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APPENDIX 5.1:

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND CRITERIA

Introduction

1. The purpose of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) when produced in the context of an EIA is to identify and report any likely significant landscape and visual effects.

2. The following appendix sets out the methodology and criteria against which the assessment of landscape and visual effects has been undertaken.

3. The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Third Edition) (GLVIA3)[1] are widely recognised as the primary source of guidance for LVIA in the UK but clearly state that: *"The guidance concentrates on principles while also seeking to steer specific approaches where there is a general consensus on methods and techniques. It is not intended to be prescriptive, in that it does not provide a detailed 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation. It is always the primary responsibility of any landscape professional carrying out an assessment to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the particular circumstances."* (paragraph 1.20)

4. GLVIA 3 also states that: *"professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA"* (paragraph 2.23) and that *"in all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others."* (paragraph 2.24).

5. It goes on to state that *"there are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed significant but LVIAs should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be the significant and non-significant effects."* (paragraph 3.32)

6. Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified, but as noted above, the nature of landscape and visual assessment requires interpretation using professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the assessment, the prediction of magnitude and the assessment of significance of the residual landscape and visual effects are based on pre-defined criteria as set out in this appendix.

7. Landscape and Visual Assessments are separate, though linked processes which GLVIA3 notes are "*related but very different considerations*". The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape is carried out as an effect on the environmental resource (i.e. the landscape). Visual effects are assessed as an inter-related effect on people.

    - Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape elements which may give rise to changes in its distinctive character and how this is experienced, including consideration of aesthetic and perceptual aspects.

[1] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition*; Spon; 2013

- Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Establishing the Baseline

8. The baseline for consideration of landscape and visual effects is evaluated through desk study and site work and is the current situation at the time of the assessment, unless noted otherwise. Existing operational / built development and development under construction is considered as part of the baseline.

9. The future baseline**,** where relevant, incorporates any anticipated natural change to the landscape (e.g. change to land cover through natural regeneration or forestry rotation), and also in the case of built development, changes which are considered certain or likely to happen (including consented proposals which are not yet present in the landscape, but which are expected to be constructed). These may or may not be included as part of the landscape and visual baseline depending on individual project circumstances. Where the future baseline differs from the current baseline, it is clearly stated in the LVIA which baseline has been adopted for the assessment of effects and a rationale for the approach taken is provided as necessary.

Direct and Indirect Effects

10. Direct and indirect effects are defined in GLVIA3. Direct effects may be defined as resulting *"directly from the development itself"* (paragraph 3.22). An indirect (or secondary) effect is one that results "*from consequential change resulting from the development*" (paragraph 3.22) and is often produced away from the site of the proposed development or as a result of a complex pathway or secondary association.

Landscape Effects

11. The starting point for an assessment of landscape effects is a desk-based assessment of published landscape studies, which may include landscape character assessments, sensitivity and capacity studies and/or landscape designation reviews. Relevant documents are listed as appropriate in the assessment and relevant extracts may be included as appendices where this is judged appropriate. Desk based assessment is supplemented by field work to verify the key characteristics of the landscape.

12. In accordance with GLVIA3, the significance of landscape effects is determined by combining judgements regarding the sensitivity of the receiving landscape and the magnitude of the landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development.

13. An assessment of the degree to which the proposed development changes "*distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse"* ('An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment', Natural England, 2014), enables a judgement to be made as to the significance of the effect in landscape character terms.

14. In order to reach an understanding of the effects of development upon the landscape resource it is necessary to consider different aspects of the landscape baseline including:

    - **Landscape Fabric/Elements**: The individual features of the landscape, such as hills, valleys, woods, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, buildings and roads for example which can usually be described and quantified.

- **Landscape key characteristics**: The particularly notable elements or combinations of elements which make a particular contribution to defining or describing the character of an area, which may include experiential characteristics such as wildness and tranquillity.

Landscape Sensitivity

15. It should be noted, as stated in GLVIA3, *"LVIA sensitivity is similar to the concept of landscape sensitivity used in the wider arena of landscape planning but is not the same as it is specific to the particular project or development that is being proposed and to the location in question"* (paragraph 5.39).

16. In LVIA, landscape sensitivity is assessed by combining judgements about the value attached to a landscape and its susceptibility to the type of change and nature of the development proposed. The overall sensitivity of the landscape to a particular development is described in the assessment as High, Medium or Low.

    - **Landscape Value**: This is the relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. Sometimes it is used as a basis for designation or recognition which expresses national or local authority consensus, because of its special qualities/attributes. Whilst the presence of formal designations are an important component when determining landscape value, other aspects are also considered as part of the judgement process as explained in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02-21[2], especially when considering the value of landscapes outside of national designations. These include factors related to natural and cultural heritage (for example ecological, geological or heritage matters), landscape condition, cultural associations (in terms of connections with people, arts or events), distinctiveness (i.e. a sense of unique identity in the landscape), recreational opportunities, perceptual aspects (including scenic quality, wildness and tranquillity) and landscapes with a clearly identifiable role or function. In this assessment, the value attributed to the landscape is described as: National, Regional or Community.

    - **Landscape Susceptibility**: Landscape Susceptibility according to GLVIA3 means *"the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed Development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies"* (paragraph 5.40). The susceptibility of the landscape varies depending on the type of development proposed and the particular site location. Judgements on landscape susceptibility include references to both the physical and aesthetic characteristics and the potential scope for mitigation. In this assessment, the susceptibility of the landscape is described as High, Medium or Low.

17. The criteria and the detailed judgements regarding susceptibility and value of landscape receptors are identified within the sensitivity tables included within **Appendix 5.4**: Landscape Sensitivity to this assessment.

18. Sensitivity is evaluated taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the table below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment is adopted. Note that equal weighting is attributed to susceptibility and value when determining overall landscape sensitivity.

[2] Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

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

Magnitude of Landscape Change

19. The magnitude of landscape change arising from the proposed development at any particular location is assessed in terms of *"size or scale, the geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced and its duration and reversibility"* (paragraph 5.48).

20. Judgements concerning the **Scale** of the change take account of:

- degree of loss or alteration to key landscape features/elements; characteristics; and for designated areas – special qualities and/or purposes of designation;
- distance from the development; and
- landscape context to the development.

21. The approach to assessing effects on landscape character is to consider the key characteristics for the Landscape Character Area (LCA) within which the proposed development is located (the host LCA) and if relevant the adjacent LCA's (non-host) and identify which of these the proposed development would affect. A large scale change in landscape character is likely to occur where key characteristics would be lost or substantially changed. A small scale change is likely to occur where key characteristics are altered to a lesser degree and this can be influenced by distance and surrounding context.

22. Where particular views are a key characteristic of a landscape type, large or medium scale landscape character effects may occur where the proposed development becomes a key feature of those views. A similar approach applies to designated landscapes, for which the effects on the defined purposes of designation and special qualities are considered.

23. In this assessment, the scale of landscape change is described as: Large, Medium, Small or Negligible.

24. Having established the scale of change to the landscape baseline, the Geographic Extent of the change can be identified. In this assessment, the geographical extent of landscape change is described as: Wide, Intermediate, Localised or Limited.

25. **Duration and Reversibility** can be linked depending on the nature of the development. Reversibility is a judgement about the practicality of reversing the landscape effects of the proposed development (for example, solar farms are ultimately largely reversible whilst housing is permanent). Duration reflects how long the change will last and can include frequency the effect would be experienced. In this assessment, the duration of the change would be considered:

- **short term** when lasting less than 2 years;
- **medium term** when lasting between 2 and 10 years;
- **long term** when lasting between 10 and 40 years, and
- **permanent** for more than 40 years.

26. Magnitude is considered taking into account the three contributory factors as illustrated by the diagrams in **Graphic 1** below.

Visual Effects

27. In accordance with GLVIA3, the significance of visual effects is determined by combining judgements regarding the sensitivity of visual receptors (people who view the landscape) and the magnitude of the change they experience arising from the Proposed Development.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

28. In visual assessment, visual receptor sensitivity is assessed by combining judgements about the value attached to views and the susceptibility of the viewer to the type of change and nature of the development proposed. The overall sensitivity of the visual receptor to a particular development is described in this assessment as High, Medium or Low.

    - **Value of Views**: The value of public views, which is the focus of GLVIA3, will vary depending on the nature, location and context of the view and the recognised importance of the view. Considerations include cultural associations; designation or policy protection; views of or from landmarks; and/or the scenic quality of the view. It should be noted that the value attributed relates to the value of the view only (e.g. a National Trail is nationally valued for access, but not always for the available views from every section). In this assessment, the value attributed to visual amenity is described as: National, Regional or Community.

    - **Susceptibility of Visual Receptors**: Those living within view of the Proposed Development are usually regarded as the highest susceptibility group as well as those engaged in outdoor pursuits for whom landscape experience is the primary objective. The susceptibility of potential visual receptors will also vary depending on the activity of the receptor. For visual receptors, susceptibility and value are closely linked - the most valued views are also likely to be those where viewer's expectations will be highest. In this assessment, visual receptor susceptibility is defined in accordance with the criteria below.

      High - Local residents; tourists; people engaged in outdoor recreation focused on an appreciation of views including users of footpaths and quiet country lanes, beauty spots and picnic areas and people experiencing views to or from important features of physical, visual, cultural or historic interest.

      Medium - Local road users and travelers on trains. People engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape e.g. road cycling, nature conservation, golf and water based recreation.

      Low - Workers, users of facilities and commercial buildings (indoors) experiencing views from buildings. Road and rail users on fast moving commuting or trunk routes. Visual receptors where views are incidental to the activity and/or location.

29. Sensitivity is evaluated taking into account component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the table below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment is adopted. Note that a greater weight is intentionally attributed to the susceptibility of the visual receptor than to value. This is in recognition of the fact that relatively few views are specifically recognised through designation or cultural reference. This approach still acknowledges that value associations influence 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 of Visual Change

30. The magnitude of visual change arising from the Proposed Development is assessed in terms of its size or scale, geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced and its duration.

31. Representative viewpoints are used in the LVIA as 'samples' on which to base judgements of the scale of change experienced by visual receptors. The wider extent of the effect and its duration are not captured in the viewpoint analysis (as a viewpoint cannot capture these factors for an entire route or area). As duration and extent are necessary considerations in determining magnitude of change, judgements concerning magnitude and significance are provided for visual receptors and not for representative viewpoints. The only exception to this would be a specific viewpoint – where people visiting that location to look at the view are assessed as a visual receptor group in its own right.

32. With the exception of specific viewpoints (as noted above), each route (e.g. a footpath or road) and receptor group (e.g. a community or village) will encompass a range of possible views, which might vary from no view of the development to very clear, close views. Therefore, effects are described in such a way as to identify where views towards the development are likely to arise and what the scale and duration and extent of those views is likely to be. In some cases, this will be further informed by a nearby viewpoint and in others it will be informed with reference to ZTV studies, aerial photography and site visits. Each of these individual effects are then considered together in order to reach a judgement of the effects on the visual receptors along that route, or in that place.

33. The scale of change arising from the Proposed Development as experienced by a visual receptor group reflects the degree to which the nature of the views from that location would be changed taking into account:

    - The distance of the viewpoint from the development;
    - the degree to which the development is visible or screened;
    - the angle of view in relation to main receptor activity or main focus of the view;
    - the horizontal and vertical field of view occupied by the development; and
    - the extent and nature of other built development visible.

34. In this assessment, the scale of change in view is described as: Large, Medium, Small or Negligible.

35. The approach to assessing effects on views is to consider the full 360 degree view from any given receptor – not just those towards the development and/or shown in visualisations. It is assumed that the change would be seen in clear visibility and the assessment is carried out on that basis. Seasonal variation in visibility due to varying vegetation cover is also taken into account in all judgements. Where there are operational (and consented) developments considered as part of the baseline, the visual effects consider the effects of adding the Proposed Development to that baseline. Where appropriate, comments may be made on lighting and weather conditions.

36. For visual receptors moving through the landscape (e.g. road and footpath users), the length of their journey during which they would see the Proposed Development is reflected in the judgement of the

Geographic Extent of effects. In this assessment, the geographical extent of visual change is described as: Wide, Intermediate, Localised or Limited.

37. **Duration** reflects how long the change will last and judgements are framed in the same way as described above for landscape effects. In this assessment, the duration of the change would be considered:

    - **short term** when lasting less than 2 years;
    - **medium term** when lasting between 2 and 10 years;
    - **long term** when lasting between 10 and 40 years, and
    - **permanent** for more than 40 years.

38. Magnitude is considered taking into account the three contributory factors as illustrated by the diagrams in **Graphic 1** below.

Combining Scale of Change, Extent and Duration to Determine Magnitude of Landscape and Visual Effects

39. Scale of change 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.

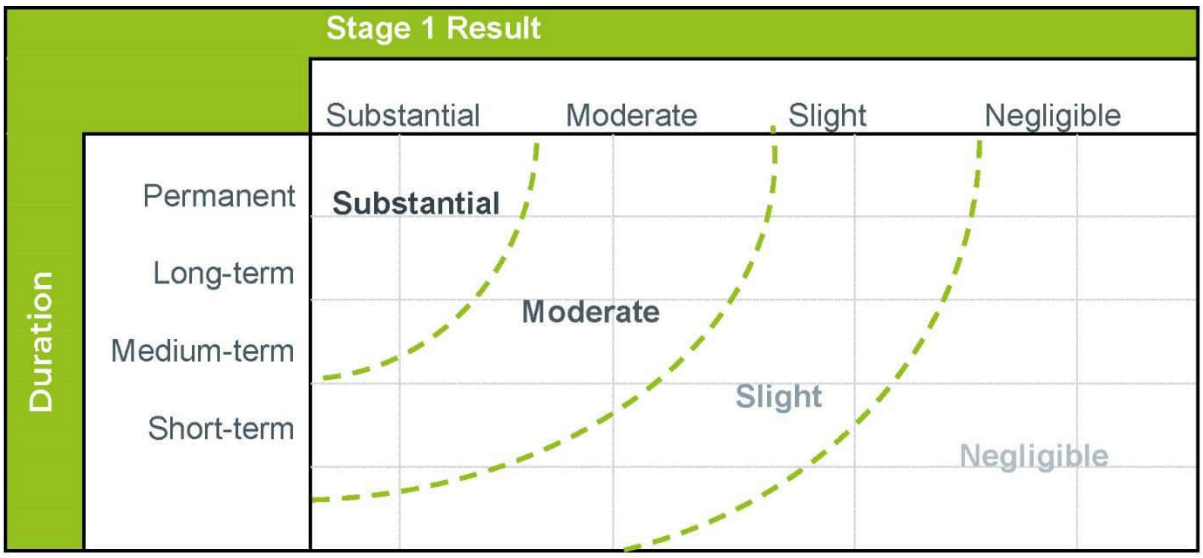
40. The diagrams presented below in **Graphic 1** illustrate in outline how these two modifying factors are considered in a two-stage process. A judgement is first formed about the scale of the change to the landscape or visual receptor. The geographic extent of the effect is then considered as a modifying influence in the first part of **Graphic 1** (Stage 1). The result or outcome of Stage 1 is then considered again in relation to the duration of the effect as illustrated in the second part of Plate 1 (Stage 2). The outcome of Stage 2 is the overall magnitude of effect judgement reported in the assessment. **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 magnitude judgement.

41. In this assessment, the magnitude of effects is described as Substantial, Moderate, Slight or Negligible. Where magnitude is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

Graphic 1 Combining Scale of Change, Extent and Duration to Determine Magnitude of Landscape and Visual Effects

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

Stage 2 - Modifying Influence of Duration on Magnitude of Effect



Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

42. The significance of any identified landscape or visual effect is described as Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible. These categories are based on the consideration of receptor sensitivity with the predicted magnitude of effect. The table below 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.

Significance		Magnitude of Effect			
		Substantial	**Moderate**	**Slight**	**Negligible**
Receptor Sensitivity	**High**	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible

43. Where the effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate, this is considered to be equivalent to a likely significant effect. Where 'Moderate' effects are predicted, professional judgement is applied to determine whether the effect is significant or not ensuring that the potential for significant effects to arise has been thoroughly considered and justification is provided for the judgement reached as appropriate. Effects of Moderate/ Minor, Minor, Minor/ Negligible or Negligible significance are considered to be not significant.

Beneficial/Adverse

44. 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. GLVIA3 indicates at paragraph 2.15 that this is a "*particularly challenging*" aspect of assessment, especially in the context of a changing landscape.

45. 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 Effects

46. In a broad generic sense, cumulative impacts "*result from the incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project*"[3] However, an assessment of cumulative effects should focus on whether there are any potential cumulative impacts which are reasonably foreseeable and which are likely to influence the decision making of the proposed development, rather than an assessment of every potential cumulative effect[4], which in practice means focusing on other nearby development proposals and the effects that might arise from the combined influence of those developments on landscape and visual receptors.

[3] GLVIA3 page 120, paragraph 7.1 quoting Hyder, 1999 ' *Guidelines for the assessment of indirect and cumulative impacts as well as impact interactions*'

[4] GLVIA3 page 121 paragraph 7.5.

47. As recommended by the NatureScot cumulative guidance, this assessment focusses on the "*additional cumulative change which would be brought about by the proposed development*"[5].

48. As noted above, operational developments are included in the baseline, consented development which are expected to be constructed, form part of the future baseline and will be included as such. However, where there is some uncertainty regarding the future construction of consented developments, they may be considered as the first scenario of the cumulative assessment.

49. Proposals in planning are considered where there is good reason to assume that the timing of decisions may be similar and significant cumulative effects are likely. The assessment of effects is considered within the cumulative assessment.

50. Proposals in scoping are noted but not considered within the cumulative assessment, as there is no certainty that these proposals will progress to planning submissions and the nature of the proposed schemes may be subject to change.

51. The assessment is based on the same landscape and visual baseline and receptor groups as the main LVIA, and the methodology is also the same in terms of forming and expressing judgements.

52. Cumulative effects on landscape receptors arise from combined direct and/or indirect effects on the same receptor – such as two developments within the same character area; or one development within, and one visible from, a designated area.

53. Cumulative effects on visual receptors arise either from two (or more) developments, both being visible from the same place; or from sequential views as people travel through the landscape.

54. In order to simplify what may otherwise be a complex assessment, where appropriate, the following approaches are also used:

    - The cumulative assessment considers scenarios within which developments may be 'grouped' - for instance two nearby cumulative proposals may be considered in one scenario if it is considered that the cumulative effects arising if one or both are developed are likely to be similar.
    - Receptors judged to receive Negligible or Slight-Negligible magnitude effects are not considered for cumulative effects on the basis that any significant effects arising would primarily be caused by the cumulative developments and would be unlikely to be contributed to by the proposed development.
    - Only those receptors judged likely to experience effects from the cumulative development(s) being considered within a given scenario are described within that scenario.

55. Qualitative assessment of design and aesthetic considerations arising as a result of cumulative development, and/or considerations set out within local guidance provided in relation to cumulative development, is also provided where relevant.

[5] Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments, NatureScot, 2021

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
CLVIA	Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Cumulative Effects	Cumulative effects are the additional effects arising from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Direct Effect	A direct (or primary) effect may be defined as an effect that is directly attributable to the development.[6]
GLVIA3	*'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition'*, published jointly by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013.
Indirect Effect	An indirect (or secondary) effect is an effect that results indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effect, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects. [7]
Key Characteristics	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Landscape Capacity	The amount of change which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate without significant detrimental effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change proposed.
Landscape Character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. 8
Landscape Character Areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. [9]
Landscape Character Types	These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.
Landscape Effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. [10]
Landscape Elements	Individual components which make up the landscape such as trees and hedges.

[6] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p155

[7] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p156

[8] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p156

[9] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

[10] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

Term	Definition
Landscape Features	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines.
Landscape Quality or Condition	This is a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which a typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. [11]
Landscape Receptor	Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Landscape Resource	The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value.
Landscape Value	The relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. [12]
Level of Effect	Determined through the combination of sensitivity of the receptor and the proposed magnitude of change brought about by the development.
Magnitude (of effect)	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Mitigation	Measures including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development.
Photomontage	A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
Residential Visual Amenity	A collective term describing the views and visual amenity from a residential property, relating to the type, nature, extent and quality of views that may be experienced from the property and its 'domestic curtilage' including gardens and access driveway. Residential Visual Amenity is only one component of the overall Residential Amenity, others being for example noise, shadow flicker and access amongst others.
Residual Effects	Potential environmental effects remaining after mitigation.
Sense of Place	The essential character and spirit of an area: *genius loci* literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. [13]
Significant Effects	It is a requirement of the EIA Regulations to determine the likely significant effects of development on the environment which should relate to the level of an effect and the type of effect. Where possible significant effects should be mitigated. The significance of an effect gives an indication as to the degree of importance (based on the magnitude of the effect and sensitivity of the receptor) that should be attached to the impact described. Whether an effect should be considered significant is not absolute and requires the application of professional judgement.

[11] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

[12] The Landscape Institute; Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

[13] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

Term	Definition
Type or Nature of Effect	Whether an effect is direct, indirect, temporary or permanent, positive (beneficial), neutral or negative (adverse) or cumulative.
Visual amenity	Value of a particular place in terms of what is seen by visual receptors taking account of all available views and the total visual experience.
Visual Effect	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. [14]
Visual Receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Visualisation	Computer simulation, photomontage or other technique to illustrate the appearance of a development. [15]
Wildness	A quality of appearing to be remote, inaccessible and rugged with little evidence of human influence.
Wireframe or Wireline	A computer generated line drawing of the DTM (Digital Terrain Model) and the proposed development from a known location.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or an effect on visual amenity. [16]

[14] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p158

[15] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p158

[16] The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p158

APPENDIX 5.2: VISUAL METHODOLOGY

Guidance and Standards Used

1. All Visibility Maps (ZTVs), photography, visualisations (wirelines and photomontages) and their graphical presentation have been undertaken in line with the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals.

The Computer Model

2. To generate wireline visualisations and photomontages, computer models of the proposed site and study area are produced. Sketchup is used to create a 3D computer model of the Proposed Development representing the specified geometry and position of the Proposed Development, and the existing landform (terrain). The landform information is derived from 5m resolution terrain data which covers the extent of the site and viewpoints where required (either by local guidance, or where we judge it is needed for accurate modelling).

3. The computer models include the entire study area, and all calculations take account of the effects caused by atmospheric refraction and the Earth's curvature. The computer models do not take account of the screening effects of any intervening objects such as vegetation, buildings or other non-terrain features, unless expressly stated.

4. The computer models combine the existing landform with the model of the Proposed Development and detailed data collected in the field to enable the output of accurate visual and graphical information and associated data for presentation as finished figures.

Visibility Maps: Zone of Theoretical Visibility

5. Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps have been generated using GIS to assist in identifying areas where visibility would not occur as well as viewpoint selection, illustrate areas from where part or all of the Proposed Development may be visible and to indicate its potential influence in the wider landscape.

6. Specifically, ZTVs have been generated using the Viewshed routine in the Visibility Analysis plugin for QGIS software.

7. Two types of ZTV have been presented as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).

- **Standard Screening ZTV** – which takes account of buildings and blocks of woodland in the landscape; and
- **Detailed Screening ZTV** - which also takes account of hedgerows and other vegetation over 2.5m in height.

8. The Standard Screening ZTV shows the maximum theoretical extent of visibility for the structures modelled (as indicated on the ZTV) taking into account the screening effect of topography, buildings and substantial blocks of woodland. In order to generate the Standard Screening ZTV a digital surface model (DSM) has been derived from Ordnance survey Terrain 5 DTM data with the locations of woodland and buildings taken from the OS Open Map Local dataset. Buildings are modelled at an assumed height of 7.5m and woodland at an assumed height of 15m. Visibility on the ZTV output is illustrated using a 5m x 5m grid size. The ZTV does not take into account some localised features

such as hedgerows or individual trees and therefore tends to give an exaggerated impression of the extent of visibility. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will be significantly less than suggested on the plan.

9. The Detailed Screening ZTV provides an extra layer of detail as it takes account of buildings and vegetation in the landscape (over 2.5m in height) not captured in the Standard Screening ZTV. In order to generate the Detailed Screening ZTV a detailed digital surface model (DSM) has been derived from the DEFRA LIDAR 2020 2m digital terrain model (DTM). The locations of buildings are taken from the OS Open Map Local dataset. Woodland and other vegetation (over 2.5m in height) is taken from the Environment Agency's Vegetation Object Model (VOM) dataset. Heights of buildings and woodland are taken from the DEFRA LIDAR 2022 2m DSM height data. Visibility on the ZTV output is illustrated using a 2m x 2m grid size. Whilst the ZTV does not take into account some localised features such as vegetation below 2.5m in height, ground truthing has consistently found these ZTVs to be considerably more accurate than Standard Screening ZTVs. Nevertheless, it is important to understand their limitations. Firstly, it should be noted that hedgerows in the UK are typically deciduous and in winter months may not act as an absolute visual barrier – filtered views through hedgerows are sometime possible. Secondly, it should also be noted that hedgerows are often cut lower (below 2.5m) in winter months and depending on when the LIDAR data was captured visibility may extend further in winter months.

10. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will still typically be less than suggested on the plan. However, the Detailed Screening ZTV has been extensively tested/ground truthed in the field in winter and it is the professional opinion of the assessors that they provide a reasonable and accurate reflection of potential visibility of the Proposed Development.

Visualisations: Annotated Photos (Type 1)

11. Baseline photography has been undertaken at each representative viewpoint location using a high-quality digital SLR camera with full frame sensor and a 50mm fixed focal length lens – in accordance with the relevant guidance identified above. The resulting photos are combined into panoramas using PTGui photo stitching software and saved as planar projection images. Panoramic images are presented on wide format sheets, in accordance with Technical Guidance Note 06/19, and are annotated to indicate the extent of the Proposed Development and highlight any important features within the view.

Visualisations: Photomontages (Type 3)

12. Baseline photography has been undertaken at each agreed representative viewpoint location using a high-quality digital SLR camera with full frame sensor and a 50mm fixed focal length lens, in combination with a panoramic head equipped tripod at 1.5m height Above Ground Level (AGL) unless stated otherwise – in accordance with the relevant guidance identified above. The resulting photos are combined into panoramas using PTGui photo stitching software and saved as cylindrical projection versions for use in visualisation production.

13. The Sketchup computer model is used to generate a perspective view from each viewpoint of the Proposed Development, using landform in the computer model and the specified geometry and position of the Proposed Development. Once matched, a wireline drawing is produced from the computer model which can then be overlaid on the photograph and used to illustrate the accuracy of the match. This can also be used to visualise components of the Proposed Development and cumulative developments where required.

14. To produce a photomontage, the above wireline is combined with the photographic panorama using Adobe Photoshop. Detailed viewpoint information as recorded on site (e.g. GPS grid co-ordinates;

ground level information; compass bearings; and any other known references; etc) is used to enable the accurate alignment of the photographs with the computer model. A perspective match is achieved between the computer generated wireline and the photographs by iteratively adjusting the parameters until all the major features in the image are aligned satisfactorily. The Proposed Development is then rendered using V-Raytaking into account the time and conditions occurring on the day of the photography to provide a realistic image. Where required, elements such as proposed tree planting, tree removal and other site infrastructure are also modelled and rendered using Sketchup and V-Rayand incorporated into the montage using Adobe Photoshop.

15. A minimal amount of image processing is undertaken. Where necessary, the contrast between the background photograph and the Proposed Development is increased to ensure that the development is apparent in the photomontage, as far as possible. It should be noted that there is an element of professional judgement inherent in the illustration of the changes represented by any photomontage.

16. The information shown on the visualisations and within the LVIA is generated via the computer model or from mathematical calculations.

17. The completed base photography, wirelines, photomontages and accompanying data are then presented as figures using desktop publishing/graphic design software to meet the relevant guidance requirements.

Assumed Vegetation Growth Rates

18. The following assumptions have been made about the growth rate of newly planted hedgerows and trees in the visualisations:

- Newly planted hedgerows and woodland/shrub will be planted as young transplants or ‘whips’. In Year 1 after construction the planting stock would typically be approximately 0.6m to 0.8m high and contained within tree protected tubes.
- Hedgerows in Year 10 will be 3.5m in height. This assumes that the plants do not put on much growth in the first planting season and then put on an average of 0.4m growth each subsequent year. This means that all new hedgerows are considered to be at full maturity in Year 10 and are maintained at 3.5m by ongoing management (except where there are limitations such as overhead lines or overshadowing).
- Except where vegetation is managed at a specific height (e.g. hedgerows) it is assumed that trees and scrub will continue to grow naturally over the remaining period of the Proposed Development.

Data Accuracy

19. The Ordnance Survey (OS) provides accuracy figures for the following terrain data products expressed statistically as root-mean-square error (RMSE) in metres:

    - OS Terrain®50 (50m resolution): 4m RMSE.
    - OS Terrain®5 (5m resolution): Urban and major communication routes 1.5m RMSE; Rural 2.5m RMSE; Mountain and moorland 2.5m RMSE.

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APPENDIX 5.3: RELEVANT LEGISLATION, NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

European Landscape Convention (ELC)

1. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is an international treaty dedicated to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. It was signed by the UK government in 2006 and introduced in March 2007.

2. The ELC contains 18 articles which, collectively, promote landscape protection, management and planning as well as European cooperation on landscape issues.

3. Article 1 defines the terms used in the ELC including the term 'landscape' which has been adopted for the purposes of this assessment.

4. Articles 5 and 6 commit signatory states to a number of actions which are designed to help ensure compliance with the overarching aims of the ELC. These include the need to recognise landscapes in law; to establish policies aimed at landscape planning, protection and management; and the integration of landscape into other policy areas.

5. The ELC is a convention of the Council of Europe, not the EU. Therefore, Brexit does not affect the status of this convention, and at the time of writing (February 2025), the UK remains a signatory.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

6. The primary statutory protection for National Landscapes in England and Wales (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)) is derived from the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

7. Section 85 (1) of the Act states that:

   'In exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty.'

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2024

8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies and how these should be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. It was last updated in December 2024 (with amendments in February 2025).

9. Section 12 of the NPPF focuses on good design and notes the following at paragraph 131:

   'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.'

10. At paragraph 135, The NPPF states (*inter alia*):

    'Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

    a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place….'

11. Section 15 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 187 states that (*inter alia*):

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, … (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including … trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate….'

12. Paragraph 188 notes that: *'Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites'*.

13. Paragraph 189 further advises that *'great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*

'The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

Planning Practice Guidance for Natural Environment, February 2025

14. This appendix covers the key issues in implementing policy to protect biodiversity and landscape fabric (including green infrastructure, Ancient Woodland and veteran trees), and contains a section on landscape. Paragraph 036 notes that:

'Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed.'

15. Paragraph 036 also notes that:

'The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully'.

16. In respect of designated landscapes, Paragraph 039 confirms that:

'Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 and section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (as amended by section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) require that 'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National Parks and

National Landscapes, relevant authorities 'must seek to further' the purposes for which these areas are designated.

Also, that:

'This duty…. is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or National Landscape boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection.'

17. With regards to Management Plans for National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Paragraph 040[1] clarifies that:

'Management plans for National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty do not form part of the statutory development plan, but they help to set out the strategic context for development. They provide evidence of the value and special qualities of these areas, provide a basis for cross-organisational work to support the purposes of their designation and show how management activities contribute to their protection, enhancement and enjoyment.'

18. With regards to development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Paragraph 041[1] reiterates that:

'The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that the scale and extent of development in these areas should be limited, in view of the importance of conserving and enhancing their landscapes and scenic beauty.'

19. This paragraph further indicates that all development within nationally designated landscapes:

'*will need to be located and designed in a way that reflects their status as landscapes of the highest quality*'

20. Paragraph 042[1] addresses development within the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and states:

'Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account.'

Planning Practice Guidance: Design - process and tools, October 2019

21. This document sets out how well-designed places can be achieved *'by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process'* and notes that it should be read alongside the National Design Guide. It reiterates NPPF guidance, noting that:

'development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design

[1] Paragraphs 040, 041 and 042 in Natural Environment continue to use Area / Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in their respective title and text and are therefore unchanged in this document.

guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.'

22. It further sets out ten characteristics that contribute to good design and these are expanded on in the National Design Guide (January 2021).

Planning Practice Guidance: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy, August 2023

23. In considering suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy, Paragraph 005 notes that:

'Natural England has used Landscape Character Assessment to identify 159 National Character Areas in England which provide a national level database. Landscape Character Assessment carried out at a county or district level may provide a more appropriate scale for assessing the likely landscape and visual impacts of individual proposals.'

24. Paragraph 008 notes that:

'Local planning authorities should not rule out otherwise acceptable renewable energy developments through inflexible rules on buffer zones or separation distances. Other than when dealing with set back distances for safety, distance of itself does not necessarily determine whether the impact of a proposal is unacceptable. Distance plays a part, but so does the local context including factors such as topography, the local environment and near-by land uses.'

25. In relation to large scale ground mounted solar photovoltaic farms the guidance notes at paragraph 013 that:

'The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.'

26. Paragraph 013 directs local planning authorities to consider (inter alia):

'solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use';

'the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses';

'the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun';

'the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing'; and

'the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges'.

27. The guidance notes the need for cumulative impacts to be considered, whilst also noting that:

'in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero.'

APPENDIX 5.4 LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

The sensitivity of the landscape character areas which may receive significant landscape effects are assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each proposed development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed development. The assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the Proposed Development, with additional comments regarding the solar site where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (LCASOVWH) (quotes shown in italics) as well as from local sources and site assessment.

It should be noted that the solar site (excluding the cable corridor of the Proposed Development to the existing substation at Harlesford Solar) is wholly within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes. This LCA is a geographically large area which extends far beyond the solar site and study area, approximately 6 km north-east and 17 km south-west and therefore some of the descriptive text in the LCASOVWH is not specifically relevant to the solar site.

As referenced in the LVIA, LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes can be split into two parts, defined by the line of the B4009 with the steeper footslopes to the south-east of this road and the lower lying, rolling landscape to the north-west and in this Appendix considered as:

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

Further to this, the discussion of landscape sensitivity below specifically focuses on the tract of this LCA (north-west of the B4009) 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.

The tables presented in this appendix are based on guidance provided within LI TGN 02/21 - specifically table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009)

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	This defined part of LCA6B is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape.	National

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Described as *"a shelf of rolling chalk landform"* with some watercourses flowing from chalk springs present in the landscape although these are *"limited to small streams which flow north-west to join the Thames, via Watlington, Shirburn and Lewknor."* Whilst these are of local ecological interest, they are primarily of community value. There are no ecological designations or areas of ancient woodland within the defined tract.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Lewknor is covered by a Conservation Area and contains a number of Grade II Listed Buildings, and St Margaret's Church which is Grade I Listed but this is not intervisible with the solar site. Despite their status as heritage assets, these are of local heritage interest and therefore of community value.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	This is a *"generally large-scale intensive arable cultivation, bounded by a comparatively intact structure of hedges with hedgerow trees, and some linear belts of planted woodland. Some hedgerows have been replaced by post and wire fencing or are missing entirely."* The road network is a visual and aural detractor within the landscape.	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	The LCASOVWH notes that *"Many villages were established by Saxon times (including Pyrton, Watlington and Lewknor) and the basic pattern of nucleated settlements clustered around a church has changed very little."* Although *"a more linear form has developed in some villages"*. This Saxon era influence is of interest within the villages themselves but does not create a cultural association that influences the wider landscape.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the	This is a *"Predominantly large-scale open arable farmland"* with field boundaries in varied condition.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
	Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	The previously described watercourses formed a focus for rural settlement and Watlington, Shirburn and Lewknor are identified as "*historic 'spring-line villages'*" Only Lewknor is within the defined tract of the landscape.	
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	In addition to the Public Rights of Way network the Oxfordshire Way runs through the western fringes of the defined tract.	Regional / Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	LCA 6B is described as *"An open and exposed landscape with long, panoramic views. The chalk escarpment of the Chilterns provides a strong wooded backdrop."* However, the Chilterns are in views to the south and east. The road network has a strong presence in views to the north and west with the LCASOVWH noting that *"the M40, A40, ..are visual and aural detractors in the landscape."*	Regional
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	This is a busy landscape with a *"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."* The road network also contributes negatively to light pollution.	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	Although there is a strong wooded backdrop provided by the Chilterns, this is not within LCA 6B. Intact hedgerows, linear tree belts and small watercourses provide some ecological connectivity but not a landscape which provides specific valuable function beyond food production.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Overall Judgement of Value				**Community**
Susceptibility				
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	As previously described, this is large-scale arable farmland. The M40 is a large-scale linear development running through the landscape.	Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	This is a *"smoothly rolling landform"* which *"generally ascends"* to the south.	Low
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	Described as having *"Scattered small blocks of woodland, and linear belts and clumps of trees provide some enclosure in an otherwise very open landscape."*	Medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover or simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	As previously described, this is generally a large-scale landscape in intensive arable cultivation.	Low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Lewknor has *"a strong local vernacular of timber-framing with wattle and daub for the oldest buildings; and brick and flint. Roofs are typically red tiles with occasional thatch."* However, the road network has a wider influence on built-form within the landscape, including the B4009 which provides access and egress to Lewknor as well as Junction 6 of the M40. The LCASOVWH also notes that *"Large-scale farm buildings are also prominent features in the open landscape."*	Low

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	The LCASOVWH describes how *"The open landscape results in high intervisibility with the Chiltern Hills to the south and east".* Layers of vegetation in the landscape and localised landform contain views to the north and west with distant horizons diffused. In and around the solar site, views to the east and south are intermittently contained by intervening vegetation and intervisibility with the Chilterns is intermittent.	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	This is a smoothly rolling landscape. Although *"The wooded chalk escarpment of the Chilterns forms a strong defining backdrop to views to the south and east"* the backdrop in views to the north and west do not have a distinctive horizon.	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				**Low**
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				**Low**

Adjacent Landscape: LCA 6B Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (south-east of the B4009)

The discussion of landscape sensitivity below specifically focuses on the tract of this LCA (south-east of the B4009) broadly defined by the B4009 to the north-west and the boundary of LCA 6B to the south-east, just beyond the study area's 2 km radius to the south-west and the study area's 3 km radius to the north-east.

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	Much of this defined part of LCA6B is within the Chilterns National Landscape.	National
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Within this defined tract there are *"Small linear belts, clumps and blocks of priority habitat deciduous woodland and tree cover are scattered across the area."* However, none of these are ancient woodland or within an ecological designation and not all are within the National Landscape.	Regional
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Although there are a number of Grade II Listed Buildings within this defined tract, these are of local heritage interest and therefore of community value.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	This is a *"generally large-scale intensive arable cultivation, bounded by a comparatively intact structure of hedges with hedgerow trees, and some linear belts of planted woodland. Some hedgerows have been replaced by post and wire fencing or are missing entirely."* The road network is a visual and aural detractor within the landscape.	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	The LCASOVWH notes that *"The Saxon period also accounts for some other patterning in the landscape, with the boundaries of 'strip parishes' (long, linear land holdings which run up into the Chiltern Hills"*. This Saxon era influence is of local interest but amongst the more widespread, intensive arable fields	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
			and road network does not create a cultural association that influences the wider landscape.	
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	This is a *"Predominantly large-scale open arable farmland"* with field boundaries in varied condition. Settlement is sparse within the defined tract with several scattered farmsteads present. Most of these have medium to large, modern agricultural outbuildings some of which are associated with horse racing.	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	In addition to the Public Rights of Way network there are *"Strong recreational access, including promoted routes The Ridgeway".* The Ridgeway is a national trail.	National
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	LCA 6B is described as *"An open and exposed landscape with long, panoramic views. The chalk escarpment of the Chilterns provides a strong wooded backdrop."* However, the Chilterns are in views to the south. The road network has a strong presence in views to the west and north. The LCASOVWH notes that *"the M40, A40, ..are visual and aural detractors in the landscape."*	Regional
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	There are villages along the line of the B4009, as well as the road itself which indicate the level of human activity across the landscape. The M40 is listed as a busy road which creates *"noise and visual intrusions and fragment the landscape."*	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship	Although there is a strong wooded backdrop provided by the Chilterns, this is not within LCA 6B. Although Small linear belts, clumps and blocks of priority habitat	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
	important relationship with national landscape designation.	that is important to a national landscape designation.	deciduous woodland and tree cover provide some ecological connectivity this is not a landscape which provides specific valuable function beyond food production.	
Overall Judgement of Value				**Regional**

Susceptibility				
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	As previously described, this is large-scale arable farmland. The M40 is a large-scale linear development running through the landscape.	Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	The landform rises quite quickly *"where it meets the foot of the scarp around 140 metres Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)."*	Medium
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	Described as having *"Scattered small blocks of woodland, and linear belts and clumps of trees provide some enclosure in an otherwise very open landscape."*	Medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover or simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	As previously described, this is generally a large-scale landscape in intensive arable cultivation.	Low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	The road network has a wider influence on built-form within the landscape, including the B4009 which provides access and egress to Junction 6 of the M40. The LCASOVWH also notes that *"Large-scale farm buildings are also prominent features in the open landscape."* The Knapp reservoir has a height of	Low

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
			between 150 and 155m which sits higher than most of the surrounding landform within this tract.	
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	The LCASOVWH describes how *"The open landscape results in high intervisibility with the Chiltern Hills to the south and east".* Although the landform within this defined tract offers elevated views to the north and west these views are not always panoramic with containment provided by intervening landform (both natural and man-made) and both foreground and distant vegetation.	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	Although *"The wooded chalk escarpment of the Chilterns forms a strong defining backdrop to views to the south and east"* the backdrop in views to the north and west do not have a distinctive horizon.	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				**Medium/Low**
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				**Medium**

Adjacent Landscape: LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale

Immediately adjacent to the solar site's eastern, north-eastern boundary is LCA 11C Eastern Upper Vale. This LCA is a geographically large area which extends far beyond the solar site and study area, approximately 6 km north-east and 10 km north-west and therefore some of the descriptive text in the LCASOVWH is not specifically relevant to the solar site. The discussion of landscape sensitivity below specifically focuses on the 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.

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	LCA 11C *"Forms part of the setting to the Chilterns National Landscape, with a high level of intervisibility with the east of the area."*	Regional
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Within this LCA *"Small watercourses cross the landscape, feeding into more substantial tributaries of the River Thame and River Thames."* The underlying geology is dominated by heavy blue-grey Gault Clay.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Within this defined tract, there are several Grade II Listed Buildings in Postcombe to the north of the A40. These are of local heritage interest and therefore of community value.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	Described as a *"Predominantly large-scale arable farmland, with some pasture on lower ground and along watercourses"* with hedgerows *"in variable condition, with some species-rich hedgerows distributed throughout the character area."* The A40 has a strong influence within the defined tract. Within the fields immediately to the east of the solar site, there are several agricultural outbuildings *"... which are visually intrusive and dilute the traditional rural character of the landscape."*	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	Within this defined tract of the landscape there are no cultural associations noted in the LCASOVWH.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	This is a landscape with a *"Predominantly rural, agricultural character of mixed arable and pastoral fields interspersed with hedgerow trees"* and although it is described as providing *"a rural landscape setting to villages"* this is not the case within the vicinity of the solar site where the primary influence is the A40, large agricultural outbuildings and incongruous built edge of Postcombe.	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	Within the defined tract, there are several routes within the Public Rights of Way network including the Lower Icknield Way which provide local amenity.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	LCA 11C is described as *"Predominantly rural character, but some localised disruption from main roads (including M40 and A40), overhead power lines and built development."* The A40 forms the boundary of the defined tract of LCA 11C, and the solar site, and existing views towards the fields within the solar site are influenced by the road.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The LCASOVWH states that *"Pockets of tranquillity exist away from settlements and main roads"* but the sense of tranquillity and remoteness is limited by the presence of the M40 and A40 with the latter described as a *"busy transport corridor"*.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	This is an agricultural landscape predominantly in arable use with some pastoral use. In combination with the hedgerows, the previously described small watercourses and *"Frequent scattered mixed woodlands"* these features provide some ecological connectivity, but this is not a landscape which provides specific valuable function beyond food production.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				**Community**

Susceptibility				
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	As previously described, this is large-scale arable farmland. The Proposed Development will be outside of LCA 11C.	Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	This is a landscape with a *"gently rolling topography"* which *"slopes down both to the north... and south..."*	Low
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	Described as having an *"Open to semi-enclosed character, with long views from higher ground, and a greater sense of enclosure within the more wooded farmland areas."*	Medium/Low
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover or simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	*"Land use is predominantly intensive arable cultivation within a pattern of large-scale rectilinear fields."*	Low

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Although some of the properties within Postcombe, to the east of the A40, reflect the common vernacular of *"Red brick and tile roofs"* there is no intervisibility with the solar site. Built environment in proximity to the solar site is primarily defined by the A40 and large agricultural outbuildings and 'borrowed in' from the incongruous built edge of Postcombe (to the west of the A40).	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	Although *"The eastern side of the vale has strong intervisibility with the Chilterns National Landscape, and forms part of its wider setting."* Views towards the solar site are orientated westwards and not in the direction of the Chilterns. Current views to the west (and towards the solar site) are visually contained and short-range due to a combination of rising landform to the west of the A40 and linear tree belts within the solar site.	Medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	This landscape has previously been described as a gently rolling topography.	Low
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				**Low**
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				**Low**

Adjacent Landscape: LCA 2A Wooded Chalk Escarpment

The discussion of landscape sensitivity below specifically focuses on the tract of this LCA broadly defined by the study area's 3 km radius to the north-east and south-west, the boundary of LCA 6B to the north-west and the boundary of LCA 2A to the south-east.

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	This character area is wholly within the Chilterns National Landscape.	National
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	There are extensive areas of Ancient Woodland with several Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) including Aston Rowant which is "one of the best remaining examples of UK lowland juniper scrub on chalk and ash-beech-yew woodland."	National
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	This is a sparsely settled landscape and within the defined tract there are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	As befitting its status as a National Landscape, it is a fully intact landscape and *"Much of the area is owned and managed by Natural England (including Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve (NNR)) and the National Trust."*	National
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	The LCASOVWH notes that *"Time depth is provided by a general lack of development and predominance of Ancient Woodland."*	National
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or	This is a *"Distinctive steep escarpment..., comprising a smooth and well-defined chalk landform heavily incised with spurs and valleys."*	National

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
		with an important relationship to a settlement.		
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	*"Excellent access along public rights of way, with long distance and promoted routes including… The Ridgeway… Areas of Open Access Land are also found within the woodlands."*	National
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	*"The height of the escarpment offers long distance and panoramic views to the west and north across Oxfordshire."*	National
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	Described as *"A rural and tranquil character"* although The M40 motorway is a visual and aural detractor.	National / Regional
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	*"The thin, calcareous soils on steep slopes are unsuited to cultivation. The landform is blanketed in Priority Habitat 'deciduous woodland', predominately beech-yew, including extensive areas of Ancient Woodland. Species-rich chalk grassland, mixed chalk scrub and juniper are found in the unwooded areas."*	National
Overall Judgement of Value				**National**

Susceptibility				
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	This character area will not be a receiving landscape. At its nearest point, the Proposed Development will be located over 1.4 km to the north-west with its perception of scale reduced at this distance. The M40	Medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
			is a large-scale linear development running through the landscape.	
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	*"The Wooded Chalk Escarpment is a prominent belt of steeply sloping land towards the western edge of the Chilterns National Landscape"*	High
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	*"Long distance views … contrast with a sense of enclosure within wooded areas."*	High / Medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover or simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	*"Although it has the typically smooth and well-defined profile of chalk landform, the escarpment is heavily incised with spurs and valleys, which give it a more complex form and character."*	High
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Settlement is described as sparse which is the case within the defined tract and with no Listed Buildings present this would imply an absence of traditional built character. The LCASOVWH notes that *"The M40 motorway is a prominent feature where it carves a route through the chalk scarp at the Stokenchurch Gap."* With the motorway a visual and aural detractor.	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	There are *"Long distance views to the east and across Oxfordshire to the west and north from the highest points."*	High
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	Within this defined tract, there are strong features and focal points however, views out towards the west these are long distance over a low-lying, predominantly gently undulating landscape that does not have a distinctive landform or horizon. Recently constructed solar schemes at Cornwell and Harlesford will be visible to the north and north-west beyond Adwell Cop.	Medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				**High**
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				**High**

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APPENDIX 5.5 VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS

Introduction

1. A viewpoint assessment has been carried out from a selection of key representative viewpoint locations to inform the assessment of the likely magnitude and significance of landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development.

2. Following desk-top analysis, site survey work and consultation with Vale of White Horse Council, a total of 18 viewpoint locations were selected to represent the main landscape and visual receptors found in the study area.

3. The locations of the selected viewpoints are shown in **Figures 5.4** and **5.5**. Details for each viewpoint are provided below.

4. Annotated photosheets are presented for each viewpoint, in a separately bound document **Figure 5.**8, to illustrate the existing view at each viewpoint location and the likely extent of the Proposed Development within the view. A summary of the viewpoint analysis is provided in Table 5.5 in Chapter 5.

5. This viewpoint assessment describes the baseline view and considers the nature of the predicted change in the view. The scale of change as described in this analysis is then reported in the Visual Effects section of the LVIA. The wider extent of the effect (beyond the individual viewpoint considered), and its duration, are not captured in the viewpoint analysis (as a single viewpoint cannot capture extent or duration). The scale, extent and duration are factors in the overall judgement on magnitude of change, therefore judgements on magnitude of change and overall level of effect and significance are also provided in the main assessment.

6. The visual assessment takes into account the screening effect of intervening landform, vegetation and built form and the potential for changes to those baseline features. It assumes clear weather conditions; although the influence of different seasons, weather, sunlight and visibility conditions have been considered, where relevant.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
1 (Figure 5.8a)	**Salt Lane** (Local road between Postcombe and South Weston)	View from a field access gate adjacent to Salt Lane orientated south-eastwards across a large, irregular shaped agricultural field. Although the Chilterns form a backdrop, the lower lying area is a rolling landform of large fields mostly under arable cultivation. A combination of field boundary vegetation, amenity planting and vegetation adjacent to a local watercourse filter and screen views across this low-lying landscape. Large-scale agricultural outbuildings are visible in view to the south-west. The M40 motorway is an aural and visual detractor within the view. The Stokenchurch Communications Tower, within the Chilterns, is a visual landmark.	The solar site's western parcel will be in the foreground field. Infrastructure within the field will screen views to the south and the M40 and much of the Chilterns will not be visible. The field boundary adjacent to Salt Lane is well established with a mix of hedgerow and semi-mature trees. Views of the solar site from Salt Lane either side of the access will be heavily filtered in winter and screened in summer. Mitigation planting is proposed within the field boundary vegetation as required to infill current gaps.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Infrastructure within the solar site will introduce incongruous features while simultaneously obscuring existing detractors, such as the M40 and large-scale agricultural buildings, and views of the Chilterns. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself however it will not be discernible within the background of the view.

2 **(Figures 5.8b – 5.8e)**	**Footpath 277/7/10 by primary transmission pole** (Footpath route between Postcombe and Lewknor)	Three hundred and sixty degree view from Footpath 277/7/10 approximately 0.16 km to the south of Postcombe. The route commences from Salt Lane, passing between residential properties, after which it follows the line of low voltage transmission poles running through the field. Views to the south and west are contained by a combination of localised landform and linear tree belts running along the field's western and southern boundaries. The Chilterns are predominantly filtered (in winter) by the intervening trees in views to the south. A woodland block to the west and north-west creates screening in these directions with the brow of Adwell Cop discernible. The developed edge of Postcombe, comprising a mix of residential property styles, agricultural and commercial buildings, contains views to the north. Although views to the east and south-east are not contained, the A40, an aural and visual detractor, runs adjacent to the field's eastern edge and	This field is within the solar site's eastern parcel. 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. Other than along the line of the footpath, views across this field will be screened by infrastructure. Views of the A40 will also be screened. Hedgerow planting is proposed adjacent to the security fence to retain as much of the offset as possible. Following establishment (5-10 years) will filter views of the fence line and infrastructure. A woodland block is also proposed in the north-west corner of this field. The existing field access adjacent to the A40 will be used as access for all of the solar site's eastern parcel. The existing field boundary hedgerow will be translocated and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay requirements. As part of this translocation, the hedgerow will be infilled as required.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Infrastructure within the solar site will introduce additional incongruous features while simultaneously obscuring existing detractors, such as the A40 and views of the Chilterns to the south-east. Low voltage transmission poles will remain unobscured. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself however it will not be discernible within the background of views to the south-east.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
		although not visible, the M40 is an additional aural detractor.	There will be no visibility of the solar site's western parcel.		

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
3 **(Figures 5.8f – 5.8i)**	**Footpath 277/7/10** (Footpath route between Postcombe and Lewknor)	Three hundred and sixty degree view from Footpath 277/7/10 approximately 0.7 km to the south of Postcombe. The route continues to follow the line of low voltage transmission poles running through the field. Views of the surrounding landscape are filtered (in winter) by linear tree belts running along the field's northern, eastern and southern boundaries. Rising landform to the north contains views in this direction. The Chilterns are predominantly filtered by the intervening trees in views to the south. Views to the west are mostly open except where the footpath passes to the east of an existing section of hedgerow. Views of traffic along the M40 are mostly unfiltered. Adwell Cop is visible to the north-west of the view. The M40 motorway is an aural and visual detractor within the view. The Stokenchurch Communications Tower, within the Chilterns, is a visual landmark.	This field is within the solar site's eastern parcel. 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. Other than along the line of the footpath, views across this field will be screened by infrastructure. Views of the M40 will also be screened. The existing hedgerow adjacent to the west side of the footpath will be extended to run the full length of the route. Following establishment (5-10 years) it will filter views of the infrastructure to the west.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Infrastructure within the solar site will introduce additional incongruous features while simultaneously obscuring the M40 and the western parcel and views of the Chilterns to the east and south-east. Low voltage transmission poles will remain unobscured. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself. Views of the Chilterns, where currently discernible above the tree line will be obscured in views to the east and south-east. Views along the line of the footpath will remain open and in the context of the low voltage transmission poles.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
4 **(Figure 5.8j)**	**Footpath 277/6/10 within field adjacent to A40** (Section of the Footpath 0.1 km east of Postcombe)	Footpath 277/6/10 runs east from the junction of the A40 and Chalford Road towards Aston Rowant. The initial 0.4 km of the route passes through fields in pastoral and equestrian use with the remnants of post and rail timber fencing evidence of field subdivision. The view is orientated south-west with longer range views contained by a combination of localised landform and linear tree belts. The Chilterns are filtered by the intervening trees in views to the south-west. To the north-west, views are screened by a woodland block and incongruous built form on the southern edge of Postcombe. The line of the A40, an aural and visual detractor, runs through the view and is denoted by the visible road signage. Low voltage transmission poles traverse the A40 as they run from field to field.	The field to the west of the A40 is within the solar site's eastern parcel. Although views into the field are partially filtered by intervening hedgerows, some infrastructure within the solar site will be visible. An existing field access, adjacent to the A40, will be used as access for all of the solar site's eastern parcel. The existing field boundary hedgerow will be translocated and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay requirements. This will effectively push the hedgerow line further westwards and provide additional filtering of the eastern parcel. As part of this translocation, the hedgerow will be infilled as required. There will be no visibility of the solar site's western parcel.	LCA 11C: Eastern Upper Vale Although infrastructure within the solar site's eastern parcel will introduce additional incongruous features, the existing landscape character is already influenced by existing detractors such as the developed edge of Postcombe and the A40. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and no change in views towards the Chilterns.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
5 **(Figure 5.8k)**	**Footway adjacent to Aston Hill** (Section of the A40 which runs north from the B4009)	View north-westwards from a section of footway adjacent to Aston Hill which is part of the A40. Due to its slightly elevated location to the north of the B4009 views are long-range but extend no further than Adwell Cop and its surrounding fields. Much of the intervening landscape is filtered and / or screened by existing vegetation. The road network has a strong influence across the view with sections of the M40, A40, B4009 and High Street discernible either by road signage, traffic or built form.	The northern edge of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible within the view. This is located to the south of the fields surrounding Adwell Cop. Although mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site, it will not filter views from this location. However, the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will provide some additional filtering within a 5-10 year period There will be no visibility of the solar site's eastern parcel.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (south-east of the B4009) Although the northern edge of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible, it will be secondary to the existing influence of the road network as currently experienced at this location.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and no change in views towards the Chilterns.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
6 **(Figure 5.8l)**	**Beacon Hill, Aston Rowant NNR** (Area of wooded escarpment within the Chilterns National Landscape)	View north-westwards from Beacon Hill which is located to the west of the M40. Due to its elevated location, and wooded nature, views offered to the north are intermittent but long distance over the lower lying vale. The landscape is a mix of medium to large agricultural fields, predominantly in arable use delineated by hedgerows and / or linear tree belts. To the north-east at Aston Rowant, fields are in equestrian use. Settlement is scattered throughout the view with the villages of Postcombe and Tetsworth visible. The road network has a strong influence across the view with the M40, A40 and B4009 visible, including part of the access road for Junction 6 of the motorway. Since this viewpoint was taken, solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell have been constructed. These are now located in the fields to the north-west, beyond Adwell Cop.	Much of the solar site will be visible either side of the M40, although the northern area of the eastern parcel, near Postcombe will be screened by the intervening tree belts. The western and south-western area of the western parcel will be filtered by existing intervening vegetation. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the Site and once established (5-10 years) will create additional filtering of views from this location.	LCA 2A: Wooded Chalk Escarpment There will be no direct changes to this landscape character which is predominantly a wooded landscape with limited views out. Where views out towards the solar site are offered, these are of the lower lying rolling downs whose landscape character is influenced by existing incongruous features including the road network and recently constructed solar schemes.	This viewpoint is within the Chilterns National Landscape designation. Additional development adjacent to the M40 will be introduced into the views out from the National Landscape. Existing incongruous features within the view include the road network and renewable energy infrastructure.

7 **(Figure 5.8m)**	**Bald Hill open access land within Aston Rowant NNR** (Area of wooded escarpment within the Chilterns National Landscape)	View northwards from Bald Hill which is located to the south-west of the M40. Due to its elevated location, views offered to the north are long distance over the lower lying vale. The landscape is a mix of medium to large agricultural fields, predominantly in arable use delineated by hedgerows and / or linear tree belts. Large scale agricultural outbuildings are present across the view. Settlement at Lewknor and South Weston is visible as well as scattered properties adjacent to the B4009 and High Street. Postcombe and Tetsworth are discernible in the distance. The M40 has a strong influence across the view with Junction 6 of the motorway discernible by the presence of coniferous trees along the line of the junction slip roads. Traffic on the B4009 is also visible. Since this viewpoint was taken, solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell have been constructed. These are now located in the fields to the north beyond Adwell Cop.	The solar site's western parcel will be visible although much of the eastern parcel will be screened by the intervening tree belts. A small area of the eastern parcel immediately adjacent to the M40 will be visible. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the Site and once established (5-10 years) will create additional filtering of views from this location.	LCA 2A: Wooded Chalk Escarpment There will be no direct changes to this landscape character which is predominantly a wooded landscape with limited views out. Where views out towards the solar site are offered, these are of the lower lying rolling downs whose landscape character is influenced by existing incongruous features including the road network and recently constructed solar schemes.	This viewpoint is within the Chilterns National Landscape designation. Additional development adjacent to the M40 will be introduced into the views out from the National Landscape. Existing incongruous features within the view include the road network and renewable energy infrastructure.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
8 **(Figure 5.8n)**	**Bridleway 277/11/70 - The Ridgeway, south-west of Old Cricket Ground Plantation** (Section of the local PROW network and National Trail)	View northwards across a rolling and low lying landscape from a section of Bridleway 277/11/70 which shares its route with the Ridgeway, a National Trail. Due to its slightly elevated location some long-range views are offered although these are mostly filtered by the foreground hedgerow and intervening vegetation within the subsequent fields. Pronounced topographical features within the landscape include Adwell Cop as well as built form, such as the raised reservoir and large agricultural buildings at Knapp Wood Farm. This built form is within the National Landscape and contains views to the north-east. The M40 is also discernible due to the regular movement of traffic along its route.	Some of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible within the view where not currently screened by intervening vegetation. There solar site's eastern parcel will not be discernible in the view. Although mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site, it will not filter views from this location. However, the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will provide some additional filtering within a 5-10 year period.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (south-east of the B4009) Although additional development will be introduced, its extent will be limited and experienced in the context of existing built form in the landscape, including the M40 which is a busy transport corridor and a noted visual detractor in the landscape.	This viewpoint is within the Chilterns National Landscape designation. A limited extent of additional development will be introduced to existing outward views from the National Landscape towards the M40. This will be experienced in the context of existing incongruous built form within the National Landscape.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
9 **(Figure 5.8o)**	**B4009, Watlington Road** (Busy local road with access to the M40)	View north from a field access gate adjacent to the B4009. The western edge of Lewknor, comprising of residential properties and agricultural outbuildings, runs adjacent to the foreground field. Adwell Cop is a pronounced topographical feature within a predominantly low lying landscape. Traffic along the route of the B4009 is an aural and visual detractor.	The northern extent of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible within the view. The remainder of the western parcel will be screened by intervening vegetation. The solar site's eastern parcel will not be visible from this location. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site and once established (5-10 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.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Although the northern edge of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible, it will be secondary to the existing influence of the road network as currently experienced at this location.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and no change in views towards the Chilterns.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
10 **(Figure 5.8p)**	**Footpath 277/27/10** (Route between Lewknor and Nethercote Lane)	View north from a section of Footpath 277/27/10 which runs through an area of low lying floodplain pasture. Field boundaries are a mix of post and wire fencing, hedgerows and individual trees. Although some boundaries are open and devoid of vegetation, the layering effect across the wider landscape is such that views out are predominantly screened. Although much of Adwell Cop is screened to the north, filtering is reduced to the north-east with traffic on the M40 discernible.	A limited extent of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible within the view. The remainder of the western parcel will be screened by intervening vegetation. The solar site's eastern parcel will not be visible from this location. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the Site and once established (5-10 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.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Although a limited extent of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible, it will not have a greater influence on landscape character than traffic on the M40.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and no change in views towards the Chilterns.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
11 **(Figure 5.8q)**	**Bridleway 277/33/10 near Nethercote (west of M40)** (Route between Weston Road and the A40)	View north from an open field access adjacent to Bridleway 277/33/10. Views are open but not long range due to the rising landform within the field. Traffic on the M40 is visible and the motorway is an aural and visual detractor.	This field is the solar site's western parcel. The whole field is not visible from this location with the remainder screened by intervening boundary vegetation and landform. The solar site's eastern parcel will not be visible from this location. Mitigation planting is proposed in the form of a new native hedgerow which will run perpendicular to the route of the Bridleway, within the foreground of the view. Once established (5-10 years) the hedgerow will filter views into the field.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Landscape character as experienced at this location is influenced by traffic on the M40. Infrastructure within the solar site will introduce incongruous features while simultaneously obscuring this existing detractor. Following the establishment of the proposed hedgerow (5-10 years) the infrastructure will be filtered and strengthen the field boundary character adjacent to the Bridleway	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and no change in views towards the Chilterns.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
12 **(Figure 5.8r)**	**Weston Road** (Local road which runs between Lewknor and South Weston)	View north-east across a rolling and low lying landscape from a field access gate adjacent to Weston Road. The landscape is a mix of medium to large agricultural fields, predominantly in arable use. Field boundaries comprise hedgerows, hedgerow trees and linear tree belts. Vegetation within the landscape is further supplemented by trees adjacent to a local watercourse and amenity planting at Nethercote. Low voltage transmission poles run across the view and the route of the M40 is discernible in the background.	In winter, a limited extent of the solar site's western parcel will be discernible with the remainder of the parcel screened by intervening vegetation. The solar site's eastern parcel will not be visible from this location. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site and once established (5-10 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.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Landscape character as experienced at this location is influenced by traffic on the M40 and along this local road. Infrastructure within the Site will introduce a limited extent of incongruous features while simultaneously obscuring the motorway. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and no change in views towards the Chilterns.

13 **(Figures 5.8s – 5.8u)**	**Footpath 277/7/10 by Field House boundary fence** (Footpath route between Postcombe and Lewknor)	Two hundred and seventy degree view from Footpath 277/7/10 by the southern edge of Postcombe. The route commences from Salt Lane, passing between residential properties, after which it follows the line of low voltage transmission poles running through the field. Views to the south and west are contained by a combination of localised landform and linear tree belts running along the field's western and southern boundaries. The Chilterns are predominantly filtered (in winter) by the intervening trees in views to the south but more open to the east. A woodland block to the west and north-west creates screening in these directions. The curtilage of residential properties, agricultural outbuildings and commercial buildings are visible in views to the east. The A40, an aural and visual detractor, runs adjacent to the field's eastern edge. Views of the landscape beyond the A40 are heavily screened by intervening vegetation.	This field is within the solar site's eastern parcel. The security fence around the PV panels will be offset by 15m 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. Other than along the line of the footpath, views across this field will be screened by infrastructure. Views of the A40 will also be screened. Existing views from within the field, including those towards the Chilterns, are predominantly filtered or screened (in winter) in all directions, except to the east. Hedgerow planting is proposed on both sides of the footpath, adjacent to the fence line and following establishment (5-10 years) this will filter views of the infrastructure. A woodland block is also proposed in the north-west corner of this field. The existing field access adjacent to the A40 will be used as access for all of the solar site's eastern parcel. The existing field boundary hedgerow will be translocated	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) Infrastructure within the solar site will introduce additional incongruous features while simultaneously obscuring existing detractors, such as the A40,and views of the Chilterns to the south-east. Low voltage transmission poles will remain unobscured. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself however it will not be discernible within the background of views to the south-east.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
			and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay requirements. As part of this translocation, the hedgerow will be infilled as required. There will be no visibility of the solar site's western parcel.		

14 **(Figures 5.8v – 5.8w)**	**Layby on A40, London Road, opposite northern field** (Vehicular parking adjacent to the A40)	One hundred and eighty degree view from the footway adjacent to the vehicular layby on the southbound carriageway of the A40. Views to the south and west are contained by a combination of localised landform and linear tree belts running along the field's western and southern boundaries. The Chilterns are predominantly filtered by the intervening trees in views to the south. A woodland block to the north-west creates screening in this direction. The developed edge of Postcombe, comprising a mix of residential property styles, agricultural and commercial buildings, contains views to the north. Low voltage transmission poles run across the view and the A40 is an aural and visual detractor.	The foreground field is within the Site's eastern parcel as is the field to the south-west of the view beyond the linear tree belt. Infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development in the latter will be heavily filtered. The existing field access adjacent to the A40 will be used as access for the eastern parcel. The existing field boundary hedgerow, either side of the field access, will be translocated and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay requirements. Infrastructure will be set back from the A40 and extend across the field. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the solar site including a woodland block on the north-western corner of the foreground field. The translocated hedgerow will be infilled as required and both the woodland block and infill hedgerow will establish within 5 – 10 years. The translocated hedgerow will provide similar filtering of views as per its current location. It will create	LCA 11C: Eastern Upper Vale Although infrastructure within the Site will introduce additional incongruous features, the A40 will continue to be the primary influence on landscape character at this location. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and views towards the Chilterns will remain predominantly filtered by the intervening trees in views to the south.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
			additional filtering of views from this location as it will be maintained to a greater height within the same 5-10 year period. There will be no visibility of the solar site's western parcel.		

15 **(Figure 5.8x)**	**Junction of Footpaths 277/6/10 and 115/10/10** (Footpath network to the east of the A40)	View orientated westwards from Footpath 277/6/10 which runs east from the junction of the A40 and Chalford Road towards Aston Rowant. The footpath passes through a network of fields predominantly in pastoral and equestrian use. Field boundaries are a mix of hedgerows, some which are gappy, and post and wire fencing. Views across the foreground fields are relatively open. Longer range views are contained by a combination of localised landform and linear tree belts. To the north-west, views are screened by agricultural buildings, and associated storage clutter, at Spinney Farm. The Chilterns are predominantly filtered by the intervening trees in views to the south-west. The line of the A40, an aural and visual detractor, is discernible within the view.	The solar site's eastern parcel, located to the west of the A40, extends across the view. A limited extent of the parcel will be visible with built form and vegetation screening views to the north-west and linear tree belts filtering views to the south-west. Infrastructure within the parcel will be visible in the background approximately between the agricultural buildings and the grouping of Scots Pine. An existing field access, adjacent to the A40, will be used as access for all of the solar site's eastern parcel. The existing field boundary hedgerow will be translocated and re-aligned within the field to satisfy visibility splay requirements. This will effectively push the hedgerow line further westwards and provide additional filtering of the parcel. As part of this translocation, the hedgerow will be infilled as required. The translocated hedgerow will provide immediate filtering of the field and will create additional filtering of views from this location as it	LCA 11C: Eastern Upper Vale Although infrastructure within the Site will introduce additional incongruous features, the A40 will continue to be the primary influence on landscape character at this location. Once the proposed mitigation has established (5-10 years) it will strengthen the layers and framework of vegetation across the landscape.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no material change within the designation itself and views towards the Chilterns will remain predominantly filtered by the intervening trees in views to the south-west.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
			continues to grow within the same 5-10 year period. There will be no visibility of the solar site's western parcel.		

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
16 **(Figure 5.8y)**	**Junction of High Street and A40, London Road** (Local road)	High Street is a local road which runs west from the A40. At its western end, it is curtailed by the line of the M40 with no onward vehicular access. It provides access to the hotel complex located adjacent to the A40 as well as access for local residents of Beacon View. This view is orientated northwards across a large arable field with low voltage transmission poles running approximately north – south through the field. Long range views are contained by a linear tree belt to the north, the A40 to the east and the M40 to the west. Adwell Cop is visible in the background.	The solar site is screened by a combination of intervening landform and vegetation and there will be no change in the view.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (north-west of the B4009) There will be no change to landscape character as experienced at this location.	This viewpoint location is within the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no change to this designation no change in views towards the Chilterns.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
17 **(Figure 5.8z)**	**Bridleway 115/12/10 - The Ridgeway** (Section of the local PROW network and National Trail)	View northwards from a section of Bridleway 115/12/10 approximately 0.4 km to the east of Aston Hill (A40). Views northwards from much of this Bridleway are heavily filtered / screened by vegetation adjacent to the route. A short break in the vegetation offers slightly elevated views across a large arable field extending to Chinnor Road (B4009). Long range views are contained by a combination of intervening vegetation primarily within the curtilage of the residential properties along Butts Way / Chinnor Road. Adwell Cop is visible in the background.	The solar site is screened by intervening vegetation and built form and there will be no change in the view.	LCA 6B: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (south-east of the B4009) There will be no change to landscape character as experienced at this location.	This viewpoint location is within the Chilterns National Landscape. There will be no change to this designation.

VP	Location	Key features of existing view	Predicted Visual Change	Predicted Change to Landscape Character	Predicted Change to Designated Area
18 **Figure 5.8aa)**	**Junction of Footpaths 277/31/20, 277/31/10 and 277/32/10** (Network of Footpaths within the Chilterns National Landscape)	View northwards from a junction of footpaths to the north of Christmas Common Road, located to the west of the M40. Due to its elevated location the views offered to the north are long distance over the lower lying vale. The landscape is a mix of medium to large agricultural fields, predominantly in arable use delineated by hedgerows and / or linear tree belts. Large scale agricultural outbuildings are present in the view. Settlement at Lewknor and South Weston is visible, with Postcombe and Tetsworth discernible in the distance. The M40 has a strong influence in the view with Junction 6 of the motorway discernible by the presence of coniferous trees along the line of the slip roads. The route of the B4009 is also discernible. Since this viewpoint was taken, solar schemes at Harlesford and Cornwell have been constructed. These are now located in the fields to the north and beyond Adwell Cop.	From this location, the southern extent of the solar site's western parcel will not be visible. The northern field within the solar site's eastern parcel will be screened by the intervening tree belts. The remaining areas of the solar site will be visible adjacent to the M40. Mitigation planting is proposed throughout the Site and once established (5-10 years) this will strengthen the network of field boundaries in and around the solar site. In addition to this, the expected continued growth of the existing, intervening vegetation will provide some additional filtering within the same period.	LCA 2A: Wooded Chalk Escarpment There will be no direct changes to this landscape character which is predominantly a wooded landscape with limited views out. Where views out towards the solar site are offered, these are of the lower lying rolling downs whose landscape character is influenced by existing incongruous features including the road network and recently constructed solar schemes.	This viewpoint is within the Chilterns National Landscape designation. Additional development adjacent to the M40 will be introduced into the views out from the National Landscape. Existing incongruous features within the view include the road network and renewable energy infrastructure.

APPENDIX 5.6: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER REVIEW

1. The current Landscape Character Assessment is the *Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033* which was published in 2017.

2. As part of the emerging Joint Local Plan, the *Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (2024)* has been prepared as part of the evidence base. There are several supplementary documents which are also reviewed in this appendix:

    - 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.

Landscape Character Assessment

3. A summary of the primary differences between the two documents are set out below:

Table 5.1 Summary of Primary Differences

Observation	**Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (2017)**	**Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (2024)**
Change in the terminology of landscape descriptors	Across the region, the Landscape has been divided into 11 broad Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The LCAs are sub-divided into 24 Landscape Character Types (LCTs).	Across the region, the Landscape has been divided into 14 broad LCTs. The LCTs are sub-divided into 44 LCAs.
Figures	Shown on **Figure 5.3a**.	Shown on **Figure 5.3b**.
Name of the broad landscape descriptor	*Landscape Character Area 5 – Eastern Vale Fringes.*	*Landscape Character Type (LCT) 6: Chalk Escarpment Footslopes.*
Name of the sub-divided landscape descriptor (Site specific)	*LCT 14: Open Rolling Downs* and *LCT 18: Semi-enclosed Rolling Downs*.	*LCA 6B: Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes.*

4. The change in name from ‘Eastern Vale Fringes’ to ‘Chalk Escarpment Footslopes’ is quite different and suggests that the landscape is reflective of both these descriptors and that in both iterations of the Landscape Character Assessment a ‘catch all’ name has been used which does not fully reflect the character of the area. Much of the 3 km study area around the Site is within ‘National Character Area 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales’ which gives credence to the fact that much of the local character is reflective of a vale landscape.

5. The line of National Character Area 108 runs south-west to north-east through the study area and is close to the line of the B4009. This regional route forms a boundary where the difference between the footslopes of the Chilterns and the smoothly rolling landform of the vale can be discerned with the former south-east of the B4009 and the latter north-west.

6. To present a more balanced assessment of the effects on landscape character, LCA 6B has been considered in two parts:

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

7. This approach has been adopted within the LVIA and in Appendix 5.4 Landscape Sensitivity Assessment.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Renewable Energy Study – Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

8. As part of the Landscape Character Assessment for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse (2024) a strategic study of Landscape Sensitivity Assessment for wind energy and solar photovoltaic (PV) development has been prepared.

9. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (LSA) defines the size of solar PV development as follows:

- *Very small solar PV installation: Up to 1 hectares (equivalent to <1 MW)*
- *Small solar PV installation: 1 to 5 hectares (equivalent to 1-4 MW)*
- *Medium solar PV installation: 5 to 20 hectares (equivalent to 5-15 MW)*
- *Large solar PV installation: 20 to 50 hectares (equivalent to 16-40 MW)*
- *Very large solar PV installation: 50 to 120 hectares (equivalent to 41-100 MW)*

10. Based on this classification the Proposed Development is considered a very large solar PV installation (96.57 ha and 49.9 MW).

Assessment Criteria

11. The LSA study considers five criteria and each criteria contains five categories of sensitivity scoring. Supporting text is provided within the LSA which sets out the factors to consider when determining the sensitivity score.

12. The criterion and sensitivity scores are only presented for each of the broad LCTs. The table below presents the scores for LCT 6 Chalk Escarpment Footslopes (as presented in Table 18 of the LSA):

Table 5.2 Extract of LSA Table 18

Criteria	Sensitivity Score
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Moderate-High
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High

13. The table below presents the scores for LCA 6B (as presented in Table 20 of the LSA):

Table 5.3 Extract of LSA Table 20

Development scenario	Overall landscape sensitivity rating
Very small solar (up to 1 hectare)	Moderate
Small solar (1-5 hectares)	Moderate-High
Medium solar (5-20 hectares)	High
Large solar (20-50 hectares)	High
Very large solar (50-120 hectares)	High

14. There is no clear explanation or methodology showing how the sensitivity score for LCT 6 has been combined with the 'Development scenario' to achieve the 'Overall landscape sensitivity rating' for LCA 6B.

Sensitivity of the Solar Site

15. The five criteria and their categories of sensitivity scoring factors are considered against the solar site with the outcomes presented in the table below:

Table 5.4 Sensitivity of the Solar Site

Criteria	Sensitivity Score & Factors	Comments
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	*"Low-Moderate: A simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform. Some enclosure provided by hedges and tree/woodland cover."*	The score will be slightly higher given that the LSA also states *"However, flat or gently undulating landscapes which are overlooked from higher ground may have a higher sensitivity."*
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	*"Low-Moderate: A landscape which is mainly defined by large, modern fields or those sub-divided for non-traditional uses, e.g. horse keeping. An area of large-scale horticulture or some urban or brownfield influences."*	The LSA also states that *"landscapes containing existing hard surfacing or built elements (e.g. urban areas, brownfield sites or large-scale horticulture) are likely to be less sensitive to field-scale solar PV development"* - the solar site is bisected by the M40 which is a large area of hard surfacing and built infrastructure.
Historic landscape character	*"Low: A landscape with relatively few historic features important to the character of the area and little time depth (i.e. large intensively farmed fields)."*	The fields within the solar site are intensively farmed and there are no nationally designated historic features within the solar site.
Visual character (including skylines)	*"Moderate-High: A landscape which is intervisible with several areas, and/or where adjacent areas are strongly interrelated. A landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features."*	The Chilterns National Landscape provides a strong backdrop however, this is in views to the south and east.

Perceptual and scenic qualities	*"Moderate: A rural or semi-rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development, such as settlement fringes. A landscape of intermittently attractive character, with occasional pleasing combinations of features, visual contrasts and/or dramatic elements. Some may be within a National Landscape."*	The solar site's presence immediately adjacent to the M40 and/or A40 introduces much human activity. Residential and commercial development on the fringes of Postcombe introduce incongruous features.

16. The sensitivity scores for LCT 6 and the Site are presented below for comparison:

Criteria	LSA Sensitivity Score (LCT 6)	Sensitivity Score (Site)
Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure)	Moderate-High	Low-Moderate to Moderate
Landcover (including field and settlement patterns)	Moderate	Low-Moderate
Historic landscape character	Moderate	Low
Visual character (including skylines)	Moderate-High	Moderate-High
Perceptual and scenic qualities	Moderate-High	Moderate

17. Without clarity on the methodology showing how the 'Overall landscape sensitivity rating' has been determined, a final outcome for the Site cannot be determined. It is reasonable however to deduce that it would not be as high as those determined for LCA 6B.

18. Overall, the outcomes presented in the LSA are too high-level and do not provide the tools to score site-specific sensitivity.

Tranquillity Assessment – Final Report

19. As part of the Tranquillity Assessment, the area of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils is defined as 'All South and Vale' excluding larger settlements which are defined as 'Urban'.

20. The solar site is on the boundary of the Urban area associated with Thame and is washed over by tranquillity associated with both 'Urban' and 'All South and Vale'.

21. The Tranquillity Assessment has identified 10 positive and 11 negative factors which have been assessed using various datasets.

22. The first positive factor '*P01 - Naturalness of land cover'* uses two different datasets for 'Urban' and 'All South and Vale' with the latter using 'Corine Land Cover 2018 (European Environment Agency).' Although this dataset identifies 'Road and rail networks and associated land' this does not include the M40 which has been included within 'Non-irrigated arable land'.

23. As a result of this, the M40 is included within a category that scores 2 and creates an anomaly whereby the M40 is contributing positively to tranquillity. This effectively means that where the M40

should be considered as a negative factor (N04 -Seeing major roads' / 'N05 -Hearing major roads') it is starting from a baseline position of being a positive contributor in the Tranquility Assessment.

24. There are also discrepancies with the scoring for positive factor *'P02 Seeing rivers and canals'* whereby the scoring is graduated against the distance at which a watercourse can be seen.

25. The stream which runs north-west from Lewknor and has been included as part of 'All South and Vale' area. Its contribution to tranquillity is scored as per the criteria below:

    - Distance 500m - Score 5,
    - Distance 1km - Score 4,
    - Distance 2km - Score 3,
    - Distance 5km - Score 2,
    - Distance 6km - Score 1.

26. The score along Salt Lane, which is within 500 m of the stream, is 5. However, field surveys confirm that the actual watercourse is not visible, and it is only discernible from here due to the adjacent tree line. Scoring extends onto the M40 corridor where even the tree line adjacent to the watercourse cannot be discerned. Similarly, for the watercourse to the east of the A40, it again scores high along this road but in reality, it is not visible from this route.

27. On the overall tranquillity map for 'All South and Vale' the solar site is predominantly in an area halfway between least and most tranquil. On the 'Urban' overall tranquillity map it is closer to least tranquil.

28. The final map 'Zones of Relative Tranquillity' identifies the Site as being in 'Zone 2: Area of some tranquillity' which is the second-best zone in the assessment.

29. Comparatively, at a high level, CPRE's Tranquillity Map shows that it is not tranquil along the line of the M40. This CPRE data is an accepted benchmark of tranquillity yet it has not been used in the Tranquillity Assessment.

30. Although the Tranquillity Assessment is a high-level regional approach, its application to the Site is not reflective of the influence that the M40, A40 and the adjacent road network have on tranquillity at a local level. There are also anomalies with how the naturalness of land cover has been addressed and how a local watercourse contributes to tranquillity when it cannot be seen.

Local Landscape Designation Review of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

31. This document identifies candidate areas to be designated as Local Landscape Designations (LLDs) including Chiltern Chalk Escarpment Footslopes LLD which covers much of LCA 6B Chalk Escarpment Footslopes and the Site.

32. The LLDs will be supported by Policy NH5 in the emerging Joint Local Plan, however as this is not yet a made Plan, the LLD is not considered further in this LVIA.