint location due to the adjacent farmhouse, undulating landform and the boundary tree and hedgerows.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value: Community

Users: People travelling in vehicles at speeds of up to 60mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting, oblique and partial view toward the site set amongst the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.31. Name: B3180, near Houndbeare House (West Hill) - Refer to VP 04

Approx. distance from Site: 2.7 km

Description: This local road is located on the western edge of West Hill (town) and connects to the A30 to the north and Exmouth to the south. The roadway is consistently located within an avenue of tall sided hedges and trees.

Effected: YES

From the majority of this local road (B3180) there are no views toward the proposed solar site, however, from a single field gate, there is a distant, glimpsed and partial views of the gentle slopes to fields D6 and D4. The main development site (along Westcott Lane) is screened from view from this location by the adjacent roadside tree and hedges as well as by the undulating topography. Although not constructed at the time of this report the consented Rockbeare Hill solar facility would be seen the mid-distance and in combination with Ford Oaks at approx. 2.7 km and barely visible.

Receptor Type:VisualValue:CommunityUsers:Deeple travelling in a

Users: People travelling in vehicles at speeds of up to 60mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting and oblique views toward both the Rockbeare Hill and Ford Oaks site and set within the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.32. Name: Junction of Quarter Mile Lane and Westcott Lane - Refer to VP 05

Approx. distance from Site: Located adjacent to Fields D7 and Fields D9 within the main development site.

Description: Although there are very few publicly accessible views of the development site from either Quarter Mile Lane and Marsh Green village, there is a view of D7 from the junction with Westcott Lane. The 'undeveloped' upper slopes of the small and enclosed valley can be seen from the roadway but much of the lower parts of the small valley fields within the development site are screened by the mature hedgerows and trees between and around the boundaries of the individual fields.

Effected: YES

At the junction with Westcott Lane there are oblique and glimpsed views of parts of D7 and D9 within the main development site.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value: LOCAL/COMMUNITY

Users: People travelling in vehicles along Quarter Mile Lane (only) at speeds of up to 60mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting and oblique views toward the site set amongst the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.33. Name: Withybed Lane

Approx. distance from Site: Located adjacent to Fields D2, D3, D4 and D6 (southern section).

Description: This lane connects Quarter Mile Lane with Westcott (hamlet) along a small local ridgeline. The majority of the lane is flanked with tall and mature hedgerows which restrict views of the surrounding countryside.

Effected: YES

Only from individual gateways are there glimpsed and oblique views of only small parts of the adjacent development fields before being screened by the field/road boundary tree and hedgerows.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value: Community

Users: People travelling in vehicles at speeds of up to 60mph. Drivers attention will be engaged with the activity of driving and the view of the site would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting and oblique views toward the site set amongst the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.34. Name: Rag Lane

Approx. distance from Site: Located 350 metres away to Fields DC04 of the main development site. **Description**: Rag Lane is a semi-private access road to individual dwellings and Westcott House (grade II). The lane is flanked by buildings and tall trees and hedges and comes to a dead end

Effected: YES

From a field gate there oblique, distant and partial views of fields DC04, DC02 and G5. The majority of the main development site would be screened by the undulating hills and the field boundary tree and hedgerows. Westcott House would not be affected as views toward the development site are restricted by boundary fences, tall trees and local buildings.

Receptor Type:VisualValue:CommunityUsers:Residents driving/walking to their properties

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.35. Name: Westcott Lane (west)

Approx. distance from Site: Located 780 metres to DC04 and DC02 within the main development site.

Description: At the western end of the lane and before the lane falls away to the valley floor there is a view from a field gate with views to the north of DC04, DC02 and G5. To the west of this gate there are several dwellings that are orientated away from the main development site with views to the north, east and south.

Effected: YES

Local walkers, horse riders, Mountain bike riders would have glimpsed and framed view of the adjacent lowland fields and hillside slopes with this small Westcott Lane valley.

Although a residential and amenity assessment was not requested, it is assumed that views from the adjacent dwellings may have oblique views from the gardens and some rooms 'toward the western edge of the main development site. There are no views the majority of the main proposed development site nor the eastern, southern and most northern fields as they are restricted by the undulating landform and intervening tall boundary trees and hedges.

Receptor Type:	Visual
Value:	Community
Users:	Walkers, horse riders, MB riders and Landowner using off road vehicle

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.36. Name: Westcott Lane (Middle) - Refer to VP 08

Approx. distance from Site: Located adjacent to Fields G5 and D8 within the main development site.

Description: The narrow lane has a devon bank with mature and tall hedge with many clusters of tall trees.

Effected: YES

Realistically, only walkers, horse riders and MB riders would be able to see into the adjacent lowland fields and as seen from the lane, there are glimpsed views over the top of the hedges into the adjacent fields and more apparent views of the sloped hillside fields of DC02 and D16. There are no long distant views into the wider countryside as they are restricted by tall boundary trees.

Receptor Type: Visual

Value:CommunityUsers:Landowner using off road vehicle and local walkers

Sensitivity to Change: LOW-MEDIUM

3.37. Name: Field adjacent to Bishops Court Lane

Approx. distance from Site: Located approx. 4km to the west of the development site.

Description: A local lane connecting onto the roundabout for the A30 with tall boundary hedges and trees. The grass land field is currently being used for grazing and has mature boundary trees and hedges and the field is visually well screened from the local countryside.

Effected: NO

For the duration of the construction of the development site, this field would be laid out with ground protection matting and contain a site cabin and parking/waiting area. The conveyance of materials to the main development site will be coordinated with deliveries initially stopping at this 'reception area' within the adjacent field until a small convoy of vehicles can be escorted by a lead vehicle along the B3184, Oak Lane, Quarter Mile Lane and into the secure storage area on Withybed Lane.

It is assumed that vehicles travelling at speed, where the driver's attention will be engaged with the activity of driving, the view of the 'reception area' would be transitory. However, passengers would have a fleeting and oblique views toward the field set amongst the surrounding landscape and only for the duration of the construction phase.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

Recreational Routes

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

3.38.Name:Aylesbeare Footpath 1 and 10 – south of the siteLength:Approx. 1kmApprox. distance from Site:approx. 1km to the south

Description: This short local footpath (01) exits Aylesbeare village from the churchyard and heads north-west through agricultural fields toward Perkin's Village Road near to Rosamondford House. Footpath10, diverges from Footpath 1 and continues north to Marwood Road.

Effected: NO

From field observations it has been established that from the footpath the proposed development would not be visible due to local topography and intervening mature woodland along local ridges.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

3.39.Name:Aylesbeare Footpath 7 - Refer to VP 09Length:500 metresApprox. distance from Site:260 metres to the south

Description: This short local footpath that connects Marwood Road to Withybed Lane. The footpath is located within an adjacent landscape separated from the main development site by the Withybed ridgeline. Development fields D2 and D3 are situated on the south facing slopes of this ridgeline.

Effected: YES

From the majority of this footpath there are no views of fields D2 and D3. However, from a short section (200 metres) The proposed development fields D2 and D3 would be visible set within the south facing slopes of the local ridgeline. Views of the fields D2 and D3 would be limited, oblique and partially screened. Views of the main development site would not be seen due to local topography and vegetation. There are no long-distance views from the footpath as they are restricted by the local ridgeline and boundary trees and hedges.

Receptor Type:VisualValue:CommunityUsers:Recreational walkers with plenty of opportunity to linger and/or pause to
appreciate views of the surrounding landscape.

Sensitivity to Change: MEDIUM

3.40.Name:Aylesbeare Footpath 4Length:550 metresApprox. distance from Site:340 metres to Field D2

Description: This short local footpath is located to the south west of the development site and connects Marwood Road (south) to Westcott (hamlet) to the north.

Effected: No

Views of field D2 are screened by the existing mature boundary hedge and also the main development site would not be seen due to local topography, tall trees and hedging.

Therefore, this receptor will not require further impacts assessment.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

3.41. Operational and Consented Solar Facilities

At the time of writing of this report, the East Devon District Council planning portal listed the following solar farms located within the study area;

Saundercroft Solar Farm (Operational):approx. 3.2 Kilometres to the north-west development site.Strete Farm (Operational):approx. 800 metres to the north-east development siteGreat Houndsbeare Farm (Operational):approx. 350 metres to the east development siteRockbeare Hill (Not built):approx. 900 m to the east of the development site.

There are no other pending solar schemes with the planning department within the study area.

The location of each of these solar facilities were chosen and positioned in areas of the countryside that have very few vantage points and where the development can be experienced or seen from only a very few publicly accessed roads or footpaths. Each solar facility is located on relatively flat fields with ground levels below 115 metres AOD. The lack of visibility of these solar facilities is mainly due to the existing significant tall hedgerow boundaries, mature trees and woodlands within the surrounding countryside.

Each solar facility went through a rigorous planning screening process and were all determined to be acceptable with the cumulative landscape and visual impacts considered not to be significant.

3.42. CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER IMPACTS

There are two principal Landscape Character Types that are considered relevant to the determination of effects of the proposed development site on the landscape within the study area. These are LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes and LCT 3E (formerly 4D): Lowland Plains, both LCTs have very similar key characteristics and are as follows;

- Gently rolling landform, sloping up from valley floor. Numerous shallow valleys
- Many hedgerow trees, copses and streamside tree rows and small blocks of woodland
- Predominantly pastoral farmland, often with a wooded appearance
- Winding, often narrow sunken lanes, with tall earth banks.
- A relatively enclosed and sheltered landscape. Some parts of the LCT feel well settled, whilst others feel exceptionally remote, with very little traffic
- Some views marred by pylons and other infrastructure.

The susceptibility to change of the existing landscape by the introduction of new solar facilities and other existing solar facilities on the landscape character is considered to have a LOW-MEDIUM sensitivity to change (see para 3.4 and 3.5).

The extent of impact that the proposed and existing solar facilities have on the fabric/character of the landscape is considered to be minimal. The proposed development would not remove any trees, the fields would continue to be grazed and there is a great enhancement with a '121% net gain' with additional ecological improvements throughout the site. The overall character of the landscape within the study area as a result of changes in the landscape fabric by the proposed and operational solar facility would be considered to be minimal and the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the solar sites would still be recognisable and consistent with the key landscape characteristics.

The impact of the proposed development on the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been considered and from an elevated vantage point within the AONB (Viewpoint B) the operational Saundercroft solar facility is just discernible (approx. 6 kilometres) from this location.

However, neither the Ford Oaks proposed development site or the operational Houndsbeare Farm solar facility can be seen, therefore there are no impacts on the AONB.

Overall, the impacts of the proposed solar development on the existing study area would be considered as low with a small contribution to the overall cumulative effect and not considered as significant.

3.43. CUMULATIVE VISUAL AMENITY IMPACTS

The Ford Oaks Viewpoint sheets 01-11 and Viewpoint B (refer to 035 120 Figure Sheet) clearly show that the majority of the existing operational solar facilities would not share interconnected views with that of the proposed development at Ford Oaks.

The exception is a single viewpoint location (VP11 Quarter Mile Lane/Withybed Lane) at a field gate in the roadside hedge where the proposed solar development and the Strete solar facility would be seen in combination. The Ford Oaks solar facility would be seen in the low land fields below the viewer but mostly screened by existing field boundary tall trees/ hedgerows as well as the proposed green infrastructure mitigation measures. The Strete solar facility would be just be discernible but seen as a minor landscape element at a distance (approx. 2.5km) to the north with a partial view of the western pv fields.

The local rural lanes tend to connect between villages and give vehicle access for farmers into fields. The are no single roadways that practically connect between all solar farms and therefore, the opportunity to experience a sequential view of the proposed development with other local solar farms is very low as some of these solar farms are situated at the end of private tracks or anyway from public footpaths.

There are no views from long-distance footpaths or leisure routes that cross through the study area and therefore, for local residents their everyday view either walking or from within a vehicle would not have the opportunity to see more than one solar facility throughout their journey. It is anticipated that may be views of individual fields of any one of the operational solar facilities and that these would tend to be fleeting and of small parts of the site. This is mainly due to the local topography that encloses small areas with additional screening by existing boundary trees and hedgerows, that can be found along most route ways.

It would seem, when viewed from above, that within 1 kilometre of Marsh Green village there would be several solar facilities (two operational, one consented, one proposed). However, from 'on the ground' site survey analysis the reality is that there are only seldom views of any one particular solar facility. If a solar facility is visible, it would be an oblique, glimpsed and partial view which is mainly due to the local landscape character being undulating and that roadside hedges, trees and local woodland tend to screen and aid the solar and green infrastructure facility to blend into the local countryside.

The proposed mitigation measure for Ford Oaks solar and green infrastructure facility would entail management of existing hedgerows and planting of trees and extra hedges along sensitive routes to screen views into adjacent fields

Therefore, for the purposes of this assessment the local solar facilities are not considered to have any cumulative effects on the landscape and visual receptors.

Therefore, these receptors will not require further impact assessment.

SENSITIVITY OF VISUAL AMENITY WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

Visual Amenity SUMMARY

3.44. The ZVI (Zone of Visual Influence) in the accompanying 035_120 Figure Sheet document has been 'ground-truthed' with a comprehensive field survey. The ZVI illustrates the extent that the site maybe visible and views are locations that are mostly within 260 metres of the development site.

There are no publicly accessible locations with views of PV fields D10-D13, located to the east of Marsh Green village due to existing topography and field boundary and roadside trees and hedges. Therefore, only within close proximity (adjacent or within approx. 150 metres) to the development site, there are short sections of local roadways (field gates and junctions etc.) including Quarter Mile Lane, Withybed Lane and Rockbeare Lane and Westcott Lane which have an oblique, partial and glimpsed view into the main development site and Fields D2 and D3.

The remaining views toward the development site are from a considerable distance of 1 km-2.7km where the development site is mostly screened by tall and mature trees and hedgerows.

The summary table below summarises the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors:

	-
Receptor	Sensitivity
Study Area – Landscape	
LCT 3B: Low Rolling Farmed & Settled Valley Slopes	LOW-MEDIUM
LCT 3E: Lowland Plains	LOW-MEDIUM
Site	
Use/Land Cover	LOW-MEDIUM
Topography/Landform	LOW
Landscape Features	LOW
Study Area - Visual	
VP 01: Rockbeare Lane/A30 - Field DC1 (only)	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 02: Rockbeare Lane - Field D17 (only)	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 03: Rockbeare Hill - Fields D4-6 and D9	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 04: B3180 - Fields D4 and D6	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 05: Quarter Mile Lane and Westcott Lane – Field D7	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 06: Westcott Lane (east) – Fields D8, D15-16 and G6	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 07: Westcott Lane (middle)	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 08a and b: Westcott Lane (west) – DC02, D5, D6, D8, D15 and G5	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 09: Footpath - Aylesbeare 07 – Fields D2 and D3	LOW-MEDIUM
VP 10: Withybed Lane – Field D3	LOW-MEDIUM
VP11: Withybed Lane and QML – DC04, D7, D9, D14, D15 and D17	LOW-MEDIUM
A30 – Dual carriageway (Exeter & Honiton)	LOW
Rag Lane – (DC02, DC04, G5)	LOW-MEDIUM

Table 1: Summary of Receptor Sensitivity (Landscape and Visual)

As seen from gateways, there are only views of a few development fields at any one time. Only from Westcott Lane is there a view of the main part of the solar facility. Therefore, views from identified footpaths and roadways would have a sensitivity of **LOW-MEDIUM.**

4 ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

DESIGN APPROACH

4.1. In order to develop a strategy to remove or limit the potential landscape and visual effects of the proposals, it is necessary to gain an understanding of the potential effects without mitigation measures in place.

Proposals

The proposals comprise of the green infrastructure assets including hedgerow height and width habitat enhancements with additional tree planting and the solar photovoltaic arrays arranged in rows, where the distance between rows will vary slightly depending on the topography but will be approximately 7m apart (centre to centre). The pv arrays will be orientated southwards, angled at approximately 15-25 degrees from the horizontal and will appear variably reflecting the sky colour. The arrays will be mounted on a simple metal framework that will be driven into the soil and will be approximately 3 metres above ground level.

Sited within the development site there would be 6 no. outdoor transformers, two substations and a storage container which will be a maximum of 3.1 m in height, 12 metres in length and green in colour, and will sit on shallow concrete pad foundations.

Fencing around the site boundary will consist of a 2m high deer proof fence, steel posts with wire mesh with a dark green colour. Mounted at the corners to the fencing there are proposed closed circuit security television cameras mounted on single posts, maximum 2.5m in height. To minimise the impact of the development there will be no security flood lighting located within the solar development.

For added security and protection of solar arrays and infrastructure, it is proposed to replace eight existing roadside agricultural field gates with 2 metre tall gates fitted with a steel panel.

Access during construction and operational phases to the site will be via the Rockbeare Lane, Quarter Mile Lane and Withybed Lane and further details of the development proposals can be found in the Design Access and Transport Statements.

Landscape Strategy

4.2. The design has followed the Guiding Principles of the Devon Green Infrastructure strategy and as the solar arrays and buildings are only 3 metres high careful consideration has been given to the character of the local area and the effect on views. Identification of the key landscape and environmental issues was achieved early in the design process in order to reduce effects on the local landscape and to mitigate the potential visual impact of the development.

The landscape strategy has been developed to remove, reduce or mitigate the potential effects described in the previous paragraphs. The landscape strategy comprises the following aims:

- Coordinated approach by the design team to find the optimum layout for the photovoltaic arrays and ancillary buildings, structures and access tracks to minimise landscape and visual effects whilst maintaining efficient function;
- Management of existing hedges to reduce the visual effect of the proposals and ecological benefits;
- New planting to reduce the visual effect of the proposals
- New planting to be appropriate and enhance local landscape character
- Provision of new ecological habitat, wildlife corridors, water and grassland management to enhance the biodiversity of the site and connectivity with the immediate landscape.

MITIGATION MEASURES

4.3. The landscape strategy has guided the development of a set of measures that will have a very significant effect in removing, reducing or mitigating the landscape and visual effects. The proposals also seek to maximise the ecological and landscape value of the site's landscape resources. The planting proposals are designed to fit into and compliment the local landscape and seek to enhance the habitat structure and biodiversity of the local area. These measures are described in the 035 200 Landscape Plan.

Primary Mitigation

- 4.4. Primary mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scheme to limit the potential effects of the proposed developments; these include:
 - The proposed pv array tables do not require ground alterations as the arrays are mounted on steel posts that have been driven into the ground. Therefore, there is no requirement to significantly alter the site topography apart from minor regrading for the electrical containers and access tracks.
 - Retain existing grassland
 - Retain existing hedges, trees and water corridor
 - Layout of pv tables to be completely removed from fields including -D1, DC02c, d, e, DC03G1-4 and D18 and D19 to ensure removal of 'higher' adverse impacts to landscape character and visual amenity.
 - Remove pv tables from parts of the fields including DC01, D10, D5-D9 to ensure reduction of impact to landscape character and visual amenity from adjacent lanes as well as protection of existing archaeological and ecological assets.
 - The main construction phase site compound within Field D3a and D6 would require an addition gravel or ground protection matting for the welfare car park and storage areas. This would be a temporary feature and would be restored back to grassland and solar arrays post practical completion.
 - The main construction phase 'Reception Area' site compound at Bishops Court Lane (4km from development site) would require ground protection matting. This would be a temporary feature and any compacted/damaged grassland would be restored post practical completion.

Secondary Mitigation

- 4.5. The following secondary mitigation measures have been incorporated into the scheme in order to further reduce any effects of the proposed development.
 - Management of existing hedges along Westcott Lane at 3 metres tall to reduce visual impacts of the development site but ensuring views out into the surrounding landscape are maintained. Also encourage individual native hedgerow species to develop into mature tall trees to continue the existing tree lines along the field boundaries.
 - Management of existing hedges within the development site boundary (under ownership) at 4 metres tall to reduce visual impacts of the development site from sensitive locations in the publicly accessible road and footpath network. Also encourage individual native hedgerow species to develop into mature tall trees to continue the existing tree lines along the field boundaries.
 - New hedge and tree planting within DC02, D10 and D14 approx. 319 linear metres
 - New tree, hedge 'infill' planting to strategic gateways at D3 (near to D4 gateway), D5, D6 south, and D6, D8, D17) - 88 m²
 - Ecological habitat creation and management of approx. 74 hectares that would enhance and diversify site wide wildlife habitats.
 - New individual trees located in DC02b to create a wildlife corridor between fields DC03 and D16 with wider field boundary corridors within D14 and into the wider development site
 - New woodland tree planting (approx. 4000m²) within the field to the south of D13
 - New wild flower grassland located throughout the development site including under overhead power lines, D2, D3 and D9 etc. – please refer to Ecological and Maintenance and Management Plan for full details

- New 'leaky dams' located throughout the water course that flow through D13, D9, G5, DC03
- For added security and protection of solar arrays and infrastructure, it is proposed to replace eight existing roadside agricultural field gates with 2-metre-tall gates fitted with a steel panel.

POTENTIAL EFFECTS

4.6. The proposals are to integrate 21st century renewable energy technology in a farmland valley intersected by three electricity circuits including five tall steel pylons with enhanced ecological habitats, new planting and hedgerow growth creating improved green infrastructure. Solar arrays and ancillary equipment are not currently associated with the underlying landscape character although they do not involve significant physical alteration of the landscape fabric.

The pv proposals could be considered a 'soft' use development as the existing grassland can still be grazed by sheep and also easily be returned to grassland after decommissioning. In this respect, when removed, the original landscape character could very rapidly be restored to its former condition.

The effects to landscape character are experienced only for the duration of the operational period (40 years) and a key element of the landscape strategy is to limit the extent and duration of effect on landscape character.

Construction Effects

- 4.7. The following activities and operations are likely to arise as a result of the construction phase of the project:
 - On site construction machinery and workers moving around the site
 - Vehicle traffic for staff or material deliveries along some public roadways
 - Upgrade of the existing access to make suitable for construction vehicles as well as provision for the construction staff and visitors car park.
 - The creation of suitable internal access roads to accommodate the traffic generated by the proposals, to and from the solar arrays
 - Areas set aside for storage of construction materials
 - Protection measure (Heras fencing) to ensure segregation of staff pedestrian access and vehicle movements

It is concluded that the scale of effects during construction are likely to be higher than those at completion and the ongoing residual effects due to the construction activities being more prominent and visually intrusive. These would however be for a short-term duration so overall would result in a lesser impact to the wider landscape character and visual amenity of the area.

Therefore, the effects during construction will not be assessed further.

Effects at Completion and during Operation

- 4.8. The following will result in longer term effects once construction is complete:
 - Security fencing/gates, access tracks, substations, transformers and CCTV/posts to ensure a comprehensive restriction to access into the development site
 - Presence of numerous pv array tables within the development site
 - New native tree and hedge planting within strategic hedgerows as well as additional wildlife and ecological enhancements within particular development fields.

5 LANDSCAPE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1. This section identifies impacts caused by the proposed development on the landscape. The significance of effects is considered at the operational phase.

The impact assessment is conducted in accordance with the definitions/criteria described in this document, and follows the report structure by assessing impacts on:

- Receptors including landscape designations, if required;
- Landscape Character;
- Landscape elements, feature and characteristics;

Table 1: Summary of Predicted Effects on Landscape

Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
Site Character				
Use / Landcover	LOW-MED	High	Medium	Moderate Adverse
		This would result in a large-scale, long- term effect across the small and localised fields of the development site = High The proposed development would construct ground mounted low level (3m high) solar pv arrays with ancillary buildings (2.4m high).	Mitigation principles have been indicated in the Landscape Plan 035-200 and provides mitigation measures to minimise the possible impact of the proposed development on existing grassland during the construction phase. Primary mitigation would be the retention, protection and management of the existing hedgerows, trees and grassland during the construction phase. Secondary mitigation would be that the landowner/site administrator propose to maintain the grassland and to continue sheep grazing.	This significance of effect is due to the presence of the proposed pv arrays and fence which would change the existing use of the site into renewable energy resource. However, as part of the management proposals the development would still continue to be used for sheep grazing.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Receptor Sensitivi	ty ge Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
Landform LOW	LOW Due to the small scale, long-term effect within the development site = Low The existing landform within the development site and is gently rolling and forms small valleys of north and south facing fields. There is anticipated to be little or very localised re-grading to accommodate the proposed development. It is assumed that there will be some works required to provide vehicle access infrastructure including; electrical substation and ancillary units.	LOW The solar pv array layout has been significantly reduced during the early stages of the design purposefully to work with the existing contours to ensure that the impacts to landform are minimal. Access into the site development would be constructed of typical stone based track sufficient for the construction phase and also during the operational activities with remedial works and monitoring. The car parking and storage arrangements would be removed at practical completion.	SLIGHT, Adverse The overall landform after construction would still be recognisable and context with character of the site.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
Landscape	LOW	LOW	NEGLIGIBLE-LOW	Minimal, Beneficial
Features		Due to the small scale, long-term effect across the majority of the site = Low There development site is an improved grassland with boundary trees and hedges.	During the construction and operational phase, the trees within the site would be retained, protected and managed. After the construction activities have been completed the grassland will be restored to previous condition with a native wildflower grass mix. The grassland will be maintained by using sheep grazing and where appropriate machinery to ensure that the grass doesn't over-shadow the solar pv units or become a fire hazard to the apparatus. New tree and hedge planting would be maintained and managed through to maturity. Management of existing hedges along Westcott Lane at 3 metres tall to reduce visual impacts of the development site but ensure views out into the surrounding landscape are maintained. Also encourage individual native hedgerow species to develop into mature tall trees to continue the existing tree lines along the field boundaries. Ecological habitat creation and management of approx. 74 hectares that would enhance and diversify site wide wildlife habitats.	Due to the provision of new woodland, maintained sheep grazing and extensively enhanced green infrastructure and wildlife habitat within the development site.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
Study Area				
3E: Lowland Plains LCT and 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes LCT	MED-HIGH	Medium Due to the Medium scale, long-term effect on local area. The development would provide a similar feature to the existing Houndsbeare and Strete solar facility. The size of the solar arrays and associated electrical buildings would be relatively small in height – approx. 3m. The design has taken into account the existing field boundaries, which will be retained, maintained and managed ensuring that the field patterns are not altered.	LOW The proposed development may only be experienced from small areas within the local countryside due to topography and vegetation and direction of travel along the various footpaths. The mitigation measures as described in the Landscape Plan 035-200 would reduce the magnitude of change with the provision of additional new landscape features including the following; New tree and hedge planting would be planted, maintained and managed through to maturity. Existing trees and hedges will be protected, mai9ntained and managed throughout the term of the development. The Green Infrastructure within many of the development fields would not only be protected and maintained but would also be extended and enhanced. Ecological habitat creation and management of approx. 74 hectares that would enhance and diversify site wide wildlife habitats.	SLIGHT, Adverse This significance of effect is due to the presence of the proposed development. The proposed development would add to the agricultural activities within both LCT's. When viewed from LCT 3E the main development site would be a noticeable activity within the small enclosed slopes. When viewed from 3B LCT only a few pv fields would be experienced but not seen as a prominent feature in the local countryside.



6 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1. This section assesses visual impacts on visual receptors grouped using the receptor sensitivity established in the Baseline against the Magnitude of Change in views from these receptors.

This starts by summarising the scale of effects of specific viewpoints throughout the study area which are then used as visual aids to judge the effect on visual receptors. These viewpoints provide a 'sample' of potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors – including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction.

Visual Impacts

6.2. As can be seen by the ZVI (see document 035_120 ZVI Figure Sheet), the development site is visually 'well contained' by the settlements surrounding landscape features and low-lying topography.

Views toward the site are mainly from Westcott Lane where there are views over adjacent hedges into the north and south facing slopes of the main development site. There are views from other roads but these are generally from fields gateways.

There are no viewpoint locations from within the elevated open access land within the East Devon AONB and this also true to footpaths around Aylesbeare and Marsh Green village.



Table 2: Scale of Effects on Viewpoints

VP no	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale o	of Effect	Rationale
VI no.		Distance	At Completion	Residual	
VP01	Rockbeare Lane/A30 - Field DC01a (only)	Adjacent	Small/Medium	Small	Rockbeare Lane is a local roadway with a roadside edge of tall trees and hedges and for the majority of its length there are no views of the development site. However, from short section (approx. 20 metres) there is an oblique and partial view from the roadside into the development site. The layout of the solar arrays can be seen to be considerably set back from the roadway and would be seen as a perceptible change to the view. The orientation of the pv array tables would mean that only the backs of pv tables would be seen from this viewpoint. In time, the existing hedgerow and hedgerow trees would continue to mature and help to screen the solar arrays. From the majority of the viewpoint locations there is typically only a single development field to be seen. This is mostly due to the local undulating topography and significant screening by adjacent and dividing boundary trees and hedgerows.



VP no	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale o	f Effect	Rationale
VI 110.		Distance	At Completion	Residual	
VP02	Rockbeare Lane - Field D17 (only)	Adjacent	Small/Medium	Small	Rockbeare Lane is a local roadway with a roadside edge of tall trees and hedges and for the majority of its length there are no views of the development site. However, from a short section (approx. 50 metres) there is an oblique and partial view from the roadside into the development site. At this location, the view from a passing vehicle would be of the array tables within this single development field. This is typical for the majority of the peripheral viewpoint locations and mostly due to the local undulating topography and significant screening by adjacent and dividing boundary trees and hedgerows. The precautionary mitigation measures include the management and maintenance of the heights of the field boundary hedges at 4 metres and appropriate 'infill' of native tree species planted within the field and adjacent to the roadside hedge that would, in
VP03	Rockbeare Hill - Fields D4, D5, D6 & D9	2.7 km	Small	Small	 time, ensure that views into this field would be mostly screened. Rockbeare Hill connects Marsh Green to West Hill (town) and at Houndbeare Farmhouse there is a single field gateway view toward the development site. From a single roadside field gate there is a glimpsed, oblique and partial view of Fields D6, D9, D4 that can just be seen approx. 1.5km to the south-west. The majority of these fields are screened by the existing boundary tall trees and hedges. The main development site (along Westcott Lane) is screened from this location by the adjacent roadside tree and hedges as well as by the undulating topography.
VP04	B3180 (West Hill) - Fields D4 & D6 (south)	Adjacent	Small-Medium	Small	 From this local road (B3180) there are no views toward the proposed solar site due to intervening topography and roadside hedgerows and tall trees. However, from a single field gate, there is a distant, glimpsed and partial views of the gentle sloping fields of D6 and D4. The main development site (along Westcott Lane) is screened from view from this location by the trees within the nearby field boundaries.



VP no	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale o	f Effect	Rationale
VI 110.		Distance	At Completion	Residual	
VP 5	Quarter Mile Lane / Westcott Lane - Field D6 and D7)	Adjacent	Small-Medium	Small	Although there are no publicly assessed viewpoint locations where there is a view of the main development site from Marsh Green village, there is a single view of field D7 from a short section (50 metres) of Quarter Mile Lane at the junction with Westcott Lane. The solar arrays would be visible in the adjacent field D7 both at the lower end of the field and also perceptible/noticeable along the ridge line of the north facing slope. The majority of the solar arrays within the main development site located within the lowland fields of the small Westcott valley are screened by the mature boundary hedgerows and trees along the roadside and between individual fields.
VP06	Westcott Lane (east) – Field D8	Adjacent	Small-Medium	Negligible Small	 Westcott Lane joins Quarter Mile Lane to Westcott hamlet, it winds along the low-lying land located at the edge of the gently rising fields to the south. The lane has been closed to traffic and is mainly used by the landowner to access the various fields. The majority of views into the adjacent fields are screened by the tall roadside trees and hedges and views of the development fields are typically from field gates. The fields (D8) form part of the lowland stream corridor and gently sloping hillside, these fields are partially screened by existing tall trees and mature hedgerows. This field gate would no longer be used for access from the lane and the gateway would be planted with a new hedge to be maintained at 3 metres tall and within a few years obscure all views into the adjacent pv field.



VP no	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale o	f Effect	Rationale
vi no.		Distance	At Completion	Residual	
VP07	Westcott Lane (centre) - No solar arrays visible	Adjacent	None	None	 Westcott Lane continues to wind along the lowland edge with the north facing slopes gently raising to the south. The trackway is not suitable for vehicle traffic and is mainly used by the landowner to access the various fields. Views of the development fields are typically only from field gates, as the hedge boundaries along the lane are tall and restrict views into the lowland fields to the north of the track. The initial layout plan showed that pv arrays would have been positioned in the adjacent field and would have been seen to rise up the slope and break the ridgeline. However, after consultation with local residents these pv tables have been removed from the layout plan to ensure that there are no impacts to the existing view of the north facing slopes.
VP8a and VP8b	Westcott Lane (west) - DC02, DC04, D8, D16 and G5	Adjacent	Medium-Large	Negligible-Small	Westcott Lane continues to wind along the lowland edge with the north facing slopes raising to the south of the trackway. The trackway is not suitable for vehicle traffic and is mainly used by the landowner to access the various fields. The majority of views into the adjacent fields are screened by the tall roadside trees and hedges and views of the development fields are typically from field gates. However, from the western extent of the track there are oblique views of only small parts of the adjacent fields DC02, D8, G5, G6, D5, D6, D16 and D15 which would be visible before being screened by the field/road boundary tree and hedgerows along the central and eastern extent of Westcott Lane. Also, as part of the on-going ecological enhancements the boundary hedge along Westcott Lane would be allowed to grow and then maintained at 3m. Views over the wider countryside would still be visible form Westcott Lane and pv arrays were omitted from Fields G3 and the higher slopes of D5, D6 and D7 to minimize the extent of development on the Westcott Lane valley landscape.



VP no	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale o	f Effect	Rationale
		Distance	At Completion	Residual	
VP09	Footpath, Aylesbeare 07 - Fields D2 (b and c) and D3	250 metres	Medium	Medium	 From the majority of this footpath there are no views of the main development site due to intervening ridgeline, trees, hedges and buildings. This vantage point is located on a short section of the local footpath to the south west of the development site. The development fields D2 and D3 can be seen on the south facing slopes of the nearby low ridge line of Withybed Lane. The mature tree line along the base of the ridgeline screens the lower edge of fields D2B and D3. Although this hedge, is not within the LEMP, this tree line would likely continue to mature and screen views of lower solar arrays. Views of the main development site (along Westcott Lane) would not be seen due to local topography and vegetation.
VP10	Withybed Lane – Field D3	Adjacent	Small	Negligible	 Withybed Lane connects Quarter Mile Lane with Westcott (hamlet) and follows a small ridgeline separating the main development site (to the north) and fields D2 and D3 to the south. The majority of the lane is flanked with tall and mature hedgerows which restrict views of the surrounding countryside and into the adjacent development fields. Only from individual field gates are there glimpsed and oblique views of only small parts of the adjacent development field which would be glimpsed before being screened by the field/road boundary tree and hedgerows. The un-required gateway into D3 would be planted with native shrubs and trees and in time would screen all views of the solar arrays. There are no interconnected views with the main development fields from this location due to topography and local tall trees and hedgerows. There are extended views of the surrounding countryside to the south which can be seen to be large fields and wooded hillside slopes, from which there are few opportunities to view the development fields.



VP no	0. Viewpoint Location Distance		Scale of Effect		Rationale	
VI 110.		Distance	At Completion	Residual		
VP11b VP11c	Withybed Lane and Quarter Mile Lane – Field D14, D15, D17, D7 and D9 D11 and D12	Adjacent	Small-Medium	Small	 Withybed Lane connects Quarter Mile Lane with Westcott (hamlet) and follows a small ridgeline between the main development site to the north and fields D2 and D3 to the south. The majority of the lane is flanked with tall and mature hedgerows which restrict views of the surrounding countryside and into the adjacent development fields. Only from individual field gates are there glimpsed and oblique views of only small parts of the slightly elevated and south sloping development fields of the northern ridge and the lowland fields of D6, D7, D8, D9, D14, D15, D17 and G6 which would be glimpsed before being screened by the field/road boundary tree and hedgerows. These fields are mostly screened by the adjacent field boundary trees and hedges. Views of the surrounding countryside to the north are of distant wooded hillside slopes from which there are few opportunities due view the development fields. 	
-	A30 dual carriageway (Exeter/Honiton) - Field DC02	Adjacent	Small-Medium	Small	As the A30 passes the north-western edge of the proposed development site, the roadway cuts into the local topography and therefore views to the south are screened. Views of the local countryside can only be 'theoretically assessed' as it is not safe to stop on the A30 dual carriageway and photographically record views into the development site. It should be assumed that vehicles travel east (only) along the A30 may see only small parts of the adjacent fields DC02 where a new screening hedgerow is included in the Landscape Plan design 035 220. The main development site would be screened by the undulating landform and the boundary tree and hedgerows.	



VP no.	Viewpoint Location	Distance	Scale of Effect		Rationale
			At Completion	Residual	
-	Rag Lane - Fields DC02, DC03, DC04 and G5	350 m	Small	Small	Rag Lane is a semi-private access road to individual dwellings and Westcott House (grade II). The lane is flanked by buildings and tall trees and hedges and comes to a dead end From a field gate there is an oblique, distant and partial views of fields DC02, DC03, DC04 and G5. The majority of the main development site would be screened by the undulating hills and the field boundary tree and hedgerows. Westcott House would not be affected as views toward the development site are restricted by boundary fences, tall trees and local buildings.



Table 3: Summary of Predicted Effects on Visual Receptors

Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	After Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
VP 01: Rockbeare	LOW-MED	= Low-Medium	= Low	Minimal Adverse
Lane/bridge A30		There would be no change to the majority of this roadway as the adjacent tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. However, there would be a change to the visual perception whilst vehicles pass over the bridge to the A30. This would result in a small/Medium scale, long term with limited effect to 50 metres of the roadway.	A precautionary mitigation measure would be to protect, maintain and manage the boundary hedgerow at 3 metres tall and strategic tree planting (VP02) to break-up the massing of the development site as seen from the roadway. The magnitude of change would reduce.	There are no extensive views of the proposed development site from the roadside as the undulating topography and tall internal field boundaries restrict views to only one or two fields.
VP 03: Rockbeare	LOW-MED	= - Negligible-Low	= Negligible	Minimal Adverse
Hill		There are no opportunities to see the development site from the majority of these two roadways. From the two gateway locations there would only be an oblique, partial and glimpsed view of the development site. The pv array tables within the sloping fields would be just perceptible as seen through the canopies of the large and tall boundary trees. This would result in a negligible/small scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the roadway.	A precautionary mitigation measure would be to protect, maintain and manage the boundary hedgerow at 4 metres tall and allow individual trees within hedgerows to mature and thereby further breaking-up the massing of the development site. The magnitude of change would reduce.	There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. However, as the adjacent hedge grows taller the views of the upper slopes would diminish and there would very little or no views of the development site.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	After Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
VP 05: Quarter Mile Lane / Westcott Lane	LOW-MED	 = Low-Medium There would be no change to the majority of this roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. The glimpsed and fleeting view of the pv array tables would be seen to be set back in the field and away from the roadway. The pv arrays would be located in the lower part of the field and would be seen as a noticeable change. This would result in a small/medium scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the roadway. 	 Low A precautionary mitigation measure would be to protect, maintain and manage the adjacent boundary hedgerow at 3 metres tall and allow strategic hedgerow trees to mature and further break-up the massing of the development site. Further mitigation would be to plant a native tree and line to screen the pv arrays at the ridgeline. The magnitude of change would reduce. As a requirement for site security the existing farm gate would be replace with a steel panelled secure gate that would also screen views into the adjacent field. 	Slight Adverse There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges would obscure most views into the development site. As the adjacent hedge grows taller the views of the low land fields would be screened.
VP 06: Westcott Lane (east)	LOW-MED	 Negligible-Low There would be no change to the majority of this roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. The pv fields D8, D15-16 and G6 can be seen from this gateway and form part of the lowland stream corridor and the gently sloping hillside, the fields are partially screened by existing tall trees and mature hedgerows. This would result in a negligible/low scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the roadway. 	= Negligible The access gate from Westcott Lane into field D8 would be removed and a native species hedge planted and allowed to grow to 3 m tall and then maintained. After 10-15 years the view of solar arrays would be screened by the new hedge. The magnitude of change would reduce.	Neutral There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges would obscure most views into the development site.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	After Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
VP 07: Westcott Lane (CENTRAL)	LOW-MED	 None There would be no change to the majority of this roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. The north facing slopes would be directly visible from this location. However, the pv arrays have been removed from the adjacent field and the pv tables proposed at the top of the field have been set back away from the edge of the ridge and would therefore not be visible from this location. This would result in a 'no change to the view. 	= None The magnitude of change would not change.	Neutral / No Change There would be no change to the roadway view of the adjacent fields.
VP 08 A and B Westcott Lane (west)	LOW-MED	 = Medium-High There would be no change to the majority of this roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. From short sections of the footpath where the existing hedge has been cut very low (approx. 1.5m high) there would be views of the pv arrays of the fields DC02, G5, G6, D8, D15 and D16. This would result in a medium /large scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the footpath. 	 Negligible-Low In order to match the hedgerow characteristics of the majority of Westcott Lane, this stretch of hedgerow should be allowed to grow and be maintain and manage at 3 metres tall. To further breakup the massing of the pv arrays, selected hedgerow plants should be encouraged to grow in height and canopy size. The magnitude of change would reduce. 	Minimal Adverse There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. However, as the proposed trees and hedges grow taller the views of the upper slopes would diminish. As the boundary hedge along Westcott Lane would be maintained at 3m the views over the wider countryside and into the north facing slopes would continue to be visible.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	After Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
VP 09: Footpath - Aylesbeare 07	LOW-MED	 = Medium From the majority of this footpath there would be no views of the development site. However, there are glimpsed views from short sections of the footpath with views of the pv arrays within the gently sloping fields. From this location there would be a noticeable change to the visual perception whilst walkers pass through the field. This would result in a medium scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the footpath. 	 = Medium The boundary tree and hedge line would continue to develop but not be under the control of the development site. The magnitude of change would not change. 	Moderate Adverse There would be no change to the majority of this footpath as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. The existing trees and hedges would continue to develop and screen some of the pv array tables in the lower fields.
VP 10: Withybed Lane	LOW-MED	 = -Low From the lane, there are glimpsed views from the gateway of the pv arrays of field D3. From this location there would be a noticeable change to the visual perception whilst vehicles pass the gate. This would result in a small scale, long term with limited from a very short sections of the footpath. 	 Negligible The pv array tables have been set back in the field and away from the gateway. The dis-used gateway would be planted with hedgerow species and a similar block of planting would further screen the proposed pv array tables. The magnitude of change would reduce. 	Minimal Adverse There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. As the proposed new hedge and block planting mature and grow taller the views of the pv tables would diminish.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	After Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
VP 11: Withybed Lane / Quarter Mile Lane	LOW-MED	 = -Low- Medium From the lane, there are glimpsed views from the gateway of the pv arrays of field DC04, D7, D9, D14, D15 and D17. From this location there would be a noticeable change to the visual perception whilst vehicles, walkers and riders pass the gate. This would result in a small/medium scale, long term with limited effect to a very short section of the roadway at the field gate. 	 = LOW The pv array tables have been removed from the field and the only visible pv arrays are to be seen within the distant Westcott Lane valley and south facing slopes. A precautionary mitigation measure would be to protect, maintain and manage the adjacent boundary hedgerow at 4 metres tall and allow strategic hedgerow trees to mature and further break-up the massing of the development site. The magnitude of change would reduce. 	Slight Adverse There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. As the hedges and trees mature and grow taller the views of the pv tables would diminish.
A30	LOW	 = - Negligible-Low There are no opportunities to see the development site from the majority of the A30. It is not safe to attempt to take a photograph but it is assumed that there would only be an oblique, partial and glimpsed view of field DC04. The pv array tables within the sloping fields would be perceptible as seen through the canopies of the large and tall boundary trees. This would result in a negligible/small scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the roadway. 	 Negligible A precautionary mitigation measure would be to allow the western field boundary hedge to grow up and also to establish a new short hedgerow across DC02 (refer to Landscape Plan). As this new feature matures it would further break-up the massing of the development site. The magnitude of change would reduce. 	Minimal Adverse There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees and hedges obscure most views into the development site. However, as the western perimeter hedge and new short DC02 hedge grows taller the views of the solar arrays in the upper slopes of DC02 would diminish and there would very little or no views of the development site.



Receptor	Sensitivity to Change	Magnitude of Change	After Mitigation	Significance of Effect (Residual)
Rag Lane	LOW-MEDIUM	 = - Negligible-Low There are no opportunities to see the development site from the majority of these two roadways. From the single gateway location there would only be an oblique, partial and glimpsed view of the development site. The pv array tables within the sloping fields would be perceptible as seen through the canopies of the large and tall boundary trees. 	 Negligible A precautionary mitigation measure would be to protect, maintain and manage the boundary hedgerow at 4 metres tall as well as re-establish the hedgerow with trees. As this new feature matures it would further break-up the massing of the development site. The magnitude of change would reduce. 	(Residual) Minimal Adverse There would be no change to the majority of the roadway as tall trees, hedges and buildings obscure most views into the development site. However, as the adjacent hedge grows taller the views of the upper slopes would diminish and there would very little or no views of the development site.
		This would result in a negligible/small scale, long term with limited effect to a very short sections of the roadway.		



7 CONCLUSION

LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Site Character

7.1. The baseline concluded that the development site has a **Low-Medium Sensitivity** to the proposed development. The two fields previously used for commercial maize production have been sown, on rotation, to grassland and would continue to be managed and grazed by sheep. The proposed Landscape Strategy Plan and Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan (EMMP) will improve the landscape character and visual amenity as well as enhancing the ecological biodiversity, with an additional 2 hectares of ecological habitat planting within these two rotational fields.

The significance of effect on the Land Use/Land Cover would have a **Moderate Adverse** impact due to the numerous solar arrays that would change the character of the development site. However, this impact significance would reduce because the land under and around the solar arrays would still be managed and grazed for sheep production. The protection, retention and management of the existing trees and hedgerows and the additional ecological measures would provide a considerable 'net gain' and provide a significance of **Minimal, Beneficial** to the landscape features. Also, the landform within the development site would be **Slight Adverse** due to the pv arrays layout that would actively work with the contours and require little or no land re-shaping.

Landscape Character

The study area is made up of two Landscape Character Types LCT 3E: Lowland Plains and 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes LCT and the baseline concluded that the Landscape Character Types both have a Low-Medium Sensitivity to the proposed development.

Although East Devon AONB is located within the study area, from field observations it can be confirmed that from this designated landscape the development site cannot be seen and therefore would not be impacted by the proposed development.

The effects of the proposed development on the landscape character within the study area are mainly experienced from locations within the southern quadrants of the study area. Vantage points which experience the proposed development site are from along Westcott Lane and locations within 50m (Rockbeare Lane) and 260 metres (Aylesbeare footpath no.7) of the development site boundary.

Less notable vantage points are located further afield and from distance roadside field gates at approx. 1.2km (Rockbeare Hill) and 2.7km (B3180 – West Hill) from the development site.

The mitigation measures as described in the Landscape Strategy Plan 035-200 would reduce the magnitude of change with the provision of the following additional landscape features;

- Proposed pv arrays to be positioned away from some field boundaries so as not to result in prolonged and exposed views as experienced by local road and footpath users.
- The green infrastructure within many of the development fields would not only be protected and maintained but would also be extended and enhanced.

- Existing boundary hedges along Westcott Lane to be protected, retained & maintained at approx.
 3 metres and or 4 metres tall and allow strategic hedgerow trees to grow and mature and further break-up the massing of the development site.
- Existing boundary hedges around pv fields to be protected, retained & maintained at approx. 3 metres and or 4 metres tall and allow strategic hedgerow trees to grow and mature and further break-up the massing of the development site.
- New hedge and tree planting within DC02, D10 and D14 approx. 319 linear metres
- New tree, hedge 'infill' planting to strategic gateways at D3 (near to D4 gateway), D5, D6 south, and D6, D8, D17 - 88 m²
- New native woodland, approx. 4000 m² within the field south of D13.
- Ecological habitat creation and management of approx. 74 hectares that would enhance and diversify site wide wildlife habitats.

At the time of writing of this report, the East Devon District Council planning portal listed several other consented solar farms to be considered as a part of the cumulative impacts assessment. These solar facilities are located between 350 metres - 3.2 km away from the proposed development site. The location of each of these consented solar facilities were chosen and positioned in areas of the countryside that have very few vantage points and where the development can be experienced or seen from only a very few publicly accessed roads or footpaths. The overall impact to the landscape character within the study area, as a result of changes by the proposed and operational solar facility, would be considered to be minimal and the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the 45 ha of green infrastructure and 29 ha of solar facility would mean that the landscape character **would still be recognisable and consistent with the key landscape characteristics.**

The proposed development would not remove any trees, the fields would continue to be grazed and there is a great emphasis with a 'net gain' of enhanced wildlife habitats of 121% with additional ecological improvements throughout the site. The extent of impact that the proposed solar facility and the existing solar facilities have on the fabric/character of the landscape is considered to be negligible/minimal.

Over time the maturing native hedgerows (existing and new) would grow and be maintained thereby contributing and helping the 29 hectares solar development settle within the 45 hectares of enhanced green infrastructure across this small and contained Westcott Lane valley. The impact to the landscape character of the study area as a result of the proposed development and after the mitigation measures have matured would be seen to be **Slight Adverse** significance.

VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual Amenity

The defined study area covers a significantly large area of approx. 6.25km² of countryside around the proposed development which is criss-crossed with many local and regional roads, footpaths and local settlements. The assessment has concluded that due to the existing topography and the local tall tree and hedgerows, the proposed development would not be visible from the vast majority of the study area. The assessment has shown that the visual envelope of the development site within the study area is only from a small number of vantage points with a varying scale of view toward the development site. Apart from a few long-distance views, as glimpsed from a field gate on the side of

the road, the majority of views are either adjacent or within a few hundred metres of the development site boundary and beyond which the development site would not be visible.

To clearly understand the impact significance of the proposed development on the study area it is essential to understand the assessment methodology (See Appendix of the LVIA) and to break down the key elements of the assessment criteria. Firstly, the sensitivity of the viewpoint locations is typically characterised as being from local and regional roads (A30 dual carriageway) and having a low-medium sensitivity to change. Secondly, the magnitude of change (due to the presence of the proposed development site) has been generally assessed as having a low - medium magnitude on the viewpoint locations. Therefore, after combining the sensitivity and magnitude assessments it can be determined that there is a general and overall **Minimal -Slight Adverse significance** to most of the viewpoint locations. However, from the Westcott Lane and footpath 'Aylesbeare 07' there are only very short sections (approx. 225 linear metres) that have a clear view of the development and only when the existing intervening boundary hedgerow has been excessively cut short.

These local footpaths are extensive in their length (approx. 1km between Rill House and Westcott and approx. 1.5km between Marsh Green and Westcott) and for most of the footpath the development site is not visible, therefore, from only two short sections of footpath (approx. 225 linear metres) with an expected **Moderate Adverse significance** to the proposed development site.

Landscape Plan 035-200 has a set of proposed mitigation measures to remedy the impacts of the proposed development from local vantage points and especially from the most affected nearby footpath along Westcott Lane. The proposal would be to allow the intensively managed hedges along Westcott Lane to re-generate and then to be maintained at 3 metres tall which would enable the hedge to function not only as a viable wildlife habitat but also to screen the pv arrays from the footpath.

Also, additional mitigation measures would be implemented with extra trees and hedges planted that would reinforce the existing boundary hedges (D8 west) managed to allow hedge trees to grow to maturity and ensure that the PV arrays would become further screened which would partially mitigate easterly views from residential properties at the east of Westcott hamlet.

As regards cumulative impacts, the assessment has demonstrated that the majority of the existing operational solar facilities would unlikely share interconnected views with that of the proposed development at Ford Oaks. The exception being a single viewpoint location (VP11 Quarter Mile Lane/Withybed Lane) as seen from a single field gate in the roadside hedge where the proposed solar development and the Strete solar facility would be seen in combination. Within this view, the Ford Oaks solar and green infrastructure facility would be seen in the low land valley fields and set below the viewer but mostly screened by existing field boundary tall trees/ hedgerows as well as (in time) the proposed mitigation measures.

It is considered that the existing local solar facilities do not have significant cumulative effects on the existing landscape and visual receptors as the local topography and existing trees, hedges and woodland all contribute to effectively screen these vitally important renewable power facilities from one another as well as views from local roads leading to and from Marsh Green village.

The reception compound (1.26 hectares) at Bishops Court Lane (4 km west of the development site) would only be used for the duration of the construction phase and would only be seen by passing vehicles travelling at speed. The drivers and passengers would have a fleeting and oblique view

toward the field where there would be a temporary and minor change to the view for a short section (approx. 50 metres) of the roadway before being screened by the local topography, trees and hedges.

It is therefore considered that due to the careful location choice of the development site set within the discreet and contained Westcott Lane valley, the considered layout design of the pv arrays and the existing natural features of the topography, tree and hedges that the assessed impacts of the proposed development are restricted to adjacent lanes and footpaths.

From a detailed survey and assessment of the Westcott Lane valley from 11 public vantage points, it can be concluded that these would be considered to have **only Low and Moderate visual impacts at the local level** (hence no district or regional significance) and that over time (5 years for views from Westcott Lane/Rockbeare Lane and 15 years for Withybed Lane (VP11)) the mitigation planting measures would further screen the proposed development without causing continuing significant effects within the Westcott Lane valley or wider countryside.

REPORT END

APPENDIX A - Landscape Character Index

Table A: Key Characteristics/Special Qualities Evaluation Tables

County: East Devon and Blackdown Hills LCA (2019)		
LCT 3E: Lowland Plains		
Relevant Key Characteristics	Relevance to study area	
Level to gently sloping or rolling plain between the valley floors and the start of steeper valley sides.	The development site is comparable to this description of relatively flat areas and also sloped areas along Westcott Lane	
Mixed farmland, often in arable cultivation. Regular medium to large field pattern with local variation, particularly around settlements. Contains some of the most fertile farmland in the study area.	Much of the fields that are located along Westcott Lane and Withybed Lane tend to be smaller fields with fields that are slightly larger located along the A30 corridor and fields D10-13.	
Semi-natural habitats include roadside hedges and hedgerow trees - particularly oaks – streams and pockets of grassland.	The majority of the lanes that are located within the development site area can be described as having hedges and roadside hedges that are semi-natural.	
Historic parklands including veteran trees.	Rockbeare House is not located with the development site boundary but	
Settled, with a mixed pattern of villages, hamlets and isolated farms.	relatively close to the northern edge of the development but separated by the A30 corridor.	
Variable highway network, from sparse rural lanes to motorway and A-roads. Relatively few public rights of way.	Much of the lanes within the development site area are considered to be small rural lanes and the A30 corridor is located to the north of the development site.	
Surprising feeling of remoteness in some parts. Despite local impacts of development and infrastructure, much of the area retains a pleasant, rural feel.	The sheltered and enclosed landscape around Westcott Lane is indicative of this character description.	
Long views over low hedges. Some views marred by pylons and other infrastructure.	Only restricted views from the local lanes and footpaths but views are not long distant but there are pylons and other infrastructure.	



APPENDIX

County: East Devon and Blackdown Hills LCA (2019)	
LCT 3B: Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Valley Slopes	
Key Characteristics	Representation on site and study area
Gently rolling landform, sloping up from valley floor. Numerous shallow valleys contain small streams.	The development site is comparable to this description of relatively flat areas and also sloped areas along Westcott Lane
Many hedgerow trees, copses and streamside tree rows. Oak and ash predominate, and there are small blocks of woodland.	Trees tend to be more oak rather than ash and there are small pockets of woodland located near Houndsbeare Farm to the east of the development site.
Predominantly pastoral farmland, often with a wooded appearance. Variable sized fields with wide, low hedged boundaries and a mostly irregular pattern, reflecting different phases of enclosure.	Much of the fields that are located along Westcott Lane and Withybed Lane tend to be smaller fields with fields that are slightly larger located along the A30 corridor and fields D10-13.
Semi-natural habitats include streams and ditches, grassland, woodland and trees.	The majority of the lanes that are located within the development site area can be described as having hedges and roadside hedges that are semi-natural.
Numerous historic landscape features including farmsteads, lanes, villages and churches.	Rockbeare House is not located with the development site boundary but relatively close to the northern edge of the development but separated by the
Settled, with various settlement sizes	A30 corridor.
Winding, often narrow sunken lanes, with tall earth banks. Local examples of deep cuttings through sandstone, particularly at entrances to settlements.	Much of the lanes within the development site area are considered to be small rural lanes and the A30 corridor is located to the north of the development site.
A relatively enclosed and sheltered landscape. Some parts of the LCT feel well settled, whilst others feel exceptionally remote, with very little traffic.	The sheltered and enclosed landscape around Westcott Lane is indicative of this character description.
Views tend to occur across valleys, rather from within them. Higher land in other LCTs forms the backdrop to views.	Only restricted views from the local lanes and footpaths but views are not long distant but there are pylons and other infrastructure.



APPENDIX B - Landscape and Visual Methodology

METHODOLOGY

The landscape and visual impact assessment deals with the separate but related issues of:

- Landscape Character: the effects of the development upon discrete character areas and/or character comprising features possessing a particular quality or merit: and
- **Visual Context**: the effects of the development on views from visual receptors, and upon the amenity value of the views.

This landscape and visual impact assessment has been carried out by the means of desktop and field studies. Initial analysis of maps studying existing landforms was undertaken to identify potential viewpoints. Panorama Digital Topographical Data was used to establish approximate heights within the application sites. Viewpoints and any other views identified during the fieldwork were then visited and assessed for their sensitivity to the proposed development.

The application site and surrounding area were visited during August 2020 where a series of photographs were taken from representative viewpoints. The viewpoint locations are shown on in 035 120 Viewpoint Figure Sheet.

All viewpoints were photographed using a Nikon D40 Digital SLR camera and the nature of the views are of relatively wide panoramas but it was considered beneficial to present of the photographs as single shot with 40 degrees of horizontal view. All photographic technical information can be found alongside each individual viewpoint.

The choice of which viewpoint location to be used as a photomontage that would portray the proposed development were agreed with the landscape officer within East Devon District Council. The photographic equipment that was used to capture the images for the photomontages are as follows;

- Nikon D600 digital SLR camera (35mm) with Nikon 50mm f/1.8 and Nikon 28mm f/1.8 ,
- Nikon 24mm tilt-shift f/3.5, Manfrotto 190 tripod, Tripod indexed pan head,
- Levelling base with bubble level, Digital Level, Laser plumb bob.

Landscape Assessment

The sensitivity of a landscape is the degree to which change is able to be accommodated without unacceptable adverse effects upon character or change of character. The GLVIA guidelines indicate, however, that landscape sensitivity is not an absolute criterion and depends upon the nature of the development. Thus the assessment of sensitivity is not strictly part of the initial baseline study of landscape character. Landscapes of high sensitivity are at risk of having their key characteristics fundamentally altered by a particular development.

The magnitude of landscape effects depends upon the extent to which the landscape changes are perceptible in the wider context, whilst assessing the degree to which the fundamental elements of the landscape that give it its unique characteristics are affected.

Direct effects are those that actually change the physical characteristics of the identified elements that make up the landscape, such as the landform and land cover, whereas indirect effects are those which alter the perceptual characteristics of the landscape character, such as the tranquility and sense of remoteness.

Landscape Sensitivity

Sensitivity is categorised as high, medium, or low, according to the degree to which a particular landscape receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its character. This is judged by combining the **susceptibility** of individual landscape receptors to the type of change or development proposed with the **value** attached to that receptor through protection by designations or contribution at a local to national level.

Susceptibility indicates the ability of a receptor (landscape or visual) to accommodate the proposed development 'without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies or strategies'. The susceptibility of a receptor is influenced by key characteristics, special qualities, purpose for designation and/or activity likely to be taking place. It is judged as:

- **High** undue consequences are likely to arise from the proposed development.
- **Medium** undue consequences may arise from the proposed development.
- Low undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the proposed development.

Landscape/Receptor Value is 'the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society'. It is judged as:

- National/International Designated landscapes which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape value – including National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), World Heritage Sites, Heritage Coasts and National Scenic Areas.
- Local Locally or regionally designated landscapes such as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). Also, areas which local evidence indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area.
- **Community** 'everyday' landscape which is appreciated by the local community but has little or no wider recognition of its value.
- Limited despoiled or degraded landscape with little or no evidence of being valued by the community.

Sensitivity Level	Landscape Resources
High	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are highly susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
Medium-High	The key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
Medium	Some of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
Low-Medium	Few of the key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are susceptible to change from the type of development being assessed.
Low	Key characteristics and qualities of the landscape are robust and are less likely to be adversely affected by the type of development being assessed.

Table B: Sensitivity Levels and Definitions.

APPENDIX

It is also important to consider the value of the general wider landscape outside of landscape designations particularly where they are not present within the study area or to test their relevance to the specific site and/or study area in question. Judgments on landscape value consider the following factors:

- Landscape Quality (including physical state, visual intactness, functional intactness, ecological intactness and state of repair)
- Scenic Quality (primarily but not wholly visual sense)
- Rarity
- **Representativeness** (key characteristics as identified in the relevant landscape character assessment that are contained within the site and the surrounding area)
- **Conservation Interests** (features of wildlife, earth science, archaeological, historical and cultural interest)
- Recreational Opportunity
- Perceptual Aspects (such as wildness and tranquility)
- Associations (with particular people/events in history)

Table C: General Landscape Value.

Value	Typical Criteria	Typical Example
High	A clear composition of valued landscape components in a robust form and health, free of disruptive detractors and with a strong sense of place. Areas containing a strong, balanced structure with distinct features worthy of conservation. All landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. No or limited potential for substitution.	World Heritage Site, National Park, AONB, Heritage Coast
Medium-High	Primarily containing valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition and lacking prominent disruptive visual detractors. Areas containing a strong structure with noteworthy features or elements, exhibiting a sense of place. Most landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Limited potential for substitution.	National Park, AONB, Heritage Coast, AGLV
Medium	Consisting primarily of valued landscape components combined in an aesthetically pleasing composition with low levels of disruptive visual detractors, exhibiting a recognisable landscape structure. Some landscape elements remain intact and in good repair. Limited potential for substitution.	Undesignated, but value perhaps expressed through non-official publications or demonstrable use
Low-Medium	Containing some features of landscape value but lacking a coherent and aesthetically pleasing composition with frequent detracting visual elements, exhibiting a distinguishable structure often concealed by mixed land uses or development. Few landscape elements remain intact and in good repair.	Areas identified as having some redeeming features and possibly identified for improvement
Low	Lacking valued landscape components or comprising degraded, disturbed or derelict features, lacking any aesthetically pleasing composition with dominance of visually detracting elements, exhibiting mixed land uses which conceal the baseline structure. No landscape elements remain intact and in good repair.	Areas identified for recovery

Landscape Impact Assessment:

Magnitude of change

Magnitude of change to the landscape character is measured on a scale of **High**, **Medium or Low** by considering the **scale** of effect to the baseline situation with the **duration** it is likely to occur and the **extent** of the receptor that will experience the change.

The following degrees of **scale** of effect have been adapted from GLVIA methodology:

- Large: total loss or major alteration to key elements of the pre development landscape, or the introduction of elements considered to be uncharacteristic when assessed within the attributes of the receiving landscape, or the proposal becomes a dominant feature within the scene with the surrounding elements becoming subordinate and the resultant effect is a change in the overall character.
- **Medium:** partial loss of, or alteration to one or more key elements of the landscape pre-development, or the introduction of elements that maybe prominent, or from a visibly recognisable new feature, but may not necessarily be considered substantially uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
- **Small:** minor loss or alteration to one or more key elements of the pre-development landscape, or the introduction of elements which constitute a minor component of the wider landscape, and are not uncharacteristic when set within the attributes of the receiving landscape.
- **Negligible**: where the development would cause a virtually imperceptible change in the existing use or character.

Duration is the time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development. It is judged as:

- **Permanent:** The change is expected to be permanent with no intention for it to be reversed.
- Long-term: the change is expected to be in place for 10-25 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or removed so no longer occurring beyond that time frame.
- **Medium-term:** the change is expected to be in place for 2-10 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or removed so no longer occurring beyond that time frame.
- **Short-term**: the change is expected to be in place for 0-2 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or removed so no longer occurring beyond that time frame.

Extent indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt as a result of the proposed development. It is judged as Wide, Intermediate, Localised or Limited.

- Wide: beyond 4km (or more than 50% of the receptor)
- Intermediate: up to approx. 2-4km (or around 50% of the receptor)
- Localised: site and surroundings up to 2km (or up to approx. 25% of the receptor)
- Limited: site, or part of the site (or up to approx. 10% of the receptor)

Significance of Landscape Impacts

The landscape impacts of the proposed development have been assessed by considering the degree to which each landscape feature is likely to be affected, taking into account the ease with which features could be replaced, and the contribution each feature makes to local landscape character, is assessed as large, medium or small. The condition of each feature is assessed as good, moderate or poor. These aspects are difficult to quantify and their assessment depends largely on professional judgement. Measures to mitigate the landscape impacts are also considered.

The overall significance of the landscape impacts are established by comparing the sensitivity of the landscape receptor against the magnitude of change with after consideration of the elements described in the paragraphs above. This is expressed as **Slight**, **Moderate** or **Major** and is summarised using the criteria stated in methodology Table C below. A judgement is made as to whether the type of effect resulting from the proposed development is considered to be **Beneficial** or **Adverse** based on the nature of the change in question.

SIGNIFICANCE	CRITERIA
Major Beneficial	Landscape feature is significantly enhance and improved in a manner consistent with the local landscape character
Moderate Beneficial	Landscape feature is enhanced and extended in a manner consistent with the local landscape character
Slight Beneficial	Landscape feature is enhanced in a manner consistent with local landscape character
Neutral	Virtually imperceptible or no indirect change in landscape characteristics over a very localised area, or virtually imperceptible, or no, direct change to landscape components/ character
Slight Adverse	Perceptible indirect change in landscape characteristics over a localised area, or direct change to landscape components/ character over a very localised area. Partial loss or deterioration of landscape component which is not mitigated
Moderate Adverse	Noticeable indirect change in landscape characteristics over less extensive area, or direct change to landscape feature/ character over a localised area.
Major Adverse	Very noticeable indirect change in landscape characteristics over an extensive area, or direct change to landscape features/ character over a less extensive area.

Table D: Significance criteria of landscape impacts

Visual Assessment

Views have been assessed from an average height of approximately 1.6m above ground level. The significance of a predicted impact is determined by combining the sensitivity of visual receptors with the magnitude of change, duration of the proposed development and the extent of the receptor that is likely to experience the change. The visual assessment focuses on the visual impacts upon public viewpoints so does not consider the effects upon views from private properties, which would be subject to separate Residential Amenity Assessment; this does not however affect the sensitivity of the receptors experiencing views.

The viewpoints were chosen to represent views in which the proposed development would be visible, none are included in which the proposed development would not be visible.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity is categorised as high, medium, or low, according to the degree to which a particular viewpoint or receptor can accommodate change arising from a particular development without detrimental effects on its visual amenity. This is judged by considering the susceptibility of the visual receptor to the type of change or development proposed with the value attached to that receptor with particular regard to the type and number of users of the receptor, this is sumarised in Table D below. Sensitivity also considered the following factors:

- <u>Location and context of the receptor</u>: For example, receptors/viewpoints which are closer to the site are generally more susceptible;
- <u>Number of viewers who commonly use the receptor</u>: Some receptors/viewpoints are commonly used by the public, such as formal viewing platforms, picnic areas or recreational rights of way. Other viewpoints may be difficult to gain access to;
- <u>Nature of the receptor</u>: Public footpaths, for example, can be susceptible, since the users' attention is often focused on the landscape. By contrast, views from outdoor sport facilities, transport routes or places of work are less susceptible;
- <u>Movement of viewers at /on the receptor</u>: More transitory views, for example from a motorway, are generally less sensitive than views experienced from footpaths;
- <u>Value attached to views</u> take account of the relation to heritage assets or planning designations and the cultural significance of the viewpoint, including its appearance in guidebooks and tourist maps, or cultural and historical associations.

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
AGHV	Areas of Great Historic Value
AGLV	Area of Great Landscape Value
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum (sea level)
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Characteristic	A distinctive element of the landscape that contributes to landscape character for instance a particular hedgerow pattern or sense of tranquillity.
Cumulative effects	The situation of effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions. As defined by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2002)
Duration of effect	The time period over which the change to the receptor would arise as a result of the development. It is judges as Permanent, Long-term, Medium-term and Short-term.
Extent of effect	Indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt as a result of the proposed development. It is judged as Wide, Intermediate, Localised or Limited.
Landscape Character	The distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements that occur in a particular landscape and how these are perceived. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement.
Landscape Character Areas	Single unique areas that are the discrete geological area of a particular landscape type.
Landscape Value	'The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society'. It is judged as National/International, Local, Community or Limited
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
Magnitude of effect	Judged as detailed in the methodology but tends to consider the scale, duration and extent of the effect.
SM	Schedule Monuments
Scale of effect	The degree of change which would arise as a result of the proposed development. It is judged as Large, Medium, Small or
	Negligible
Sensitivity	The relative extent to which the character and quality of the receptor can accommodate change as a result of a particular type of
	development. The sensitivity of a receptor is a combination of its susceptibility and value. Judgements of sensibility are detailed in
	the methodology.
Significance of effect	Judgements are detailed in the methodology but tend to be the sensitivity of receptor considered against the magnitude of change
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest



APPENDIX

Susceptibility	Indicates the ability of a receptor (landscape or visual) to accommodate the proposed development 'without undue consequences
	for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies or strategies'. The
	susceptibility of a receptor is influenced by key characteristics, special qualities, purpose for designation and/or activity likely to be
	taking place. It is judged as High, Medium or Low.
ZVI	Zone of Visual Influence, the extent of where elements of the proposal are predicted to be visible based on topography and
	landscape features.
ZVT	Zone of Theoretical Visibility, this represents the area over which a development can theoretically be seen, based on digital terrain
	data. Limitations occur with intervening objects within the landscape not captured by the digital terrain data.



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