# Chapter 5 – Landscape and Visual

## Postcombe and Lewknor Solar Farm Environmental Statement

### Postcombe and Lewknor Solar Farm Limited

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| LVIA | Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment |
| GLVIA3 | Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) |
| IEMA | Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment |
| PV | Photovoltaic |
| CCTV | Closed Circuit Television |
| CEMP | Construction Environmental Management Plan |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| NPPF4 | National Planning Policy Framework 4 |
| ZTV | Zone of Theoretical Visibility |
| VRG | Visual Receptor Groups |
| AONB | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty |
| LCA | Landscape Character Area |
| LCT | Landscape Character Type |
| PRoW | Public Rights of Way |

# 5. Landscape and Visual

## 5.1 Executive Summary

5.1.1 This chapter provides an assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development with regard to its landscape and visual impact. The majority of the effects identified for the Proposed Development have been assessed as being non-significant (refer to **Table 5.8**: Summary Table).

5.1.2 The Site is not located within the Chilterns National Landscape however its location in the setting of the National Landscape means it will be intermittently visible from elevated locations within the Chilterns, in views to the west and north-west, but experienced in the context of the M40 and the solar schemes at Cornwell and Harlseford (and subsequently Dodwells).These solar schemes are located within the setting of, and visible from, the National Landscape and most of them are visually associated with the M40, which demonstrates the existing influence of renewable development in the wider landscape.

5.1.3 The Site is located in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes, an area which was previously described as LCA 5 Eastern Vale Fringes, with characteristics of both evident. To present a more balanced assessment of the effects on landscape character, LCA 6B has been considered in two parts. There will be indirect effects on both LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale, which is immediately adjacent to the solar site's eastern boundary, and LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment which is within the Chilterns National Landscape.

5.1.4 Key visual receptors include those passing through and adjacent to the solar site on the Public Right of Way (PRoW) network and users of the major road network including the M40 where views from the latter would be fleeting. For visual receptors within the Chilterns National Landscape the Proposed Development will be visible in the context of the M40, local road network and recently constructed solar schemes.

5.1.5 The M40 is a noted significant visual and aural detractor within the landscape affecting both views and experience of landscape character in the solar site and

National Landscape. Low voltage transmission poles are also a visual detractor within the solar site.

5.1.6 There will be large changes within the solar site to both existing landscape character and views, notably from Footpath 277/2/10.

5.1.7 In views from within the Chilterns National Landscape the Proposed Development will be visible in the context of the M40 and existing solar schemes. Visual effects for the National Landscape have been assessed as Moderate (significant).

5.1.8 Mitigation is proposed through the solar site including new sections of native rich hedgerows, infill planting of existing hedgerows and linear tree belts. There will also be areas of wildflower seeding and creation of 1.11 ha native woodland.

5.1.9 Once established this will create additional filtering of views in winter (screened in summer) and will increase the vegetative structure within the solar site and create permanent improvements on landscape character.

5.1.10 Effects on the PRoW network within and adjacent to the solar site have been identified as Moderate (significant) however there will be a positive indirect effect resulting from the screening of the M40 and A40 due to a combination of the proposed infrastructure and mitigation planting.

## 5.2 Introduction

### Background

5.2.1 Stephenson Halliday was commissioned in January 2023 to prepare a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the Proposed Development on behalf of the Applicant.

5.2.2 This LVIA defines the existing landscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key landscape and visual related aspects of the Proposed Development; and, describes the nature of the anticipated changes and assesses the effects arising during construction, operation and decommissioning.

5.2.3 The LVIA considers the potential effects upon:

- landscape fabric;
- landscape character;
- the special qualities of any landscape designations; and
- visual receptors including residential, transport and recreational receptors.

5.2.4 The LVIA has been undertaken in accordance with published best practice; namely the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition), Landscape Institute and IEMA 2013 (GLVIA3) and associated technical guidance

notes published by the Landscape Institute (referenced as appropriate in **Appendix 5.1**).

5.2.5 Although linked, landscape and visual effects are considered separately. Landscape effects derive from changes in the landscape fabric, which may result in changes to the character, whereas visual effects are the effect of these changes as experienced by people (visual receptors).

## The Site and Proposals

5.2.6 The Site lies adjacent to the village of Postcombe and approximately 450 m north of the village of Lewknor. The Site consists of two land parcels which border either side of the M40 motorway, with the A40 to the east, Weston Road to the west and Salt Lane to the north. The Site area including the grid route is approximately 97.5 ha. The Proposed Development would comprise a solar PV (photovoltaic) array with an export capacity of up to 49.9 MW, with an indicative maximum panel height of 3.1 m.

5.2.7 The final Proposed Development layout will comprise of solar photovoltaic modules arranged in rows with a height of up to 3.1 m. In addition to the modules, associated infrastructure will include:

- PV module mounting frames;
- inverters;
- transformers;
- high voltage (HV) switchgear and control equipment;
- cabling and interconnector;
- cabling for grid route to connection at Harlesford Solar Farm substation (‘cable corridor’);
- on-site substation and control building;
- customer station compound;
- spares container;
- site access and tracks;
- car parking;
- security fencing and CCTV; and
- temporary construction compound and
- Landscape mitigation planting.

5.2.8 The Proposed Development will include the installation of rows of solar photovoltaic panels, ancillary cables, and substation surrounded by a perimeter fence for security. There will be two points of access, one for each of the land parcels that straddle the M40. Access to the eastern site will be taken from an existing agricultural access junction on the A40 to the south of Postcombe. Access to the western parcel will be taken from Salt Lane from an existing agricultural access. Access between the two parcels will be taken using the A40 and Salt Lane.

5.2.9 The Proposed Development will connect to the existing substation at Harlesford Solar (planning reference: P20/S3245/FUL) approximately 3 km to the north-west of the solar site. The cable corridor connecting the solar site to the substation will be trenched underground. No vegetation will be removed as a result of the trenching and the ground will be restored to its previous state upon completion. Changes will be short-term, during the construction phase and following completion no above ground infrastructure will be visible. Effects will be no greater than negligible and the underground cabling is not considered further within this LVIA. Therefore, this assessment only references the solar site.

5.2.10 The construction of the Proposed Development is expected to take place up to fourteen months and anticipated to commence in 2027 due to the grid connection date. Environmental impacts would be controlled, mitigated, and monitored through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

5.2.11 The operational life of the Proposed Development is proposed to be 40 years.

5.2.12 **Figures 5.1** and **5.2** place the solar site within its local context.

### Competence

5.2.13 This chapter along with the design of the mitigation for the Proposed Development has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Stephenson Halliday. The Practice has over 20 years of experience working on renewable energy proposals throughout the UK.

The Practice is a Landscape Institute and IEMA registered practice and all work is prepared and reviewed internally by senior highly experienced landscape planners with Public Inquiry experience.

### Report Structure and Terminology

5.2.14 This chapter is structured as set out in the table of contents.

5.2.15 Supporting appendices have been prepared that supplement the sections regarding methodology, planning policy and baseline. The appendices are important to the assessment and should be read alongside this report.

5.2.16 Key terms used within the assessment are described in **Paragraph 5.5** and **Appendix 5.1** which set out the methodology. A glossary is provided within the same appendix.

## 5.3 Legislation, Policy & Guidance

### Legislation

5.3.1 Relevant legislation and guidance documents have been reviewed and taken into account as part of this assessment. Refer to **Appendix 5.3**.

### Planning Policy

5.3.2 The Planning Statement associated with this Town and Country Planning

application sets out the planning policy framework that is relevant to the EIA. This section considers the relevant aspects of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Advice Notes, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 and other relevant guidance.

### National Planning Policy

5.3.3 Relevant national planning policy is set out in **Appendix 5.3** and addressed in detail in the accompanying Planning Statement.

### Local Planning Policy

5.3.4 Current local planning policy is described in the adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035. Of relevance to the assessment presented within this chapter, regard has been had to the following policies:

5.3.5 Policy ENV1: Landscape and Countryside – which states:

*"The highest level of protection will be given to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs):*

- *Development proposals that could affect the special qualities of an AONB (including the setting of an AONB) either individually or in combination with other developments, should be accompanied by a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.*

*South Oxfordshire's landscape, countryside and rural areas will be protected against harmful development. Development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscapes, in particular [inter alia]:*

*i) trees (including individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands), hedgerows and field boundaries;*

*viii) important views and visually sensitive skylines; and*

*ix) aesthetic and perceptual factors such as tranquility, wildness, intactness, rarity and enclosure."*

5.3.6 Policy DES9: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy – which states:

*"The Council encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation and associated infrastructure at all scales including domestic schemes. It also encourages the incorporation of renewable and low carbon energy applications within all development. Planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be supported, provided that they do not cause a significantly adverse effect to* [inter alia]*:*

*i) landscape, both designated AONB and locally valued, biodiversity, including protected habitats and species and Conservation Target Areas;*

*v) residential amenity."*

5.3.7 South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are working collaboratively on a "Joint Local Plan 2041". The Joint Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in December 2024 for independent examination.

5.3.8 At the time of writing, the Joint Local Plan is not adopted and is therefore not considered further within this assessment.

## Guidance and Background Reports

5.3.9 In addition to the policy documents identified above, there are several background reports which have informed local policy or form part of the evidence base for the emerging local plan.

### Chilterns Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024

5.3.10 Although Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) were renamed as National Landscapes as of November 23rd, 2023, subsequent Sections within this LVIA addressing the published documents listed above will retain the term Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and AONB to avoid confusion. At the time of writing these documents had not been superseded using the term National Landscape.

5.3.11 The Chilterns AONB Management Plan sets out the vision, policies and actions for the management of the AONB for the period 2019–2024. As part of new government reforms and requirements relating to National Landscapes and their management plans, National Landscapes have the option to delay reviewing their plans by up to a year by publishing a "light-touch review" statement. The Chilterns National Landscape has taken up this option, and as a result, their current plan has been extended until the end of March 2025. At the time of writing, the Chilterns National Landscape is undergoing a boundary review.

5.3.12 Policy DP4 states that "*In the setting of the AONB, take full account of whether proposals harm the AONB. For example, development of land visible in panoramic views from the Chilterns escarpment, or which generates traffic in or travelling across the AONB, or which increases water abstraction from the chalk aquifer, thereby reducing flow in chalk streams."*

5.3.13 The Special Qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape are referenced throughout the Management Plan and are presented on their website:

- *"A rich natural tapestry. Panoramic views across a dramatic chalk escarpment – a globally rare landscape type interwoven with intimate valleys and rolling fields. Ancient hedgerows, trees, orchards and parkland weaving across farmland.*
- *Unspoilt, tranquil countryside. One of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, with relative tranquillity, unspoilt countryside and dark skies on the doorstep of 10 million people.*
- *Scarce and threatened species. Nationally important concentrations of species-rich chalk grassland that is home to scarce and threatened species, such as Chiltern gentian, wild candytuft, pasqueflower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm.*

- *One of the most wooded landscapes in England. Over half of the woodland is ancient, including the Chilterns beech wood Special Area of Conservation (SAC, European designation). There are also significant box, juniper and beech-yew woods; veteran trees and relict wood pasture.*
- *Nine precious chalk streams. A globally scarce habitat and home to some of the UK's most endangered species, such as otter, water vole, reed bunting and brown trout.*
- *A diverse archaeological landscape. Ancient parish boundaries, medieval field patterns, iron age hillforts, and remnants of woodland heritage like sawpits and charcoal hearths.*
- *Ample common lands. More than 2,000 ha of common land, heaths and greens, rich in wildlife and cultural heritage.*
- *Highly accessible - A network of 2,000 km of rights of way, including two national trails (the Ridgeway and Thames Path); two regional routes (the Chiltern Way and Chilterns Cycleway); and numerous ancient routes like the Icknield Way.*
- *A rich industrial heritage. An industrial heritage of woodworking, quarrying, brick making and food production with windmills and watercress beds.*
- *Distinctive buildings. Made from local brick, flint and clay tiles; attractive villages and notable buildings including stately homes and monuments; and a wealth of medieval churches."*

5.3.14 The Special Qualities are considered further within **Section 5.13**.

### Chilterns Conservation Board – Position Statement: Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB (2011)

5.3.15 The Position Statement was adopted in June 2011 as part of the 'Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2014-2019: A Framework for Action' and remains valid for the 'Chilterns Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024.'

5.3.16 The Position Statement provides guidance on *"the need to consider the impacts on the AONB of development and land management proposals which lie outside it but within its 'setting'."*

5.3.17 It also advises that *"The setting of the Chilterns AONB does not have a geographical border. The location, scale, materials or design of a proposed development or land management activity will determine whether it affects the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. A very large development may have an impact even if some considerable distance from the AONB boundary. However, the distance away from the AONB will be a material factor in forming a decision on any proposals, in that the further away a development is from the AONB boundary the more the impact is likely to be reduced."*

5.3.18 The Position Statement includes the following examples of adverse impacts to consider:

- *"Blocking or interference of views out of the AONB particularly from public viewpoints or rights of way;*

- *Blocking or interference of views of the AONB from public viewpoints or rights of way outside the AONB;*
- *Breaking the skyline, particularly when this is associated with developments that have a vertical emphasis and/or movement (viaducts, chimneys, plumes or rotors for example);*
- *The visual intrusion caused by the introduction of new transport corridors, in particular roads and railways;*
- *Loss of tranquillity through the introduction of lighting, noise, or traffic movement;*
- *Introduction of significant or abrupt changes to landscape character particularly where they are originally of a similar character to the AONB;*
- *Change of use of land that is of sufficient scale to cause harm to landscape character;*
- *Loss of biodiversity, particularly in connection with those habitats or species of importance in the AONB;*
- *Loss of features of historic interest, particularly if these are contiguous with the AONB;*
- *Reduction in public access and detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of rural roads and lanes, and*
- *Increase in air or water pollution."*

5.3.19 The setting of the National Landscape is considered further in **Section 5.13**.

## 5.4 Consultation

5.4.1 Consultation was undertaken by SLR Consulting, on behalf of the Applicant, with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) throughout 2023. Landscape comments were received from Hazel Osborne, Landscape Officer for SODC and Vale of White Horse Council issued to SLR Consulting in response to:

- 19/01/2023 - Request for a Scoping Opinion (Reference: P23/S0203/SCO); and
- 06/09/2023 - Pre-Application request (Reference: P23/S3027/PEJ).

5.4.2 **Table 5.1** below, summarises the key consultation responses in relation to landscape and visual matters.

**Table 5.1: Consultation Responses**

| Consultee | Consultation Response | Applicant Action |
|---|---|---|
| P23/S0203/SCO<br>23rd February 2023<br>Landscape Officer (SODC and Vale of White Horse Council) | Regarding cumulative effects:<br>*Other permitted solar developments along the M40 corridor, at Harlesford (P20/S3245/FUL), should be considered in terms of sequential impact, there are further sites which are pending a decision (P21/S3915/FUL), these will be outside the proposed 3km study area.* | Harlesford (P20/S3245/FUL) is now operational and considered part of the existing baseline. The other operational developments which are outside of the study area are also considered as part of the existing baseline, Chalgrove (P14/S1734/FUL) and |

| Consultee | Consultation Response | Applicant Action |
|---|---|---|
| | | Cornwell, formerly Little Haseley, (P20/S3244/FUL).<br>The following site is consented and included in the cumulative assessment presented in **Section 5.14**:<br>P21/S3915/FUL – Dodwells Solar Farm |
| | Regarding proposed mitigation:<br>*Growth rates for planting to be agreed.* | Suggested growth rates are included in **Appendix 5.2**. |
| | Regarding viewpoints:<br>*Additional viewpoints are marked on the attached plan, these include views from the open access land on the Chilterns escarpment and additional viewpoints from the local road and footpath network. Should any other significant views be found during the course of site work please include these also. All viewpoints should be represented by winter photographs when the trees are bare, summer views can also be included.* | Ten viewpoints were proposed as part of the request for a Screening Opinion. Photography was undertaken on 4th and 5th April 2023 when vegetation was still bare leaf. Viewpoints captured included the original ten, those marked on the Landscape Officer's plan and other views found during the site visit. |
| | Regarding potential impacts:<br>*Photomontage locations should be agreed once the photographs are available, taking into account the additional views as above. These should be verified images, Type 4 as set out in the Landscape Institute technical guidance note TGN 06/19, Table 2. Photomontages should be included to demonstrate the visual effects of the proposals before and after mitigation, using year 1 winter and year 10 or 15 summer views.* | As part of the Pre-App consultation with SODC in September 2023, the consultation document stated, *"Whilst the Photomontages would be Type 4, as set out in Table 2 of the Landscape Institute's TGN 06/19, given the rural context and form of development it is not considered necessary to survey the camera positions at an additional level of accuracy."* This was accepted by the Landscape Officer on 6th November 2023.<br>Four photmontages were produced in June 2024 as part of the Applicant's Public Consultation event. As this event was not requiring input from SODC, Stephenson Halliday considered that these were proportionate to indicate the nature of the Proposed Development. |
| 6th September 2023 Pre-Application request (Reference: P23/S3027/PEJ). | | As part of this request, a revised list of 12 viewpoint locations was submitted. The 12 viewpoints comprised six of the original ten, four locations proposed by the Landscape Officer (which superseded four |

| Consultee | Consultation Response | Applicant Action |
|---|---|---|
| | | of the original locations) and two new locations also proposed by the Landscape Officer. |
| 6th December 2023<br>Landscape Officer (South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse Council) | Regarding Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Viewpoints:<br>*Additional views were requested, but not the removal of original viewpoints. Views should not be restricted to just one per footpath or local road, sometimes several viewpoints will be needed along linear features to illustrate the impact of the proposals. Previous viewpoints 2, 3 and 4 should be reinstated.*<br>*The same applies to views from the open access land, include the view from the junction of bridlepaths and footpath within nature reserve north of Cowleaze Wood, as requested; this should be in addition to new view 7, not instead of.*<br>*Include the view requested from Chalford Road (the view from the adjacent footpath could potentially be moved further to the east in order to give a different perspective) and the layby on the A40. In all cases discretion should be used on site and viewpoints adjusted as necessary to give the best view.*<br>*Please confirm that, where it is stated that site work has established there is no view, the site work has been carried out in winter when vegetation is bare of leaves. If not these viewpoints should be revisited. Some notes specifically referred to winter views, it is still too early for these to have been checked.*<br>*In general, please include the additional views requested where a view is available, in winter, without omitting other viewpoints.* | The original ten viewpoints were re-instated.<br>From the list submitted as part of P23/S3027/PEJ, the viewpoint to the north of Cowleaze Wood has been re-instated as has the view from the A40 layby.<br>No view from Chalford Road has been captured however this will be acknowledged within the LVIA and informed by other nearby viewpoints and desk-based assessment.<br>Informed by feedback across the two consultation periods, a total of 18 viewpoints are included as part of this LVIA. |

5.4.3 The final list of all 18 viewpoints is provided in **Section 5.12**, **Table 5.5:** Viewpoint Analysis Summary. Viewpoint analysis is provided in **Appendix 5.5**.

*5.4.4* As part of the Scoping Opinion response, provided in March 2023, SODC identified Topics to be scoped-in to the ES which stated *"The topics that the Local Planning Authority consider should be scoped-in to the ES are as follows:*

- *Landscape, glint and glare*, and visual impact"*

5.4.5 Glint and Glare are not assessed as part of this LVIA and impacts are discussed in Chapter 9 of the ES.

## 5.5 Assessment Methods & Significance Criteria

### Study Area

5.5.1 In GLVIA3 it recommends that the study area for a consideration of landscape effects should '*include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner.*' It also recommends that the LVIA should consider the area from which the Proposed Development will potentially be visible but that the emphasis '*must be on a reasonable approach which is proportional to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development.*'

5.5.2 It is accepted practice within landscape and visual assessment work that the extent of the study area for a development proposal is broadly defined by the visual envelope of the Proposed Development. In this case a study area of 3 km has been used, as shown on **Figures 5.4**: Standard ZTV and **5.5**: Detailed ZTV. This study area is considered proportionate and adequate to identify all non-negligible effects on landscape and visual receptors.

## Desk-based Assessment

5.5.3 Desk-based assessment involved a review of published documents including, but not limited to, those listed in **Section 5.3**.

## Site Visit

5.5.4 To inform the assessment, a site visit was made to various locations within the study area including, but not restricted to, representative viewpoints by Stephenson Halliday's assessment team during April 2023.

## Assessment of Significance

5.5.5 This section provides a summary of the methodology adopted for the LVIA. Full details of the assessment methodology, including assessment criteria, are provided in **Appendix 5.1**.

5.5.6 In accordance with GLVIA3, the level of landscape and visual effects is determined by considering, in tandem, the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors (landscape elements, landscape character areas, landscape designations and groups of people who may be affected by changes in visual amenity) and the magnitude of effect arising from the Proposed Development.

### Sensitivity

5.5.7 Sensitivity (described as High, Medium or Low) is judged by combining component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the receptor, as illustrated in **Table 5.2** and **Table 5.3**. An explanation of how susceptibility and value has been determined is provided in **Appendix 5.1**. Detailed susceptibility and value criteria for landscape receptors are established in **Appendix 5.1** whilst detailed visual susceptibility and value criteria are set out in **Appendix 5.1**. It should be noted that intermediate assessments of value or susceptibility may be applied (e.g. High/Medium, Medium/Low or National/Regional, Regional/Community). Likewise, when combining susceptibility and value to determine sensitivity, an intermediate assessment is adopted where overall sensitivity is judged to lie between levels. In all instances, professional judgement

is employed, and the tables below should not be interpreted rigidly to give a specific answer. A slightly greater weight is given to susceptibility in judging the sensitivity of visual receptors.

**Table 5.2: Landscape Sensitivity**

| Landscape Receptors | | Susceptibility | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **High** | **Medium** | **Low** |
| **Value** | **National** | High | High/Medium | Medium |
| | **Regional** | High/Medium | Medium | Medium/Low |
| | **Community** | Medium | Medium/Low | Low |

**Table 5.3: Visual Sensitivity**

| Visual Receptors | | Susceptibility | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **High** | **Medium** | **Low** |
| **Value** | **National** | High | High/Medium | Medium |
| | **Regional** | High/Medium | High/Medium | Medium/Low |
| | **Community** | High/Medium | Medium | Low |

### Magnitude

5.5.8 The magnitude of effect arising from the Proposed Development (described as Substantial, Moderate, Slight or Negligible) is assessed in terms of its scale, geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced and its duration.

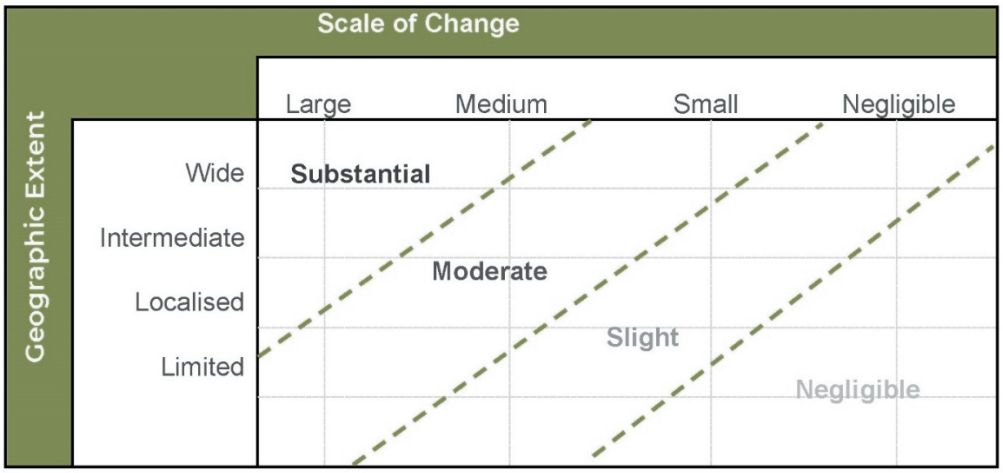
5.5.9 Scale of change (expressed as Large, Medium, Small, Negligible) is the first and primary factor in determining magnitude. Geographical extent and duration of the effect are modifying factors to the overall magnitude judgement which may be higher if the effect is particularly widespread and/or long lasting, or lower if it is constrained in geographic extent and/or timescale.

5.5.10 The diagrams presented below in **Graphic 1** below illustrate in outline how these two modifying factors are considered in a two-stage process and further explanation is provided in **Appendix 5.1**. **Graphic 1** is not intended to be interpreted rigidly as a chart to provide definitive answers; professional judgement is employed as appropriate to arrive at an overall judgement on the magnitude of effect. A definition of the terms used in the diagrams in **Graphic 1** is provided in **Appendix 5.1**.

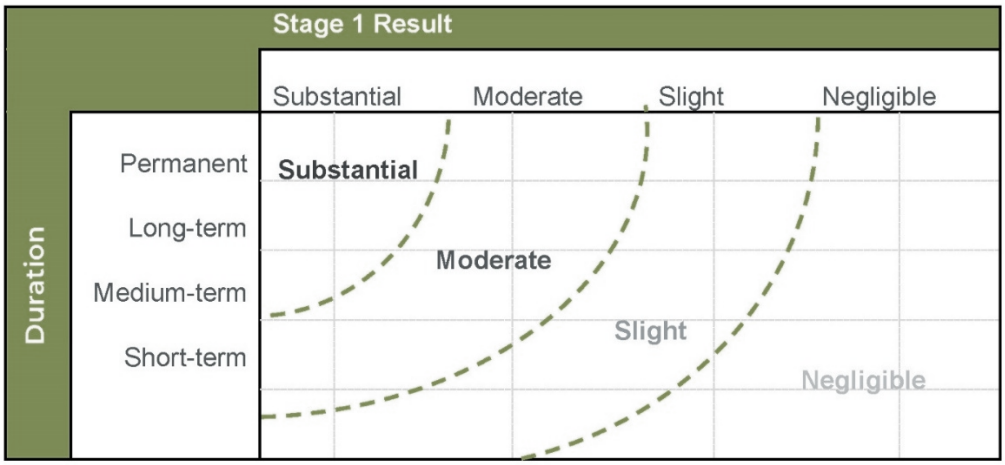
5.5.11 Where magnitude of effect (or other judgements) is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment is adopted and is expressed as e.g. Moderate/Slight.

**Graphic 1 - Illustration of how Magnitude of Effect is Established**

**Stage 1 - Modifying Influence of Geographic Extent on Magnitude of Effect**




**Stage 2 - Modifying Influence of Duration on Magnitude of Effect**




### Level of Effects

5.5.12 The significance of a landscape or visual effect (described as Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible) is assessed using professional judgement, combining the sensitivity of the receptor with the predicted magnitude of effect, as summarised in **Table 5.4**. **Table 5.4** is not used as a prescriptive tool and illustrates the typical outcomes, allowing for the exercise of professional judgement. In some instances, a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis. Where significance is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted for example 'Moderate/Minor'. Such a judgement indicates that the significance of effect is less than Moderate but more than Minor.

**Table 5.4: Significance**

| **Significance** | | **Magnitude Of Change** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Substantial** | **Moderate** | **Slight** | **Negligible** |
| **Receptor** | **High** | Major | Major/Moderate | Moderate | Minor |

| Significance | | Magnitude Of Change | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Substantial** | **Moderate** | **Slight** | **Negligible** |
| **Sensitivity** | **Medium** | Major/Moderate | Moderate | Moderate/Minor | Minor/Negligible |
| | **Low** | Moderate | Moderate/Minor | Minor | Negligible |

### Beneficial/Adverse

5.5.13 Landscape and visual effects can be beneficial or adverse and in some instances may be considered neutral. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both. Whether an effect is beneficial, neutral or adverse is identified based on professional judgement.

5.5.14 However, for the avoidance of doubt, in this assessment it has been assumed that where new infrastructure is introduced into the landscape or views, this will generally constitute an adverse effect. Any variation from this stance will be clearly justified.

### Cumulative Assessment

5.5.15 Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development. The approach to cumulative assessment is set out within **Appendix 5.1**.

5.5.16 As set out in **Table 5.1**, at the time of consultation with the Council and based on the 3 km study area, the following schemes were identified for consideration:

- P20/S3244/FUL – Harlesford Solar Farm, 3.1 km north-north-west of the solar site
- P21/S3915/FUL – Dodwells Solar Farm, 3.2 km north of the solar site

5.5.17 Harlesford Solar Farm is now operational and therefore forms part of the current baseline and is no longer considered for cumulative assessment. Dodwells Solar Farm is consented and at the time of writing not constructed; cumulative effects in conjunction with the Proposed Development are considered at **Section 5.14**.

5.5.18 The Proposed Development is shown in the context of other operational and consented solar projects on **Figure 5.6**.

### Residential Amenity

5.5.19 As set out within LI Technical Guidance Note 02//19 ‘Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)’:

*“Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has ‘a right to a view.’ …*

*It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a*

*new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before."*

5.5.20 Residential properties have been considered within their Visual Receptor Group from **Paragraph 5.12.66** to **5.12.151**.

#### Distances

5.5.21 Where distances are given in the assessment, these are approximate distances between the nearest part of the solar site and the nearest part of the receptor in question, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

#### Visual Aids

5.5.22 The visual aids accompanying this chapter have been prepared in accordance with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 06/19: Visual Representation of Development Proposals (September 2019). The methodology for production of the visual aids is outlined in **Appendix 5.2**.

## 5.6 Baseline

### Introduction

5.6.1 An overview of the baseline study results is provided in this section with the full baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors being provided alongside the assessment in **Section 5.12** for ease of reference.

5.6.2 This section provides a review of the key local baseline studies and guidance documents and identifies those landscape and visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those which are not taken forward for further assessment as effects "*have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further*" (GLVIA3, para. 3.19).

5.6.3 Both this baseline section and the effects section describe landscape character and visual receptors before considering designated areas as it is common for designations to encompass both character and visual considerations within their special qualities or purposes of designation.

### Current Baseline

5.6.4 The baseline for consideration of landscape and visual effects is evaluated through desk-based assessment and site work and is the current situation at the time of the assessment, unless noted otherwise. Operational developments and

those under construction are considered as part of the baseline and included as part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

### Future Baseline

5.6.5 Where relevant, the future baseline is considered to include changes to the landscape which are certain to happen. This may include consented proposals which are not yet present in the landscape but are certain to be constructed as identified in **Paragraph 5.5.17**.

## 5.7 ZTV Study

5.7.1 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study was generated based on the Proposed Development to identify areas of potential visibility. Two versions of the ZTV have been produced which are shown on **Figures 5.4** and **5.5**.

- **Figure 5.4** is a Standard Screening ZTV, and the analysis was carried out using a topographic model of the landscape and includes buildings and woodland blocks as visual barriers in order to provide a reasonable indication of potential visibility. It should be noted however, that hedgerows, some copses of trees and individual trees are not modelled in the ZTV and would add an additional layer of screening in the landscape.
- **Figure 5.5** is a Detailed Screening ZTV which uses the same analysis as the Standard Screening ZTV but also takes into account hedgerows and other vegetation over 2.5 m in height.

5.7.2 The ZTV study was used to aid the identification of those receptors that are likely to be most affected by the Proposed Development and those that do not require detailed consideration. The actual extent of visibility on the ground would still typically be less than suggested on both Figures.

5.7.3 The ZTVs show that the main areas of potential visibility are immediately adjacent to the solar site and within the 1 km radius to the north-east and north-west. Beyond this distance site work has confirmed that there will be no views from these directions due to intervening vegetation and localised landform. Suggested visibility to the north is fragmented and site work has confirmed that visibility of the Proposed Development diminishes quite quickly in this direction due to intervening built form and localised landform. Views of the Proposed Development to the south and south-west will be limited both within, and just beyond, the 1 km radius due to intervening vegetation. Visibility of the Proposed Development will extend

south and south-west towards the 2 and 3 km radii to intermittent locations on the higher slopes of the Chilterns National Landscape.

5.7.4 Effects on landscape or visual receptors outside the zones of visibility shown on the ZTV study would be negligible and are not assessed further within this LVIA.

## 5.8 Landscape Character

5.8.1 The following published landscape character documents which are relevant to the study area have been reviewed and these documents have helped to inform the description of the existing baseline:

- National Character Area (NCA) 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales;
- National Character Area (NCA) 110: Chilterns;
- Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (2017); and
- Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (2024) (LCASOVWH).

5.8.2 The LCASOVWH forms part of the evidence base for the emerging Joint Local Plan.

### NCA 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales

5.8.3 The solar site and the majority of the study area sits within NCA 108: Upper Thames Clay Vales. It is described as *"a broad belt of open, gently undulating lowland farmland on predominantly Jurassic and Cretaceous clays… There are contrasting landscapes, including enclosed pastures of the claylands with wet valleys, mixed farming, hedges, hedge trees and field trees and more settled, open, arable lands".*

### NCA 110: Chilterns

5.8.4 A small section of the study area to the south-east of the solar site is within NCA 110: Chilterns. It is described as forming *"the north western edge of the chalk aquifer that underlies the London basin. These soft rocks form a steep, north west facing escarpment and a more gentle 'dip slope' to the south east."*

### Local Landscape Character

5.8.5 Whilst the NCA profiles help to provide national context, the focus of assessment in this LVIA is on the more detailed local landscape character. The corresponding character covering the solar site and study area is outlined below.

5.8.6 Local landscape character is described in two Landscape Character Assessment documents:

- Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (2017); and
- LCASOVWH.

5.8.7 The LCASOVWH has been prepared as part of the evidence base for the emerging Joint Local Plan and will supersede the Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (2017) once the Joint Local Plan has been made.

5.8.8 The LCASOVWH is supplemented by a series of other documents, notably:

- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Renewable Energy Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment;
- Tranquillity Assessment – Final Report; and
- Local Landscape Designation Review of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.

5.8.9 The LCASOVWH and the supplementary documents have been reviewed in **Appendix 5.6**.

5.8.10 Details of that review are not fully repeated here; however, the main consideration is that LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes does not accurately reflect the variation of character within the Site's 3 km study area.

5.8.11 As part of this LVIA and **Appendix 5.4**, LCA 6B has been considered in two parts:

- LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) – LCA 6B (NW); and
- LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (south-east of the B4009) – LCA 6B (SE).

5.8.12 The whole of the solar site and most of the study area is within the administrative boundary of South Oxfordshire District Council. A very small area of the study area on the 3 km radius, to the south-east of the solar site, is within the administrative of Buckinghamshire Council. No visibility of the Proposed Development extends to this part of the study area and therefore the corresponding Wycombe District Landscape Character Assessment is not considered further within this LVIA.

### LCASOVWH

5.8.13 As shown on **Figure 5.3b**, the solar site is within LCT 6 Chalk Escarpment Footslopes and LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes.

5.8.14 The following LCTs and LCAs, as identified in the LCASOVWH, are within the 3 km study area:

- LCT 2 Wooded Chalk Escarpment (comprises of only LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment) – this LCT / LCA covers much of the south-eastern extent of the study area with the ZTV showing intermittent visibility of the Proposed Development.
- LCA 5A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Ridges and Valleys (within LCT 5 Wooded Chalk Ridges and Valleys) – this LCA is located on the edge of the study area around the 3 km radius. Visibility of the Proposed Development indicated from within this LCA is negligible.

- LCA 9F Eastern Vale Edge Slopes (within LCT 9 Vale Edge Slopes) – this LCA which lies approximately to the north-west of the solar site commencing in the fields around Adwell Cop. Visibility of the Proposed Development indicated from within this LCA is negligible.
- LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale (within LCT 11 Upper Vale) – this LCA is immediately adjacent to the solar site's eastern parcel, running along the line of the A40. Visibility of the parcel extends into the fields immediately to the east, north-east of the A40.
- LCA 12C Eastern Middle Vale (within LCT 12 Middle Vale) – this LCA lies further to the north-west of LCA 9F and there will be no visibility of the Proposed Development from within this LCA.

5.8.15 The discussion of effects on landscape character is therefore limited to a consideration of effects on:

- LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment,
- LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (in two parts); and
- LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale.

5.8.16 These are considered further in **Section 5.12**.

## 5.9 Visual Receptors

5.9.1 Visual receptors are *"the different groups of people who may experience views of the development"* (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.3). In order to identify those groups who may be significantly affected, the ZTV study, baseline desk-based assessment and site visits have been used.

5.9.2 The different types of groups assessed within this chapter encompass local residents; people using key routes such as roads; cycle ways, people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using PRoW; or people visiting key viewpoints. In dealing with areas of settlement, PRoW and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common.

5.9.3 Representative viewpoints have been selected to aid the assessment of effects on visual receptors.

### Visual Receptor Groups

5.9.4 The following Visual Receptor Groups (VRG) are located within the study area and may have visibility of the Proposed Development, as shown on **Figures 5.4 and 5.5** and are considered further in **Section 5.12**.

- **M40 Motorway** (between approximately 0 and 3 km north-west and south-east of the solar site) – This group includes users of this major road which passes through the study area and between the Site's eastern and western parcels.

- **A40** (between approximately 0 and 3 km north-west and south-east of the Site) – This group includes users of this major road which passes through the study area and adjacent to the solar site's eastern parcel.
- **B4009** (between approximately 0.9 and 3 km south-west, south and south-east of the solar site) – This group includes users of this regional road which passes between the study area.
- **Lewknor** (between approximately 0 and 0.9 km south of the solar site) – This group includes the village and users of Footpath 277/27/10, to the north of the village.
- **PRoW network** (within and immediately adjacent to the solar site) – This group includes Footpath 277/2/10 which passes through the solar site's eastern parcel and Bridleways 277/33/10 and 277/33/30 which run adjacent to the solar site's southern boundary.
- **PRoW network east of the A40** (between approximately 0.03 and 0.5 km north-east and east of the solar site's eastern parcel) – This group includes users of Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10 and Restricted Byway 277/25/10 which are located to the east of the A40.
- **Postcombe south-east of Salt Lane, Salt Lane and Weston Road** (approximately 0 km north, 0.5 km north-west and 0.5 km west, south-west of the solar site) – This group includes the part of Postcombe which is adjacent to the solar site's eastern parcel and users of the local road network.
- **The Ridgeway** (approximately 2.3 km south and between 1.4 km and 3 km south-east) – This group includes users of this National Trail route which also shares the route with Swans Way (Restricted Byway 277/11/50).
- **Chilterns National Landscape east of M40** (approximately 1.8 km south-east) – This group includes users of Beacon Hill.
- **Chilterns National Landscape west of M40** (approximately 2.4 and 2.7 km south-east) – This group includes Aston Rowant Nature Reserve, Bald Hill open access land and the junction of Footpaths 277/31/30 and 277/31/10.

5.9.5 **Figure 5.2** shows the PRoW network within the study area. References are taken from Oxfordshire County Council's interactive Countryside Access Map

5.9.6 There are also a number of receptor groups which are not considered further, on the basis that visual effects are likely to be Negligible, for the reasons indicated below:

- **Kingston Blount** – (approximately 2.1 km east of the solar site) Visibility is indicated to the north-western corner of the village although views from here will be screened by intervening vegetation.
- **Postcombe** – (between approximately 0.17 and 0.5 km north of the solar site) This group includes the parts of the village along Box Tree Lane and Lower Lane, to the north and north-east of the A40. It also includes parts of the village to the north-west of the Salt Lane / A40 junction where intervening built-form and vegetation will screen views of the Proposed Development.
- **PRoW network north-west of the Site** (approximately 0.05 km) Footpath 277/34/10 commences from Salt Lane immediately to the west of the M40 underpass. The route runs north-west along a farm access track which is

adjacent to the north-bound carriageway of the M40. There will be no views of the Proposed Development from this footpath due to intervening vegetation and landform.

- **Oxfordshire Way** (approximately 1.3 km south-west) – Visibility is indicated along a section of this regional footpath route near to Model Farm. Site work has confirmed that the solar site will be screened (in winter) by intervening vegetation.

## Key Routes

5.9.7 As shown on **Figure 5.2**, the following longer distance routes lie within the study area:

### Roads and Rail

5.9.8 **M40 Motorway** – This is a major route which links London, Oxford, and Birmingham. The M40 Motorway is considered as part of the VRG of the same name.

5.9.9 **A40** – This is a former trunk road running between London and Fishguard in Wales. The A40 is considered as part of the VRG of the same name.

5.9.10 **B4009** – This a regional road which runs for approximately 20 km between Benson and Bledlow and forms part of the access and egress for Junction 6 of the M40. The B4009 is considered as part of the VRG of the same name.

5.9.11 Other roads (or sections of roads) in the study area requiring consideration are included within the VRGs identified above.

### Recreational Routes

5.9.12 **The Ridgeway** (approximately 2.3 km south and between 1.4 km and 3 km south-east) – the Ridgeway is a National Trail which runs between Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire. The route traverses the south-eastern extent of the study area

and is within the Chilterns National Landscape. The Ridgeway is considered as part of the VRG of the same name

5.9.13 **Swan's Way** – this is a long-distance route which runs between Goring and Salcey Forest, near Aylesbury. It runs along some of the same route sections of the Ridgeway and is considered as part of VRG 'The Ridgeway'

5.9.14 All other routes within the PRoW network are considered as part of the VRG they lie within.

## 5.10 Landscape Designations and Value

### Designated Areas

5.10.1 No national or local landscape designations cover the Site itself. The Chilterns National Landscape does however cover the south and south-eastern extent of the study area, between the 1 and 3 km radii.

#### Chilterns National Landscape

5.10.2 The boundary of the Chilterns National Landscape is located approximately 1 km south of the solar site at its closest point between the southern tip of the solar site's western parcel and the field boundary adjacent to the west bound carriageway of the B4009.

5.10.3 Legislation and national policy relating to the National Landscape is set out in **Appendix 5.3**. The Special Qualities of the National Landscape and its Setting are outlined in **Section 5.13** of the LVIA.

### Local Landscape Value

5.10.4 Local landscape value has been assessed in **Appendix 5.4** and is detailed in **Paragraph 5.12.23**.

## 5.11 The Proposed Development

5.11.1 The following section provides an overview of the main aspects of the Proposed Development which might give rise to landscape and visual effects.

5.11.2 Details of the Proposed Development have been previously provided in **Sections 5.2.6 to 5.2.11** and are not repeated here.

5.11.3 For the purposes of this LVIA, it is assumed that the existing field and hedgerow vegetation within the Site will be retained, and consideration has been given to the root protection zones of the existing vegetation including hedgerow, hedgerow trees and woodland in the layout of the Proposed Development. It should be noted that a section of existing hedgerow adjacent to the A40 will be translocated rather than removed.

5.11.4 Although the Proposed Development will be operational for a fixed time period, with a proposed operational life of 40 years, it would give rise to long term

operational effects on the landscape. However, the proposals will be fully reversible on decommission of the Proposed Development and the land fully restored to agricultural use.

### Design Approach and Mitigation

5.11.5 The design of the Proposed Development has involved an iterative process, taking into account Site constraints and looking to minimise any adverse impacts wherever possible. The siting of infrastructure within the solar site has been dictated by required buffers from amenity, including an increased buffer from Postcombe following consultation, ecological features and existing vegetation on field boundaries.

5.11.6 Details of the Site's selection are presented in **Chapter 3**.

5.11.7 A Landscape Mitigation Plan is presented in **Figure 5.10** and has been developed to integrate the Proposed Development into the receiving landscape and minimise visual effects. Key features of the landscape and visual mitigation strategy are as follows:

- The primary landscape fabric of the solar site will be retained as no existing boundary vegetation will be removed from the solar site and root protection zones protected during construction.
- Existing field boundaries within and around the perimeter of the solar site will be strengthened as necessary with infill planting and new hedgerows planted. All planting will comprise of a mix of native species.
- The fence around the Proposed Development, within the solar site's eastern parcel, will be offset by 15 m on either side of the centre line of Footpath 277/2/10. PV panels will be set back from the fence by a minimum of 5 m (refer to the illustrative cross section shown on Figure 5.10c).
- New hedgerows and strips of hedgerow edge wildflower seeding will be planted close to the new fence on both sides of the initial section of the footpath as it runs south from Postcombe to filter views of the Proposed Development (refer to the illustrative cross section shown on Figure 5.10c).
- The existing hedgerow adjacent to the subsequent section of the footpath will be infilled and extended southwards through the planting of a new hedgerow which will filter the Proposed Development in views to the west.
- New hedgerows will be planted along the boundaries of those fields immediately adjacent to the M40.
- Infill and new hedgerows will be maintained at a minimum height of 3 to 3.5 m and cut on a three-year rotational basis (noting that hedgerows underneath Overhead Power Lines are to be maintained and managed at a height that gives suitable clearance in accordance with National Grid requirements).
- Creation of a 1.11 ha native woodland block to the south-west of Postcombe and a new hedgerow along the south-eastern edge of the village.
- Trees will be planted within the solar site's western parcel to the south of the substation area.

- The areas inside of the fence and underneath the PV panels will be seeded with a shade tolerant wildflower seed mix. The grazing of sheep within these areas may also be possible.
- Areas of the solar site outside of the fence will be seeded with a wildflower mix.

### Construction

5.11.8 Construction of the Proposed Development would involve the following operations:

- Two temporary construction compounds (including storage, welfare facilities and office accommodation).
- Access tracks within the Site boundary for material and equipment set down as well as ongoing maintenance vehicular access once in operation.
- Erection of fencing.
- Installation of mounting frames and PV panels.
- Installation/construction of electrical buildings.
- Excavations for cable runs.
- Infill planting of existing field boundaries and planting of new hedgerows, trees and a woodland block.
- Reinstatement works, including the removal of the temporary compound.

5.11.9 The construction works summarised above are likely to give rise to some landscape and visual effects. These effects would however be temporary and would mainly arise through the installation of the PV panels and the erection of the fence. The effects arising from other operations, including the excavation of the cable runs would be localised, and whilst potentially visible, would not appear prominently in views from the surrounding areas.

5.11.10 Construction operations would take place over a period of approximately up to fourteen months. These effects would be limited in extent and duration and subservient to the effects arising from the presence of the longer-term features of the Proposed Development.

5.11.11 Decommissioning works at the end of the operational lifetime of the development would be similar to those during construction but in reverse.

## 5.12 Assessment of Potential Effects

### Introduction

5.12.1 This section sets out the effects that the Proposed Development would have on landscape and visual receptors.

### Effects on Site Fabric

5.12.2 The Site comprises of several agricultural fields located either side of the M40. The western parcel consists of a single, large field while the eastern parcel

consists of two medium-sized fields and a narrow strip of field. The fields are predominantly in arable use and are mostly bounded by established and semi-mature vegetation in the form of hedgerows, linear tree belts and woodland blocks.

5.12.3 Along the field boundaries adjacent to the M40, in both parcels, boundary vegetation is limited. New hedgerows will be created and once established will filter views of the motorway and equally filter views of the Proposed Development from the motorway.

5.12.4 Access into the solar site, for both construction and operation, will use existing field access gates with the western parcel accessed from Salt Lane and the eastern parcel accessed from the A40. The existing access from the A40 will require the creation of a visibility splay and a section of the existing hedgerow adjacent to the A40 will be translocated rather than removed.

5.12.5 No other boundary vegetation within the solar site will be removed or disrupted as a result of the Proposed Development. The Root Protection Zones of existing retained vegetation will be protected where necessary.

5.12.6 A programme of native hedgerow improvements, native tree and woodland planting will be undertaken within the solar site.

5.12.7 In addition to the areas under the PV panels being seeded, new wildflower seeding will be implemented in areas outside of the fence.

5.12.8 As the new planting establishes, the network of hedgerows, linear tree belts and woodland blocks will be strengthened.

5.12.9 During operation, the existing Footpath route (277/7/10) will not be diverted and offsets of 15 m either side of the route have been included to create a sense of separation from the Proposed Development. Within the eastern parcel's northern field hedgerow planting is proposed on either side of the footpath and along the

western side of the footpath as it passes through the eastern parcel's southern field.

5.12.10 The residual effect upon landscape fabric will be neutral as the additional planting will be permanent and contribute positively to landscape character, amenity and biodiversity.

## Viewpoint Analysis

5.12.11 Viewpoint analysis has been taken from a total of 18 Viewpoints.

5.12.12 The viewpoint locations are illustrated on **Figures 5.4** and **5.5** and annotated photosheets are presented in **Figure 5.8**.

5.12.13 The full viewpoint analysis is contained within **Appendix 5.5**. The findings are summarised below in **Table 5.5**. In each case, distances are listed in relation to the nearest section of the boundary fence around the Proposed Development.

5.12.14 Please note that **Appendix 5.5** considers the nature of changes to character and views at each viewpoint location only. The sensitivity of receptors and wider extent of the effect (beyond the individual viewpoint location) and its duration are considered in the main body of the assessment text below as part of the consideration of the magnitude and significance of effects.

**Table 5.5: Viewpoint Analysis Summary**

| Viewpoint Number | Viewpoint Location | Distance / Direction | Scale of Landscape Change | Scale of Visual Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 (Figure 5.8a) | Salt Lane | 0 km. Adjacent to northern boundary of the Site's western parcel | Large | Large |
| 2 (Figures 5.8b – 5.8e) | Footpath 277/7/10 by primary transmission pole | 0 km. Within the Site's eastern parcel | Large | Large |
| 3 (Figures 5.8f – 5.8i) | Footpath 277/7/10 | 0 km. Within the Site's eastern parcel | Large | Large |
| 4 (Figure 5.8j) | Footpath 277/6/10 within field adjacent to A40 | 0.08 km north-east | Medium (indirect effects) | Medium |
| 5 (Figure 5.8k) | Footway adjacent to Aston Hill | 1.3 km south-east | Negligible | Small / Negligible (Negligible in summer) |
| 6 (Figure 5.8l) | Beacon Hill, Aston Rowant NNR | 1.7 km south-east | Medium (indirect effects) | Medium |
| 7 (Figure 5.8m) | Bald Hill open access land within Aston Rowant NNR | 2.4 km south-east | Medium (indirect effects) | Medium |

| Viewpoint Number | Viewpoint Location | Distance / Direction | Scale of Landscape Change | Scale of Visual Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 (Figure 5.8n) | Bridleway 277/11/70 - The Ridgeway, south-west of Old Cricket Ground Plantation | 2.3 km south | Small (Small / Negligible in summer) | Small (Small / Negligible in summer) |
| 9 (Figure 5.8o) | B4009, Watlington Road | 1.1 km south | Small (Small / Negligible in summer) | Small (Small / Negligible in summer) |
| 10 (Figure 5.8p) | Footpath 277/27/10 | 0.6 km south-east | Small / Negligible (Negligible in summer) | Small / Negligible (Negligible in summer) |
| 11 (Figure 5.8q) | Bridleway 277/33/10 near Nethercote (west of M40) | 0.05 km south | Large | Large / Medium |
| 12 (Figure 5.8r) | Weston Road | 0.6 km south-west | Medium (Small in summer) | Medium (Small in summer) |
| 13 (Figures 5.8s – 5.8u) | Footpath 277/7/10 by Field House boundary fence | 0 km. Within the Site's eastern parcel | Large | Large |
| 14(Figures 5.8v – 5.8w) | Layby on A40, London Road, opposite northern field | 0.03 km east | Medium / Small | Medium / Small |
| 15 (Figure 5.8x) | Junction of Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10 | 0.4 km north-east | Small (indirect effects) | Medium / Small (Small in summer) |
| 16 (Figure 5.8y) | Junction of High Street and A40, London Road | 0.8 km south-east | Negligible | Negligible |
| 17(Figure 5.8z) | Bridleway 115/12/10 - The Ridgeway | 1.6 km south-east | Negligible | Negligible |
| 18 (Figure 5.8aa) | Junction of Footpaths 277/31/20, 277/31/10 and 277/32/10 | 2.8 km south-east | Medium (indirect effects) | Medium |

5.12.15 Each of the viewpoints is a 'sample' of the 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. From these viewpoints it can be seen that the distribution of effects would be as follows:

### Scale of Landscape change

- Large scale changes would largely be limited to within the solar site itself where there would be a fundamental change in character from arable fields to a solar farm, albeit with grazing pasture underneath the PV panels.
- To west of the Site, there will be a Medium scale of landscape change over the area defined by Salt Lane, Weston Road and Nethercote Lane. Beyond these local roads the scale of change will reduce to Small/Negligible.

- Character along the route of the A40 will remain influenced by the road network and the scale of change will be Medium/Small. Within the network of fields to the east of the A40, changes from the Footpath network will initially be Medium reducing to Medium/Small. Beyond approximately 0.5 km, the scale of change will reduce to Small/Negligible.
- To the south of the solar site between the B4009 and the Ridgeway, approximately 1 to 2.3 km, there will be a Small scale of change. To the south-east of the solar site, extending to, and including, the Ridgeway the scale of landscape change will be Negligible.
- Within the Chilterns National Landscape, between approximately 1.7 and 2.8 km to the south-east, the scale of landscape change will be Medium where the Proposed Development is experienced in the context of the M40, Junction 6, large agricultural outbuildings, the local road network and low voltage transmission poles.
- Beyond these distances, in all other directions, changes will be Negligible.

### Scale of Visual change

- A Large scale of visual change will be experienced from Footpath 277/7/10 which runs through the solar site's eastern parcel. From Salt Lane it runs south for approximately 1.1 km where it connects with Bridleways 277/33/20 and 277/33/30 on the solar site's southern boundary. The footpath is influenced aurally and visually by the A40 and M40 and passes within 0.06 to 0.09 km of the latter. The detracting influence of the M40 extends along the route of the Bridleways.
- On the northern boundary of the solar site's western parcel, there will be a Large scale of visual change from the existing field access on Salt Lane. The access is a very small section of the local road and field boundary vegetation adjacent to Salt Lane will heavily filter (screen in summer) views from the remaining route. The detracting influence of the M40 extends along this section of Salt Lane and is visible from the field access.
- On the southern boundary of the solar site's western parcel, there will be a Large/Medium scale of change from the existing field access on Nethercote Lane / Bridleway 277/33/10. The access is a very small section of this route and adjacent field boundary vegetation will heavily filter (screen in summer) views from the remaining route. The detracting influence of the M40 extends along this section of Nethercote Lane / Bridleway 277/33/10 and is visible from the field access.
- There will be a Medium scale of visual change from Weston Road to the west of the Site where much of the western parcel in winter will be screened by intervening vegetation with the remaining extent filtered. The screening effect will increase in summer with the remaining extent heavily filtered by intervening vegetation.
- Medium changes will also extend east from the solar site to Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10 where a limited extent of the Site's eastern parcel will be intermittently visible beyond the line of the A40. Visual changes from the A40 will be Medium / Small.
- Visual changes from the PRoW network between Nethercote Lane and Lewknor will be no greater than Small/Negligible (Negligible in summer)

- Approximately 1 to 2.3 km south of the solar site's western parcel, the scale of visual change will be Small (Small/Negligible in summer) from the B4009 and the Ridgeway where only a limited extent of the western parcel will be discernible.
- To the south-east of the solar site, extending to, and including, the Ridgeway the scale of visual change will be Negligible.
- Within the Chilterns National Landscape, between approximately 1.7 and 2.8 km to the south-east, the scale of visual change will be Medium.
- Beyond these distances, in all other directions, changes will be Negligible.

### Effects on Landscape Character

5.12.16 As shown on **Figure 5.3b** the solar site is located wholly in LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes with LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale located immediately adjacent to the east of the solar site. These two LCAs cover much of the study area and both extend far beyond it.

5.12.17 LCA 6B covers the majority of the locations from where viewpoints were captured as part of the field work based the ZTV's indication of potential visibility of the Proposed Development (**Figures 5.4 and 5.5**).

5.12.18 Several viewpoints were captured from LCA 11C as well as from LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment. Characteristics for the assessed LCAs are summarised below, including descriptions from the LCASOVWH along with further observations from site-based work.

#### LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes

5.12.19 The key characteristics of LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes extracted from the LCASOVWH are as follows:

- *"A shelf of rolling chalk landform that falls from the foot of the scarp in the east towards lower lying vale and river valleys landscapes to the west and south.*
- *Predominantly large-scale open arable farmland, with small areas of traditional orchards on the edge of several villages and hamlets.*
- *Scattered small blocks of woodland, and linear belts and clumps of trees provide some enclosure in an otherwise very open landscape; several locks of Ancient Woodland concentrated at Britwell Salome, Oakley Court and Woodhouse Farm.*
- *Small watercourses flow from chalk springs towards the River Thame, and form a focus for rural settlement, including the historic 'spring-line villages', such as Watlington, Shirburn and Lewknor.*
- *Network of parallel minor roads, often with no boundaries; busier roads also cross the area, including the M40, which create noise and visual intrusions and fragment the landscape.*

- *Numerous holloways and ancient tracks link the chalk hills and clay lowlands of the vale. Strong recreational access, including promoted routes The Ridgeway, ancient Icknield Way, Oxfordshire Way and Chiltern Way.*

- *An open and exposed landscape with long, panoramic views. The chalk escarpment of the Chilterns provides a strong wooded backdrop."*

5.12.20 Whilst the published character description for LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes sets a broad context and reflects some elements of the landscape character in the vicinity of the Site, the LCA is a large area which extends far beyond the Site and study area, approximately 6 km north-east and 17 km south-west.

5.12.21 A further consideration is that the LCASOVHW identifies several busy transport corridors but does not include the B4009 which provides access and egress to Junction 6 of the M40.

5.12.22 Further observations regarding landscape character in the vicinity of the Proposed Development are provided below based on desk-based assessment and field observations:

- The character varies between the western and eastern parcel. The western parcel comprises of a single, large irregular shaped field with intact, mature hedgerows along its northern and southern boundary. Vegetation along its eastern and western boundary is intermittent, although for the latter it is supplemented by the tree line running along a nearby watercourse.
- The eastern parcel comprises of two medium-large fields located immediately to the west of the A40 and a long field strip which runs between the fields and the M40. Vegetation around the medium-large fields comprises of linear tree belts although not on every boundary; the northern field is bounded by a hedgerow along its eastern edge and Postcombe along its northern edge.
- Landform within the western parcel rolls down to the south-west. In the eastern parcel, it is rising to the south-west, and this is more pronounced in the northern field.
- There is limited field boundary vegetation between the long field strip and the M40. The motorway bisects the solar site and is an aural and visual detractor across both parcels.
- Footpath 277/7/10 runs through the eastern parcel and the experience from this route is detracted visually and aurally by the M40 and A40. There is no public access into the western parcel, although there are Bridleways which run adjacent to the Site's southern boundary. The experience from these routes is similarly aurally detracted by the M40, particularly the section passing under the motorway.
- The wooded escarpment of the Chilterns National Landscape forms the backdrop in views to the south and south-east, although from sections of Footpath 277/7/10 the linear tree belts filter views of the backdrop, and these views will be screened in summer.
- Away from the solar site, layers of vegetation within the wider landscape are such that much of the Site is screened from views. Primarily, only the solar

site's western parcel is discernible within winter views from the south and south-west, including from sections of the Ridgeway within the Chilterns National Landscape.

5.12.23 As stated in **Paragraph 5.8.11**, LCA 6B has been assessed in **Appendix 5.4** in two parts and, the susceptibility of LCA 6B (NW) is judged to be Low and the value of the landscape is judged to be Community. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be Low.

5.12.24 The susceptibility of LCA 6B (SE) is judged to be Medium/Low and the value of the landscape is judged to be Regional. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be Medium.

5.12.25 As described in **Paragraph 5.12.15** above, Large scale of changes will be limited to within the Site itself. To the west of the solar site this will reduce to Medium over an area defined by Salt Lane, Weston Road and Nethercote Lane. Beyond these local roads the scale of change will reduce to Small/Negligible.

5.12.26 Medium changes will also extend east from the solar site for approximately 0.8 km into the network of fields east of the A40; changes from this route will be Medium/Small. Beyond this distance the scale of change will reduce to Small/Negligible.

5.12.27 Changes from the M40, which bisects the solar site, will be Medium/Small.

5.12.28 Changes to the landscape between the B4009 and the Ridgeway will be Small to the west of the M40 and Small/Negligible to the east of the motorway.

5.12.29 The primary change in landscape character would arise from a localised change in landcover from arable fields to a solar scheme surrounded by security fencing.

5.12.30 In the eastern parcel, the height of the proposed structures will be consistent with the existing structure of the landscape in terms of existing linear tree belts, low voltage transmission poles and larger vehicles on the A40 and M40. In terms of verticality therefore there will be no impact on the scale of the landscape. The tree belts within this parcel predominantly create a sense of enclosure with some openness towards the major road network. The Proposed Development will create a greater sense of enclosure and reduce the openness towards the road network; however, this will also reduce the intermittent openness towards the Chilterns National Landscape.

5.12.31 In the western parcel, although there are linear tree belts present to a greater or lesser degree along field boundaries, the proposed structures will not be consistent in terms of verticality. The Proposed Development will also create a sense of enclosure as opposed to the current sense of openness which will also reduce the openness of views south towards the Chilterns National Landscape and the M40. It should however be noted that this experience is from an existing

field access gate on Salt Lane and is therefore from a very limited section of LCA 6B.

5.12.32 Tranquillity within the solar site is detracted by the A40 and M40 with both of these routes and other regional routes influencing the wider landscape. During the operational phase, there will be limited vehicular movement within the parcels of the site except for occasional management activities. This will be comparable with existing agricultural operations and will not impact on the low level of tranquillity currently experienced.

5.12.33 As part of the proposed mitigation, new field boundary hedgerows will be planted along site boundaries adjacent to the M40. In the eastern parcel, a new woodland block will be created in the north-western corner of the northern field and in this same field a new hedgerow will be planted on both sides of Footpath 277/7/10 as the route passes through the Proposed Development. In the southern field, an existing hedgerow to the west of the footpath will be extended.

5.12.34 The existing hedgerow adjacent to the A40 will be translocated slightly to the west to facilitate a visibility splay. This hedgerow will be infill planted as required and managed to a height of over 3.5 m.

5.12.35 In the western parcel, a new hedgerow will run perpendicular to Nethercote Lane and ultimately run parallel along the section of the western boundary which is currently delineated by post and wire fencing. All existing field boundary vegetation within the Site will be supplemented by mitigation planting. This will strengthen the overall vegetated character of the fields within the solar site.

***Construction Phase Effects – LCA 6B (NW)***

5.12.36 During construction there will be a temporary Medium scale of change.

5.12.37 The overall construction phase will be up to fourteen months, and the short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects - LCA 6B (NW)***

5.12.38 Prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, a Medium scale of change will be experienced over a localised extent and the medium-term effects will result in a **Moderate** magnitude of change (not significant) and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

5.12.39 Following the establishment of mitigation planting (assumed to be between five to ten years) the scale of change on landscape character would reduce to Medium/Small. There would be a long-term **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

5.12.40 Effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be no greater than those experienced during construction and will arguably be less as mitigation

planting across the solar site will have matured and the vegetative structure within the landscape will have been strengthened.

***Construction Phase Effects – LCA 6B (SE)***

5.12.41 During construction there will be a Small/Negligible scale of change.

5.12.42 The overall construction phase will be up to fourteen months, and the short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects - LCA 6B (SE)***

5.12.43 Prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, a Small scale of change will be experienced over a limited extent and the medium-term effects will result in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

5.12.44 Following the establishment of mitigation planting (assumed to be between five to ten years) the scale of change on landscape character would reduce to Small/Negligible. There would be a long-term **Slight/Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be neutral as mitigation planting will assimilate the Proposed Development into the landscape.

5.12.45 Effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be no greater than those experienced during construction and will arguably be less as mitigation planting across the solar site will have matured and the vegetative structure within the landscape will have been strengthened.

### LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale

5.12.46 LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale is located immediately adjacent to the solar site. The key characteristics of LCA 11C extracted from the LCASOVWH are as follows:

- *"Scattered small blocks, copses and linear belts of woodland, contrast with more open areas.*
- *Predominantly large-scale arable farmland, with some pasture on lower ground and along watercourses. Hedgerows are in variable condition, with some being closely clipped, some gappy with few hedgerow trees, and others are species-rich.*
- *Predominantly rural character, particularly away from settlements and main roads; some localised disruption from overhead power lines and the M40, A40, A329 and A418."*

5.12.47 Whilst the published character description for LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale sets a broad context and reflects some elements of the landscape character in the

vicinity of the solar site, the LCA is a large area which extends far beyond the solar site and study area, approximately 6 km north-east and 10 km north-west.

- Fields to the east of the solar site are pastoral and equestrian use with the remnants of post and rail timber fencing evidence of field subdivision.
- Field boundaries are a mix of hedgerows, some which are gappy, and post and wire fencing.
- Presence of large agricultural buildings and associated storage clutter within the fields and surrounding landscape.

5.12.48 The susceptibility of LCA 11C is judged to be Low and the value of the landscape is judged to be Community. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be Low.

5.12.49 This landscape will not be hosting any infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development and the effects will be indirect.

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.50 During construction there will be a Medium/Small scale of change.

5.12.51 The overall construction phase will be up to fourteen months, and the short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.52 Prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, a Medium scale of change will be experienced over a limited extent and the medium-term effects will result in a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

5.12.53 Following the establishment of mitigation planting (assumed to be between five to ten years) the scale of change on landscape character would reduce to Medium/Small. There would be a long-term **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be neutral as mitigation planting will assimilate the Proposed Development into the landscape.

5.12.54 Effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be no greater than those experienced during construction and will arguably be less as mitigation

planting across the solar site will have matured and the vegetative structure within the landscape will have been strengthened.

### LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment

5.12.55 LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment is within the Chilterns National Landscape. The key characteristics of LCA 2A extracted from the LCASOVWH are as follows:

- *"Distinctive steep escarpment of the Chiltern Hills, comprising a smooth and well-defined chalk landform heavily incised with spurs and valleys, resulting in a complex form and character.*
- *Heavily wooded, including characteristic beech-yew woodlands. Outside of the woodlands a mosaic of semi-natural habitats includes chalk grassland, dry grasslands and scrub.*
- *Long distance views to the east and across Oxfordshire to the west and north from the highest points, including Watlington Hill, contrast with a sense of enclosure within wooded areas. Modern development at Watlington and Chinnor is visible from high points.*
- *A rural and peaceful character, with the main roads cutting east-west across the scarp the main local detractors, including the M40 at Stokenchurch Gap."*

5.12.56 Whilst the published character description for LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment sets a broad context of long distance views to the west and north, further observations are provided below based on desk-based assessment and field observations:

- In addition to residential properties, development comprises large agricultural outbuildings, low voltage transmission poles and recently constructed solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell,
- M40 is a visual and aural detractor and in some view all 6 lanes within the motorway are visible,
- The B4009 provides access to and from Junction 6 of the M40 and extends the influence of the road network.

5.12.57 The susceptibility of LCA 2A is judged to be High and the value of the landscape is judged to be National. Considering susceptibility and value together the sensitivity is judged to be High.

5.12.58 This landscape will not be hosting any infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development and the effects will be indirect.

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.59 During construction there will be a Medium/Small scale of change.

5.12.60 The overall construction phase will be up to fourteen months, and the short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.61 Prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, a Medium scale of change will be experienced over a limited extent and the medium-term effects will result in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an indirect effect of **Moderate** significance (significant).

5.12.62 Proposed mitigation planting within the solar site comprises infill of existing field boundaries, creation of new hedgerows and a woodland block. In combination with the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation, the mitigation planting will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the host landscape, as perceived from LCA 2A.

5.12.63 The scale of change will remain Medium and the limited, long-term effects will remain as a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an indirect effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.64 Effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be no greater than those experienced during construction.

## Visual Effects

5.12.65 **Section 5.9.4** identifies the visual receptors to be included in the assessment of effects.

### Visual Receptor Groups

5.12.66 This assessment focuses on effects on groups of visual receptors, incorporating effects on views from public spaces and streets within neighbourhoods. The assessment of effects focuses on the visual amenity of public spaces, though views from groups of dwellings will also be noted in the descriptions. Effects on private residential amenity are a separate matter, and a detailed assessment has

not been provided as part of this LVIA however, they are considered within the Visual Receptor Group (VRG) they lie within.

5.12.67 The Proposed Development's construction phase will be up to fourteen months, and its operational phase will be 40 years.

5.12.68 Effects during decommissioning of the Proposed Development would be no greater than those experienced during construction and will arguably be less as mitigation planting across the solar site will have matured and, in combination with the anticipated growth of existing vegetation, will provide additional filtering in both winter and summer. This has been considered as applicable to all VRG.

### M40 Motorway

5.12.69 **M40 Motorway** (between 0 and 3 km north-west and south-east of the solar site) – This VRG includes users of the motorway as it runs across the study area specifically vehicular occupants on both the north and south-bound carriageways. For much of the route within the study area there will be no visibility of the Proposed Development, and it will only be visible from the motorway for approximately 1.2 km as it approaches and passes between the solar site's eastern and western parcels.

5.12.70 The visual amenity experienced is one of major road infrastructure and this VRG is assessed as being regional value and low susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium/Low sensitivity to change.

#### *Construction Phase Effects*

5.12.71 During construction, activity within the solar site will be visible from the section of the motorway as it passes between the parcels due to limited roadside and field boundary vegetation. The northern field of the eastern parcel is set back from the motorway and visibility will be filtered in winter (screened in summer) due to the linear tree belts along the boundary of this field.

5.12.72 The scale of change will be no greater than Medium/Small from a limited section of the motorway and receptors will typically be fast moving with only fleeting views.

5.12.73 The short-term effects will be Limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

#### *Operational Phase Effects*

5.12.74 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects would be as per the construction phase (in the medium-term).

5.12.75 New hedgerows are proposed in each parcel along the field boundary adjacent to the motorway as well as infill planting along existing field boundaries within the solar site. Once mitigation planting, including the hedgerow adjacent to the

motorway, has established (Year 10), views of the Proposed Development will be filtered in winter (heavily filtered in summer).

5.12.76 The scale of change would be Small/Negligible in winter (Negligible in summer) from a short section of the motorway and receptors will typically be fast moving with only fleeting views.

5.12.77 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight/Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor/Negligible** significance. The effect will be neutral as mitigation planting will filter views (screen in summer).

**A40**

5.12.78 **A40** (between 0 and 3 km north-west and south-east of the solar site) – This VRG includes users of this A-road as it runs across the study area specifically vehicular occupants on both the north and south-bound carriageway as well as pedestrians using the footway. Users of Chalford Road are also included in this group.

5.12.79 Visibility of the Proposed Development from the A40 is primarily limited to approximately 1 km of the route as it passes adjacent to the solar site's eastern parcel. As previously described, this parcel comprises of three fields but only two are adjacent to the A40 and views of the southern field will be filtered in winter (screened in summer) by the linear tree belts along its boundaries. The Proposed Development within the northern field will be visible from a 0.5 km section of the A40 although an intervening hedgerow will provide some filtering. The northern field is located to the south of Postcombe and will be viewed in the context of incongruous built form located along this edge of the village on approach from both the north and south and when passing the field (Viewpoint 14, Figures 5.8v – 5.8w). The third field within the parcel is further to the west, adjacent to the M40, and will not be visible. There will be limited views of the solar site's western parcel from a short section of the A40 / Aston Hill approximately 1.3 km to the south-east (Viewpoint 5, Figure 5.8k).

5.12.80 Chalford Road is a local road which joins the A40 from the north-east approximately opposite to Postcombe Service Station. When heading south-west along this route, the northern field will be intermittently visible from a 0.15 km section between the agricultural outbuildings at Poplars Farm and the junction with the A40.

5.12.81 The visual amenity experienced is one of A-road and local road infrastructure and incongruous built form and this VRG is assessed as being community value and medium / low susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium/Low sensitivity to change.

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.82 During construction, activity within the northern field will be most visible from a 0.5 km section of the A40 as it passes the northern field and a short section of Chalford Road. Activity within the southern field will be filtered in winter (screened

in summer) due to the linear tree belts along the boundary of this field (Viewpoint 16, Figure 5.8y).

5.12.83 The scale of change will be Small with most receptors typically medium-fast to fast moving with only fleeting views.

5.12.84 The short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.85 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects will be Medium/Small (Small in summer) and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

5.12.86 The existing hedgerow along the northern field boundary adjacent to the A40, will be translocated and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay requirements. A new hedgerow will be planted along the northern field's northern boundary which is currently delineated by palisade fencing associated with Postcombe Service Station.

5.12.87 In addition to the above, proposed mitigation planting comprises infill of existing field boundaries within the eastern parcel, including the translocated hedgerow, and the creation of a woodland block in the north-western corner of the northern field.

5.12.88 Once mitigation planting has established (Year 10) and the translocated hedgerow maintained to a greater height, views of the eastern parcel will be filtered in winter (heavily filtered in summer).

5.12.89 The scale of change would be Medium/Small in winter (Small in summer) from a short section of the A40 adjacent to the northern field.

5.12.90 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Elmtree Villa***

5.12.91 Elmtree Villa is a residential property located approximately 0.3 km north of the A40 junction with Chalford Road. The property is orientated south-west to north-east and its main view is across the A40 and towards Postcombe Service Station.

5.12.92 Views towards the northern field will be oblique with the nearest infrastructure approximately 0.6 km south of the property. Although a hedgerow along the

southern curtilage boundary of Elmtree Villa will filter oblique views from ground floor windows, oblique views will be possible from first floor windows.

5.12.93 The translocated hedgerow and new hedgerow along the field's northern boundary will create additional filtering of ground floor views but there will still be oblique views from first floor windows. Considering the orientation of the property, the primary influence on views will be the road network and Postcombe Service Station. There will be a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change in the long-term.

### B4009

5.12.94 **B4009** (between approximately 0.9 and 3 km south-west, south and south-east of the Site) – This VRG includes users of this regional road as it runs across the study area specifically vehicular occupants on the north-east and south-west bound carriageway. The B4009 passes under the M40 and provides access to and from Junction 6 of the motorway. The visual amenity experienced is one of regional road infrastructure with links to major road infrastructure and this VRG is assessed as being regional value and low susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium/Low sensitivity to change.

5.12.95 To the west of the M40, there will be intermittent visibility of a limited extent of the solar site's western parcel from a section of the B4009 approximately between Field Farm and the junction with Lewknor (Viewpoint 9, Figure 5.8o) which will primarily be from the north-east bound carriageway. To the west of the M40, around Junction 6's southbound access, a small extent of the western parcel will be discernible primarily from the south-west bound carriageway of the B4009.

#### *Construction Phase Effects*

5.12.96 During construction, visibility of activity within the solar site's western parcel will be limited with the remaining part of the parcel screened in winter due to intervening vegetation.

5.12.97 The scale of change will be Small/Negligible from a limited section of the B4009, where most receptors will typically be fast moving with only fleeting views.

5.12.98 The short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight/Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor/Negligible** significance. The effect will be adverse.

#### *Operational Phase Effects*

5.12.99 The scale of change will be Small/Negligible (Negligible in summer) and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects will be as per the construction phase (in the medium term).

5.12.100 Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site and once established (five to ten years) will create additional filtering of views from this location. In addition to

this, the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will provide some additional filtering within the same period.

5.12.101 Once mitigation planting has established (Year 10) and intervening vegetation grown, the scale of change would be Negligible in both winter and summer.

5.12.102 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Negligible** significance. The effect will be neutral as mitigation planting will screen the Proposed Development in views from this receptor group.

### Lewknor

5.12.103 **Lewknor** (between approximately 0 and 0.9 km south of the Site) – This VRG includes the village and the network of footpaths to the north of the village, with views towards the Site orientated northwards. There will be no views from Lewknor itself due to a combination of amenity planting and intervening layers of vegetation within the landscape. The footpaths pass through a series of fields primarily in pastoral use and are within approximately 0 to 0.5 km of the M40 which is intermittently visible. The footpaths are assessed as being community value and medium susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium sensitivity to change.

5.12.104 Due to intervening vegetation there will be intermittent visibility of a small extent of the solar site's western parcel from sections of Footpath 277/27/10 (Viewpoint 10, Figure 5.8p) and from very limited sections of Footpath 277/7/20, 277/9/20 and 277/9/10.

#### *Construction Phase Effects*

5.12.105 During construction, visibility of activity within the solar site's western parcel will be limited to a small extent with the remainder of the parcel screened in winter due to intervening vegetation.

5.12.106 The scale of change will be Small / Negligible in winter when users of the routes would also be able to discern traffic on the M40 (Viewpoint 10, Figure 5.8p).

5.12.107 The short-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight/Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

#### *Operational Phase Effects*

5.12.108 The scale of change will be Small/Negligible (Negligible in summer) and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects will be as per the construction phase (in the medium-term).

5.12.109 Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site and once established (five to ten years) will create additional filtering of views from this location. In addition to

this, the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will provide some additional filtering within the same period.

5.12.110 Once mitigation planting has established (Year 10) and intervening vegetation grown, the scale of change would be Negligible in both winter and summer.

5.12.111 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Minor/Negligible** significance. The effect will be neutral as mitigation planting will screen the Proposed Development in views from this receptor group.

### PRoW network

5.12.112 **PRoW network** (within and adjacent to the solar site) – This group includes connecting routes within the local PRoW network which pass through the solar site's eastern parcel and run adjacent to the solar site's southern boundary. Low voltage transmission poles are a visual detractor and the routes pass close to the A40 and/or M40 and are assessed as being of community value and medium susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium sensitivity to change.

5.12.113 Footpath 277/2/10 commences from Salt Lane in Postcombe and runs southwards for approximately 1 km where it connects with Bridleways 277/33/30 and 277/33/20 near to the M40. The footpath initially passes between residential and commercial development (Viewpoint 13, Figures 5.8s – 5.8u) after which it enters the northern field and follows the line of low voltage transmission poles running through the field (Viewpoint 2, Figures 5.8b – 5.8e). Linear tree belts run along the field's western and southern boundaries and heavily filter (screen in summer) views in these directions. The A40 runs adjacent to the eastern field boundary and is an aural and visual detractor and although not initially visible, the M40 is also an aural detractor. The footpath continues to follow the line of transmission poles as it enters the adjoining field to the south. Within this field, linear tree belts run along its northern, eastern and southern boundaries and heavily filter (screen in summer) views in these directions. To the west a section of low hedgerow runs adjacent to the footpath however views westwards are more open (Viewpoint 3, Figures 5.8f – 5.8i) and the M40 is clearly visible and within 0.07 km of the route.

5.12.114 The aural and visual influence of the M40 increases as the route of the footpath gets nearer to the motorway and is experienced for the remainder of the footpath's route with the aural influence continuing along the route of both bridleways. Bridleway 277/33/20 runs south-west from Footpath 277/2/10 for 51 m and passes under the M40. The experience of using the underpass is significantly worsened by the volume of noise created by the vehicles passing overhead.

5.12.115 Bridleway 277/33/30's route runs north-east from its junction with Footpath 277/7/10 and follows a track between two rows of linear tree belts, terminating at the A40. Views north into the eastern parcel are heavily filtered (screened in

summer) and although the aural influence of the M40 lessens slightly when heading east conversely the aural influence of the A40 increases.

5.12.116 Bridleway 277/33/10 runs south-west from the M40 underpass for approximately 0.3 km and terminates at the driveway entrance for Nethercote, a residential property in private grounds. This route runs adjacent to the southern boundary of the solar site's western parcel which comprises of a linear tree belt and views of the parcel will be heavily filtered (screened in summer) by this vegetation. Due to an existing, open field access into the western parcel from the bridleway, there will be brief open views of the Proposed Development (Viewpoint 11, Figure 5.8q) from a short section of the route.

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.117 During construction the scale of change will be Large with Footpath 277/7/10 diverted through the field within the solar site's western parcel and no access into the eastern parcel.

5.12.118 The short-term effects will be limited primarily to Footpath 277/7/10 and a short section of Bridleway 277/33/10. This will result in a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.119 The security fence around the PV panels will be offset by 15 m on either side of the centre line of Footpath 277/2/10 and the panels will be set back from the fence by a minimum of 5 m.

5.12.120 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects would be Large and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.121 Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site including hedgerow planting adjacent to the fence on either side of Footpath 277/7/10 within the northern field. In the southern field the existing hedgerow to the south-west of Footpath 277/7/10 will be extended to run along this section of footpath. Hedgerow planting is also proposed to run perpendicular to Bridleway 277/33/10 from the open field access.

5.12.122 Once established (five to ten years) the hedgerows will filter views of the Proposed Development in winter (heavily filter in summer), and although the scale of change will remain Large, there will be a positive indirect effect resulting from

the screening of the M40 and A40 due to a combination of the proposed infrastructure and mitigation planting.

5.12.123 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

***Nethercote***

5.12.124 Nethercote is a residential property in large grounds located adjacent to the western parcel's south-western boundary. Much of the parcel will be screened by a large, evergreen hedge which runs for 0.28 km along the eastern curtilage of the property. The remainder of the eastern curtilage is defined by a post and wire fence which continues along the northern curtilage. As part of discussions between the resident and the Applicant, infrastructure has been set back by 0.05 km from Nethercote's eastern curtilage and to the north-west it is 0.25 km away from the property.

5.12.125 A new native hedgerow will be planted to run perpendicular to Bridleway 277/33/10 from the open field access for approximately 0.3 km which will be offset from Nethercote's evergreen hedge by 0.01 km. The new hedgerow will continue beyond the evergreen hedge and cut in to follow the remaining section of the eastern curtilage and the northern curtilage.

5.12.126 Nethercote's primary orientation is south-west to north-east with views eastwards screened by the tall evergreen hedge. Views to the north-west will be intermittently filtered by existing amenity vegetation around the property. The Proposed Development will be visible from within the northern part of the curtilage prior to the new hedgerow establishing. This will result in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change reducing to slight following the establishment of the hedgerow (five to ten years).

5.12.127 Sheepbrook House is located 0.13 km south-west of the western parcel however there will be no visibility of the Proposed Development due to intervening vegetation.

### PRoW network east of the A40

5.12.128 **PRoW network east of the A40** (between approximately 0.03 and 0.5 km north-east and east of the solar site's eastern parcel) – This group includes users of Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10 and the Lower Icknield Way (Restricted Byway 277/25/10 / Bridleway 115/8/10), primarily those travelling westwards along the routes.

5.12.129 The routes commence from, or very close to, the A40 which is an aural and visual detractor within the views from these routes. They are assessed as being of community value and medium susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium sensitivity to change.

5.12.130 Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10 run east from the A40 junction with Chalford Road for approximately 1.2 km and ultimately link up with the Lower Icknield Way.

The footpaths pass through fields in pastoral and equestrian use with low voltage transmission poles running south-west through the fields and across the A40 (Viewpoint 4, Figure 5.8j) and in proximity to large agricultural buildings and associated storage clutter (Viewpoint 15, Figure 5.8x). Only the solar site's eastern parcel will be visible with much of this filtered (screened in summer) by linear tree belts along field boundaries within the parcel or screened by agricultural buildings.

5.12.131 As it runs north-east from the A40, the Lower Icknield Way initially follows the route of a Restricted Byway for approximately 0.33 km which subsequently transitions into Bridleway 115/8/10. The combined route passes along the northern edge of the Dogs Trust complex and then Aston Rowant. The route commences from the A40 opposite to the south-eastern corner of the solar site's eastern parcel and views will be filtered in winter (screened in summer) due to the linear tree belts along the boundary of this field. Where discernible, the Proposed Development will be viewed in the context of the busy road network. The remainder of the eastern parcel will be screened in views to the north-east from this route due to intervening landform and vegetation, including hedgerows adjacent to the route of the Lower Icknield Way.

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.132 During construction the scale of change will be Medium/Small. The short-term effects will be limited to intermittent sections of Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10. This will result in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.133 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects will be Medium (Medium/Small in summer) and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.134 The existing hedgerow along the northern field boundary adjacent to the A40, will be translocated and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay

requirements. A new hedgerow will be planted along the northern field's northern boundary adjacent to Postcombe Service Station.

5.12.135 In addition to the above, proposed mitigation planting comprises infill of existing field boundaries within the eastern parcel, including the translocated hedgerow.

5.12.136 Once established (five to ten years) the mitigation will filter views of the eastern parcel, and the scale of change will be Medium/Small.

5.12.137 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

### Postcombe south-east of Salt Lane, Salt Lane and Weston Road

5.12.138 **Postcombe south-east of Salt Lane, Salt Lane and Weston Road** (approximately 0 km north, 0.5 km north-west and 0.5 km west, south-west of the solar site) – In addition to these local roads, this group includes the part of Postcombe located to the south-east of Salt Lane. This VRG is assessed as being of community value and medium susceptibility resulting in an overall Medium sensitivity to change.

5.12.139 Salt Lane runs south-west for approximately 1.4 km between the A40 and Weston Road, passing under the M40 en route. Much of the initial 0.4 km section of Salt Lane, between the A40 and M40 underpass, provides access to residential and commercial properties, including Beech Farm, situated on the southern edge of Postcombe. To the west of the M40, Salt Lane is bounded by agricultural fields.

5.12.140 To the east of the M40, built form within Postcombe screens much of the solar site from Salt Lane with remaining visibility screened by a woodland block. A limited extent of the eastern parcel will be visible to the south of Beech Farm Close, a short residential street which runs perpendicular to Salt Lane. Views from Salt Lane to the west of the M40 are limited to an existing field access (Viewpoint 1, Figure 5.8a) due to the tall and well-established field boundary vegetation along the remainder of the route.

5.12.141 Weston Lane runs for approximately 1.9 km between Lewknor and Salt Lane with the M40 intermittently visible from this local road. A limited extent of the solar site's western parcel will be intermittently discernible with much of it screened by intervening vegetation comprising hedgerows, hedgerow trees, linear tree belts, trees adjacent to a local watercourse and amenity planting at Nethercote (Viewpoint 12, Figure 5.8r).

5.12.142 The whole solar site will not be visible from any one location with only the eastern parcel discernible in views from Salt Lane and Postcombe to the east of the M40.

The western parcel is only discernible from Salt Lane to the west of the M40 and from Weston Lane.

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.143 During construction the scale of change will be Medium/Small. The short-term effects will result in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.144 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development and prior to the establishment of mitigation planting, Year 1 effects will be Medium (Medium/Small in summer) and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.145 Proposed mitigation planting comprises infill of existing field boundaries within the solar site, a new hedgerow along part of the western parcel's western boundary and the creation of a woodland block in the north-western corner of the eastern parcel's northern field.

5.12.146 Once established (five to ten years) the mitigation will filter views of the respective parcels, and the scale of change will be Medium/Small (Small in summer).

5.12.147 The long-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

***Postcombe south-east of Salt Lane***

5.12.148 As previously described, there will be views into the eastern parcel from Salt Lane when looking south-east along, and from, Beech Farm Close. The nearest residential property is 4 Beech Farm Close which is orientated south-west to north-east and its main view is towards an agricultural outbuilding and evergreen shelterbelt planting on the other side of Beech Farm Close. The nearest infrastructure within the parcel will be approximately 0.09 km to the south-east and there will be views from a ground floor window in the side elevation of the property. There is no amenity planting along the curtilage of the property and the curtilage boundary is denoted by a post and rail fence.

5.12.149 The proposed woodland block will provide immediate filtering in Year 1 as larger planting stock will be used (up to 1.8 m high at the time of planting) and planted at close spacing to create density. The Proposed Development will result in a **Moderate** magnitude of change reducing to **Moderate/Slight** following the establishment of the woodland block (five to ten years).

5.12.150 Field House is located to the east of 4 Beech Farm Close but is accessed from Salt Lane via Forge Lane. It is orientated south-east to north-west with the view from its rear elevation towards the northern field and the nearest infrastructure within the parcel will be approximately 0.09 km to the south-east. Field House is

set lower than the northern field and views from ground floor windows will be heavily filtered by intervening amenity planting with views from first floor windows filtered.

5.12.151 The Proposed Development will result in a **Substantial/Moderate** magnitude of change reducing to **Moderate** following the establishment of the new hedgerow along the intervening boundary (five to ten years).

### The Ridgeway

5.12.152 **The Ridgeway** (approximately 2.3 km south and between 1.4 km and 3 km south-east) – This group includes users of The Ridgeway, a National Trail, and Swan's Way (Restricted Byway 277/11/50) which also follows some of this route which runs through the south-eastern extent of the study area. The Ridgeway is located within the Chilterns National Landscape and this VRG is assessed as being of national value and high susceptibility resulting in an overall High sensitivity to change.

5.12.153 The Ridgeway follows the undulating landform along the scarp footslopes and is predominantly flanked on both sides by field boundary hedgerows. From the section of The Ridgeway to the west of the M40, and south of the solar site, there are intermittent views towards the Site. Some of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible with the rest screened by intervening vegetation however the eastern parcel will not be visible from this section of the route. The western parcel will be viewed in the context of built-form, such as the raised reservoir and large agricultural buildings at Knapp Wood Farm with traffic on the M40 also discernible (Viewpoint 8, Figure 5.8n). To the east of the M40, intervening vegetation is such that there will be no views of the solar site (Viewpoint 17, Figure 5.8z).

#### *Construction Phase Effects*

5.12.154 During construction the scale of change will be Small/Negligible. The short-term effects will result in a **Slight/Negligible** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

#### *Operational Phase Effects*

5.12.155 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development, Year 1 effects will be Small (Small/Negligible in summer) and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.156 Proposed mitigation planting within the western parcel comprises infill of existing field boundaries and a new hedgerow along part of the parcel's western boundary. Although the mitigation planting will not create additional filtering in views from the

south, the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will provide some additional filtering within a five to ten year period.

5.12.157 However, this will not affect the scale of change which will remain Small (Small/Negligible in summer).

5.12.158 The limited, long-term effects will remain as a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be adverse.

### Chilterns National Landscape

5.12.159 **Chilterns National Landscape east of M40** (approximately 1.8 km south-east) – This group includes users of Beacon Hill and this VRG is assessed as being of national value and high susceptibility resulting in an overall High sensitivity to change.

5.12.160 Despite its elevation, the heavily wooded character creates a sense of enclosure and longer-range views to the north and west are intermittent and generally from high points across Beacon Hill. These panoramic views across the lower-lying landscape present a mix of agricultural land, settlement, modern development and infrastructure.

5.12.161 The M40 is a visual and aural detractor with all 6 lanes visible where the motorway passes between the solar site. The local road network also has a strong influence within the views with the B4009 visible which provides access to and from Junction 6 of the motorway. In the fields to the north beyond Adwell Cop recently constructed solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell are discernible.

5.12.162 Proposed Development across the whole of the solar site will not be visible as the northern field within the eastern parcel will be screened by an intervening linear tree belt. Within the remainder of the solar site, the Proposed Development will be visible within the fields to the west and east of the M40 although partially screened by intervening vegetation (Viewpoint 6, Figure 5.8l).

#### *Construction Phase Effects*

5.12.163 During construction the scale of change will be Medium. The construction phase will be short-term effects will result in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

#### *Operational Phase Effects*

5.12.164 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development, Year 1 effects will be Medium (marginally reduced in summer), and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.165 Proposed mitigation planting within the solar site comprises infill of existing field boundaries, creation of new hedgerows and a woodland block, however this will not create additional filtering in views from this VRG. The expected continued

growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will however, provide some additional filtering within a five to ten year period.

5.12.166 The scale of change will remain Medium (marginally reduced in summer).

5.12.167 The limited, long-term effects will remain as a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.168 **Chilterns National Landscape west of the M40** (approximately 2.4 and 2.7 km south-east) – This group includes Aston Rowant Nature Reserve, Bald Hill open access land and the junction of Footpaths 277/31/30 and 277/31/10. This VRG is assessed as being of national value and high susceptibility resulting in an overall High sensitivity to change.

5.12.169 Similarly to the character of the National Landscape to the east of the M40, this area also has a heavily wooded character which creates a sense of enclosure. Longer-range views to the north and west are intermittent and generally from high points where woodland cover is notably absent such as on Bald Hill. These panoramic views across the lower-lying landscape present a mix of agricultural land and large agricultural outbuildings, settlement, modern development and infrastructure.

5.12.170 The road network has a strong influence within the views with the M40 visible and Junction 6 discernible with the route of the B4009 also discernible. In the fields to the north of Adwell Cop recently constructed solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell are discernible.

5.12.171 Proposed Development across the whole of the solar site will not be visible as much of the eastern parcel will be screened by intervening linear tree belts. The western parcel will be visible adjacent to the M40 (Viewpoint 7, Figure 5.8m).

5.12.172 From a more elevated location, views are more intermittent where the presence of intervening woodland and vegetation increases and frames views in the direction of views. The extent of outward views is further contained by the scarp face to the east of the M40.

5.12.173 The influence of the road network is greater where sections of the carriageways on the M40 are fully visible and create a distinct break within the landscape below. The presence of incongruous, large agricultural outbuildings is also more apparent where they are visually associated with the motorway. Recently constructed solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell are also discernible.

5.12.174 Proposed Development across the whole of the solar site will not be visible as the northern field within the eastern parcel will be screened by an intervening linear tree belt. Intervening linear tree belts will also screen much of the southern field. Within the remainder of the solar site, the Proposed Development will be visible

within the fields to the west and east of the M40 although partially screened by intervening vegetation (Viewpoint 18, Figure 5.8aa).

***Construction Phase Effects***

5.12.175 During construction the scale of change will be Medium. The short-term effects will result in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

***Operational Phase Effects***

5.12.176 During the operational phase of the Proposed Development, Year 1 effects will be Medium (marginally reduced in summer), and the medium-term effects will be limited resulting in a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.12.177 Proposed mitigation planting within the solar site comprises infill of existing field boundaries, creation of new hedgerows and a woodland block, however this will not create additional filtering in views from this VRG. The expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will however, provide some additional filtering within a five to ten year period.

5.12.178 The scale of change will remain Medium (marginally reduced in summer).

5.12.179 The limited, long-term effects will remain as a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (significant). The effect will be adverse.

## 5.13 Designated Areas

5.13.1 As previously described in **Paragraphs 5.3.13** and **5.3.14**, effects on the Special Qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape and the setting of the National Landscape arising from the Proposed Development are considered further within this Section.

### The Special Qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape

5.13.2 The Chilterns National Landscape (formerly Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) sets out ten Special Qualities that underpin its status as a National Landscape.

5.13.3 These Special Qualities are assessed against the Proposed Development and presented in the table below:

**Table 5.6: Special Qualities Of The Chilterns National Landscape**

| Special Quality | Description of Special Quality | Effects of the Proposed Development |
|---|---|---|
| *A rich tapestry* | *Panoramic views across a dramatic chalk escarpment – a globally rare landscape type interwoven with intimate valleys and rolling* | Views from the National Landscape are considered further below. |

| Special Quality | Description of Special Quality | Effects of the Proposed Development |
|---|---|---|
| | *fields. Ancient hedgerows, trees, orchards and parkland weaving across farmland.* | |
| *Unspoilt, tranquil countryside* | *One of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, with relative tranquillity, unspoilt countryside and dark skies on the doorstep of 10 million people.* | The Proposed Development will not affect access, tranquillity or dark skies within the National Landscape. The solar site is located immediately adjacent to the M40 and A40 and the Proposed Development will have no greater influence on tranquillity and dark skies than what is currently created by the road network. |
| *Scarce and threatened species* | *Nationally important concentrations of species-rich chalk grassland that is home to scarce and threatened species, such as Chiltern gentian, wild candytuft, pasqueflower, silver-spotted skipper and glow-worm.* | The Proposed Development will not affect any of the habitats or species within the National Landscape. |
| *One of the most wooded landscapes in England* | *Over half of the woodland is ancient, including the Chilterns beech wood Special Area of Conservation (SAC, European designation). There are also significant box, juniper and beech-yew woods; veteran trees and relict wood pasture.* | The Proposed Development will not affect any areas of woodland, or ecological designations within the National Landscape. |
| *Nine precious chalk streams* | *A globally scarce habitat and home to some of the UK's most endangered species, such as otter, water vole, reed bunting and brown trout.* | The Proposed Development will not affect any watercourses or associated species within the National Landscape. |
| *A diverse archaeological landscape* | *Ancient parish boundaries, medieval field patterns, iron age hillforts, and remnants of woodland heritage like sawpits and charcoal hearths.* | The Proposed Development will not affect any historical assets within the National Landscape. |
| *Ample common lands* | *More than 2,000 ha of common land, heaths and greens, rich in wildlife and cultural heritage.* | The Proposed Development will not affect areas of common land, habitats, species or cultural heritage within the National Landscape. |
| *Highly accessible* | *A network of 2,000 km of rights of way, including two national trails (the Ridgeway and Thames Path); two regional routes (the Chiltern Way and Chilterns Cycleway); and numerous ancient routes like the Icknield Way.* | The Proposed Development will not affect opportunities for recreational experiences in the National Landscape. No routes into or out of the National Landscape will be restricted in any way. |
| *A rich industrial heritage* | *An industrial heritage of woodworking, quarrying, brick making and food production with windmills and watercress beds.* | The Proposed Development will not affect the industrial heritage of the National Landscape. |
| *Distinctive buildings* | *Made from local brick, flint and clay tiles; attractive villages and notable buildings* | The Proposed Development will not affect distinctive and valued |

| Special Quality | Description of Special Quality | Effects of the Proposed Development |
|---|---|---|
| | *including stately homes and monuments; and a wealth of medieval churches.* | built form within the National Landscape. |

5.13.4 The Special Qualities requiring further consideration are set out below:

***A rich tapestry***

5.13.5 The solar site is not located within the National Landscape or within a rare, dramatic chalk escarpment landscape type. The Panoramic views are specified as being *across* a dramatic chalk escarpment rather than from one which implies views within and of the National Landscape itself.

5.13.6 Panoramic views out of the National Landscape towards the solar site includes an extent of the chalk escarpment but the panorama is completed by adjacent, low-lying landscape which is not globally rare or dramatic. This low-lying landscape comprises a mix of agricultural land and large agricultural outbuildings, settlement, modern development and infrastructure but is not part of a rich tapestry.

5.13.7 The Proposed Development will not change the structure or landscape fabric of the National Landscape which will remain intact and there will be no material change to the chalk escarpment that is within the panoramic views.

5.13.8 The scale of change to Special Quality *"A rich tapestry"* will be Medium/Small. The localised, long-term effects will be a **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be indirect and adverse.

5.13.9 There will be no effects on any of the other Special Qualities.

### Chilterns Conservation Board – Position Statement: Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB (2011)

5.13.10 As part of the Position Statement, the following examples of adverse impacts are provided for consideration in relation to development within the setting of the National Landscape (formerly AONB):

**Table 5.7: Position Statement Adverse Impacts**

| Adverse impacts | Effects of the Proposed Development |
|---|---|
| *"Blocking or interference of views out of the AONB particularly from public viewpoints or rights of way."* | The Proposed Development will not block or interfere with views out of the AONB. |
| *"Blocking or interference of views of the AONB from public viewpoints or rights of way outside the AONB."* | In the context of the solar site, the AONB forms the backdrop in views to the south and south-east. Views from Footpath 277/2/10 and Salt Lane are considered further below. |
| *"Breaking the skyline, particularly when this is associated with developments that have a vertical emphasis and/or movement* | The Proposed Development will not contain any infrastructure on the same scale as chimneys or rotors. In views orientated towards the AONB, the PV panels will not be greater in height than the existing |

| Adverse impacts | Effects of the Proposed Development |
|---|---|
| *(viaducts, chimneys, plumes or rotors for example."* | vegetative structure and, in the case of the eastern parcel, not greater than the low voltage timber pylons already present within the solar site. |
| *The visual intrusion caused by the introduction of new transport corridors, in particular roads and railways."* | The Proposed Development does not require the creation of new transport corridors and as an indirect effect, will screen views of the M40. This will reduce the current visual intrusion and may also reduce the aural intrusion of this major road on views orientated towards the AONB. |
| *Loss of tranquillity through the introduction of lighting, noise, or traffic movement."* | There is no lighting within the Proposed Development. Noise and traffic movement will be minimal and given the solar site's location immediately adjacent to the M40 and the A40, tranquillity is significantly reduced by the road network and the Proposed Development will not reduce this further. |
| *"Introduction of significant or abrupt changes to landscape character particularly where they are originally of a similar character to the AONB."* | There is no similarity between the landscape character of the solar site, or its immediate environs, and that found within the AONB. The solar site is bisected by the M40 which creates an existing abrupt change in landscape character. |
| *"Change of use of land that is of sufficient scale to cause harm to landscape character."* | The landscape character of the solar site has been assessed within **Appendix 5.4**. This includes a reference to scale which notes that the host landscape is large-scale arable farmland and of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. |
| *"Loss of biodiversity, particularly in connection with those habitats or species of importance in the AONB."* | The Proposed Development will not affect any of the habitats or species within the AONB. |
| *"Loss of features of historic interest, particularly if these are contiguous with the AONB."* | The fields within the solar site are intensively farmed and there are no nationally designated historic features within the solar site and therefore none which are contiguous with the AONB. |
| *"Reduction in public access and detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of rural roads and lanes."* | There will be a short-term reduction in public access during the construction phase. There will be no detrimental impacts on the character or appearance of rural roads and lanes. |
| *"Increase in air or water pollution."* | The Proposed Development will not result in an increase of air or water pollution. |

5.13.11 The 'Adverse Impacts' requiring further consideration are set out below:

***Blocking or interference of views of the AONB from public viewpoints or rights of way outside the AONB.***

5.13.12 In the context of the solar site, when travelling south on Footpath 277/2/10, through the eastern parcel, the AONB is visible to varying degrees in views to the south, south-east and east. These existing views are intermittently filtered in winter by intervening linear tree belts, woodland blocks and vegetation outside of

the solar site. In summer, the visibility of the AONB will be reduced or even fully screened by the intervening vegetation.

5.13.13 Where currently discernible in views from Footpath 277/2/10, the landform within the AONB will be approximately 2.4 km to the south, 1.3 km to the south-east and over 3 km to the east.

5.13.14 The footpath follows a line of low voltage transmission poles which introduce incongruous elements into the view although the primary existing interference on these views is the almost permanent aural and visual detraction from the M40 and the A40 (Viewpoints 2, 3 and 13, Figures 5.8b – 5.8i and 5.8s – 5.8u).

5.13.15 The Proposed Development will introduce additional interference although the security fence around the PV panels will be set back by 15 m on either side of Footpath 277/2/10 and the panels will be set back from the fence by a minimum of 5 m. Hedgerow planting is proposed adjacent to the fence on either side of Footpath 277/7/10 within the northern field. In the southern field the existing hedgerow to the south-west of Footpath 277/7/10 will be extended to run along this section of footpath. The set back of the infrastructure and proposed hedgerows will ensure that views towards the AONB are not fully blocked.

5.13.16 Considering the existing effects on views towards the AONB from Footpath 277/2/10, arising from the road network and seasonal vegetation changes, the Proposed Development will extend the current interference to a year-round effect.

5.13.17 The scale of change to existing views of the AONB from a PRoW will be Medium/Small. The limited, long-term effects will be a **Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be adverse.

5.13.18 To the west of the M40, a field access gate on Salt Lane offers a public viewpoint across a large, irregular shaped arable field adjacent to the M40 and the AONB in the background. This field comprises the western parcel of the solar site and infrastructure within the field will screen views of the M40, an existing aural and visual detractor, and the lower slopes of the AONB will not be visible (Viewpoint 1, Figure 5.8a).

5.13.19 The scale of change to existing views of the AONB from this public viewpoint will be Large/Medium. The limited, long-term effects will be a **Moderate** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate** significance (not significant). The effect will be adverse.

5.13.20 In views orientated towards the solar site from the south, east and west, the Proposed Development will not block or interfere with views of the AONB.

***Reduction in public access and detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of rural roads and lanes.***

5.13.21 As part of the Proposed Development the route of Footpath 277/2/10, which runs through the solar site's eastern parcel, will be diverted during the construction phase for no more than fourteen months. A temporary, alternative route will be

provided through the western parcel between Nethercote Lane (Bridleway 277/33/10) and Salt Lane.

5.13.22 The scale of change arising from the reduction in public access will be Medium. The limited, short-term effects will be **Moderate/Slight** magnitude of change and an effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance. The effect will be indirect and adverse.

5.13.23 There will be no detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of rural roads and lanes.

## 5.14 Assessment of Cumulative Effects

5.14.1 As referenced in **Paragraph 5.5.16** there is one similar scheme to be considered cumulatively with the Proposed Development, as detailed below:

- P21/S3915/FUL – Dodwells Solar Farm. (hereafter referred to as 'Dodwells').

5.14.2 Dodwells is a consented scheme but not yet under construction and is considered in the cumulative assessment presented in this LVIA. To assist in the consideration of cumulative effects, a number of cumulative ZTVs have been produced as follows:

- **Figure 5.6**: Cumulative Sites Location Plan,
- **Figure 5.7**: Cumulative ZTV between the Proposed Development and Dodwells; and
- **Figure 5.11**: Cumulative Photowire.

5.14.3 It is noted that since site work was undertaken, the solar schemes at Cornwell and Harlesford have been constructed. Their respective locations, and the location of the Dodwells scheme, are shown on **Figure 5.6** and represented on **Figure 5.11**; the latter is an interpretation of Viewpoint 6 (Figure 5.8l).

### Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

5.14.4 In **Appendix 5.4**, the tract of LCA 6B (north-west of the B4009) within which the solar site is located broadly defined by LCA 6B's boundary to the north, the B4009 to the south, the A40 to the east and the study area's 2 km radius to the west has been assessed as being of Low sensitivity to solar development. This judgement remains valid for this assessment of cumulative effects.

5.14.5 It should be noted that Dodwells is located north-west of Tetsworth, adjacent to the A40 and over 5 km to the north-west of the solar site and is therefore outside of the tract of landscape defined above.

5.14.6 As part of the LVIA submitted for the Dodwells scheme effects on Landscape Character were assessed using the Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (2017). The host landscape character area has been identified as Landscape Character Area 3 – 'Clay Vale' with the site within two Landscape Character Types (LCT); LCT 19 - Undulating Open Vale' and LCT 20: 'Undulating

Semi-Enclosed Vale.' Within the Dodwells LVIA *"it is considered that the site would typically be of Medium landscape sensitivity."*

5.14.7 As part of LCASOVWH the Dodwells site is located within LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale and it is assumed that the sensitivity of the landscape would remain as Medium.

5.14.8 LCA 11C is immediately to the east of the Site and in **Appendix 5.4**, the defined tract of this LCA broadly defined by LCA 6B's boundary to the south-west and south-east and the study area's 1 km boundary to the north and east has been assessed as being of Low sensitivity to solar development. This judgement remains valid for this assessment of cumulative effects.

5.14.9 The Proposed Development and Dodwells will each have localised effects on their respective host landscape character. The Proposed Development will have limited, indirect effects on LCA 11C but will not extend the influence of renewable energy beyond the tract defined and given the intervening distance between the two sites, there will be no overlap in the extent of renewable energy influence.

5.14.10 The Dodwells scheme has been consented and if subsequently constructed in combination with the Proposed Development, there would be no greater magnitude of effect on LCA 6B (north-west of the B4009), or indirect effect on LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale, than if the Proposed Development was constructed in isolation. Likewise, the Proposed Development will not increase the magnitude of landscape effects arising from the Dodwells scheme being built in isolation or in combination. Therefore, the magnitude of change will be no greater in any direction as a result of the Proposed Development.

5.14.11 As a result of the Dodwells scheme, there will be no increase of effects on LCA 6B (south-east of the B4009) or LCA 2A greater than those arising as a result of the Proposed Development in isolation.

### Cumulative Visual Effects

5.14.12 This assessment considers two types of cumulative visual effect:

- Combined views which *'occur where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint.'* Combined visibility may either be in combination (where several developments are within the observer's arc of vision at the same time) or in succession (where the observer has to turn to see the various developments); and
- Sequential views which *'occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments.'*

5.14.13 The following observations are made regarding cumulative effects at the 18 assessment viewpoints:

- At all Viewpoint locations, except for 6, 7 and 18, the Dodwells site will not be visible and therefore there will be no cumulative effects arising at these locations.

5.14.14 Looking beyond the assessment viewpoints and despite the suggested cumulative visibility shown on **Figure 5.7**, in reality there are few locations where the Proposed Development would be visible in combination with the Dodwells scheme.

5.14.15 The straight-line distance between the Dodwells site and the Proposed Development is over 5 km which will be greater when utilising the local road network or PRoW network. When using these routes, the duration and distance of travel between the two sites is over an intermediate extent and too great to simply consider that an observer is moving to another viewpoint. Existing solar development, high voltage pylons and overhead lines, major road network and built-form are present in the intervening landscape and will diffuse the visible association between the Dodwells site and the Proposed Development.

5.14.16 Considering the location of the Dodwells scheme to the north of the A40 and M40 and the Proposed Development's location adjacent to these major roads, it is reasonable to consider that there will be sequential views for receptors travelling on these routes. The considered section of the M40 is between Junction 7 and Junction 6, which is a distance of approximately 9 km. The A40 is located to the north-east of the M40, following a similar alignment to the motorway and the same geographical extent and distance is considered for this regional route.

5.14.17 There will be no combined views for receptors travelling on these routes due to intervening vegetation, localised landform and the direction of travel as views from each carriageway vary. Vehicular occupants' views will primarily be orientated in the direction of travel with some appreciation of views to the side.

5.14.18 Despite the typically fast-moving nature of these receptors within the defined section of the road network, visibility of the Dodwells scheme and the Proposed Development will be intermittent due to intervening vegetation and localised landform. Existing solar development, high voltage pylons and overhead lines, major road network and built-form are all present in the intervening landscape and will diffuse the visible association between the Dodwells site and the Proposed Development.

5.14.19 Within the Dodwells LVIA, visual effects at Year 1 on both the A40 and *'Major road network'* were assessed as **Minor**. At Year 10, following the establishment of mitigation planting, this will reduce to **Negligible** for the A40 but remain as **Minor** for the major road network.

5.14.20 Within this LVIA, effects on the M40 have been assessed as:

- Year 1 – **Minor**; and
- Year 10 – **Minor/Negligible**.

5.14.21 Effects on the A40 have been assessed as:

- Year 1 – **Moderate/Minor**; and
- Year 10 – **Moderate/Minor**.

5.14.22 The primary influence on visual receptors using the M40 and A40 is the road network itself. Although the effects on sequential views arising from the Proposed Development and the consented Dodwells scheme will be over an intermediate area of the road network, they will not be any greater than **Minor**.

### Cumulative Effects on Designated Areas

5.14.23 Viewpoints 6, 7 and 18 (Figures 5.8l, 5.8m and 5.8aa) are located within the Chilterns National Landscape and as indicated on **Figure 5.11**, the schemes at Cornwell and Harlesford will be visible to the north of Adwell Cop with the consented Dodwells scheme located to the north-east of Harlesford.

5.14.24 Neither the Chilterns National Landscape nor its setting have been assessed in the Dodwells LVIA. The distance between the nearest part of the Dodwells site and the National Landscape boundary, along the B4009, is approximately 7 km. The distance between the Dodwells site and Viewpoints 6, 7 and 18 (Figures 5.8l, 5.8m and 5.8aa) is between approximately 7.7 and 8.8 km and the Dodwells scheme is unlikely to be discernible within the views.

5.14.25 Therefore, there will be no cumulative visual effects arising from the Proposed Development and the consented Dodwells scheme on the Chilterns National Landscape or its setting.

### Summary

5.14.26 There will be no cumulative effects on landscape character.

5.14.27 Cumulative effects on visual receptors will be limited to the major road network where typically fast-moving receptors will experience the Proposed Development and the Dodwells scheme in sequential views only. Effects will not be any greater than Minor.

5.14.28 There will be no cumulative effects on either combined views or on Designated Areas.

## 5.15 Summary

5.15.1 A summary of effects on landscape and visual receptors is provided in **Table 5.7** overleaf.

5.15.2 The solar site and majority of the study area is within LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes. Upon review, it is considered that this LCA does not accurately reflect the character found within the solar site and study area and therefore it has been considered in two parts in this LVIA. The review of LCASOVWH is presented in **Appendix 5.6**.

5.15.3 Direct effects on landscape character will be limited to the host landscape, LCA 6B (NW), within a broadly defined tract between LCA 6B's boundary to the north, the B4009 to the south, the A40 to the east and the study area's 2 km radius to the west. Large scale effects will be limited to within the solar site itself where the

primary change in landscape character would arise from a change in landcover from arable fields to a solar scheme, surrounded by a security fence. There will be an overall effect of **Moderate/Minor** significance on this tract of LCA 6B (NW) which would reduce to **Minor** following the establishment of mitigation planting (five to ten years).

5.15.4 Effects on LCA 6B (SE) will be **Moderate/Minor** which would reduce to **Minor** following the establishment of mitigation planting (five to ten years).

5.15.5 LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale is located immediately to the east of the solar site and the effects will be **Moderate/Minor** which would reduce to **Minor** following the establishment of mitigation planting (five to ten years). These effects will be indirect.

5.15.6 LCA 2A Chiltern Wooded Chalk Escarpment is within the Chilterns National Landscape and effects will be of **Moderate** significance (significant). These effects will be indirect.

5.15.7 There will be Large scale visual changes from Footpath 277/2/10, which passes through the solar site's eastern parcel and from an existing field access gate on Salt Lane, to the north of the solar site's western parcel. Existing views from both locations are heavily influenced by the M40 which is a visual and aural detractor within the wider landscape. Effects on these specific receptor locations will be **Moderate** significance (significant).

5.15.8 The scale of change on all other visual receptors within the study area will be no greater than Medium, including from The Ridgeway and the Chilterns National Landscape.

5.15.9 Effects on the Special Qualities of the National Landscape, specifically "*A rich tapestry*" will be **Moderate** (significant). These effects will be indirect as they occur outside of the National Landscape and will not directly affect the globally rare dramatic chalk escarpment.

5.15.10 There will be no cumulative effects on landscape character. Cumulative effects on visual receptors are limited to the M40 and A40 and will not be any greater than **Minor**.

5.15.11 As part of the proposed mitigation new sections of native rich hedgerows will be planted as well as infill planting of existing hedgerows and linear tree belts. There will also be areas of wildflower seeding and creation of 1.11 ha native woodland block.

**Table 5.8: Summary Table**

| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Landscape Character** | | | | | | |
| LCA 6B (NW) | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium | Low | Moderate/Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the defined tract of landscape character prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | Low | Moderate | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the defined tract of landscape character following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium/Small | Low | Moderate/Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| LCA 6B (SE) | Construction / Decommissioning | Small/Negligible | Medium | Moderate/Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the defined tract of landscape character prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small | Medium | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the defined tract of landscape character following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small/Negligible | Medium | Slight/Negligible | Minor | Neutral |
| LCA 11C | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium/Small | Low | Moderate/Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Indirect effects on the defined tract of landscape character prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | Low | Moderate | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Indirect effects on the defined tract of landscape character following the | Medium/Small | Low | Moderate/Slight | Minor | Neutral |

| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | | | | | |
| LCA 2A | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium/Small | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| | Indirect effects on the defined tract of landscape character prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| | Indirect effects on the defined tract of landscape character following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| **Visual Receptor Groups** | | | | | | |
| M40 Motorway | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium / Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium / Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small/Negligible | Medium / Low | Slight/Negligible | Minor/Negligible | Neutral |
| A40 | Construction / Decommissioning | Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium / Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |

| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium / Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| B4009 | Construction / Decommissioning | Small/Negligible | Medium / Low | Slight/Negligible | Minor/Negligible | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small/Negligible | Medium / Low | Slight/Negligible | Minor/Negligible | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Negligible | Medium / Low | Negligible | Negligible | Adverse |
| Lewknor | Construction / Decommissioning | Small/Negligible | Medium | Slight / Negligible | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small/Negligible | Medium | Slight / Negligible | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Negligible | Medium | Negligible | Minor/Negligible | Neutral |
| PRoW network (within and adjacent to the Site) | Construction / Decommissioning | Large | Medium | Moderate | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation | Large | Medium | Moderate | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |



| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | planting and management (five to ten years). | | | | | |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Large | Medium | Moderate | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| PRoW east of the A40 | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium/Small | Medium | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | Medium | Moderate | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium/Small | Medium | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| Postcombe south-east of Salt Lane, Salt Lane and Weston Road | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium/Small | Medium | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | Medium | Moderate | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium/Small | Medium | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |

| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Ridgeway | Construction / Decommissioning | Small/Negligible | High | Slight/Negligible | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small | High | Slight | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small | High | Slight | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| Chilterns National Landscape east of M40 | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| Chilterns National Landscape west of M40 | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |

| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Significant) | Adverse |
| **Designated Areas** | | | | | | |
| The Special Qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape | Indirect effects on *"A rich tapestry"* | Medium/Small | High | Moderate/Slight | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB (2011) | Indirect effects on *"Blocking or interference of views of the AONB from public viewpoints or rights of way outside the AONB."* – Footpath 277/2/10 | Medium/Small | Medium | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Indirect effects on *"Blocking or interference of views of the AONB from public viewpoints or rights of way outside the AONB."* – Salt Lane public viewpoint | Large/Medium | Medium | Moderate | Moderate (Not Significant) | Adverse |
| | Indirect effects on *"Reduction in public access and detrimental impacts on the character and appearance of rural roads and lanes."* – Footpath 277/2/10 | Medium | Medium | Moderate/Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| **Cumulative Effects – Sequential views** | | | | | | |
| M40 Motorway | Construction / Decommissioning | Medium/Small | Medium/Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation | Medium/Small | Medium/Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |

| Receptor | Description | Scale of Change | Sensitivity | Magnitude | Significance | Beneficial / Neutral / Adverse |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | planting and management (five to ten years). | | | | | |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Small/Negligible | Medium/Low | Slight/Negligible | Minor/Negligible | Neutral |
| A40 | Construction / Decommissioning | Small | Medium/Low | Slight | Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group prior to the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium/Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |
| | Effects on the receptor group following the establishment of mitigation planting and management (five to ten years). | Medium/Small | Medium / Low | Slight | Moderate/Minor | Adverse |

## 5.16 References

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