11th June 2025

Environmental Statement

Chapter 2: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

Stokes Lane Solar Farm

Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
The Applicant	Stokes Lane Solar Farm Limited
The Agent	Atmos Consulting Limited
Environmental Advisors and Planning Consultants	Atmos Consulting Limited
Environmental Impact Assessment	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a means of carrying out, in a systematic way, an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects from a development.
Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations	The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
Environmental Statement	A document reporting the findings of the EIA and produced in accordance with the EIA Regulations.
The Proposed Development	Stokes Lane Solar Farm
The Proposed Development Site	The full application boundary
Study Area	The study area which extends outside the Proposed Development Site. This includes an initial 5km study area and a detailed 2km study area for assessment.

List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AGLV	Areas of Great Landscape Value
BDBC	Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
BDLCA	Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment
BRE	The Building Research Establishment
CA	Conservation Area
CDS	Countryside Design Summary
DTM	Digital Terrain Model
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
GI	Green Infrastructure
GLVIA3	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition)
GPA	Good Practice Advice
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LEMP	Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
LI	Landscape Institute
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
NL	National Landscape
NCA	National Character Area
NGR	National Grid Reference
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework

NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
NSA	National Scenic Area
NWD	North Wessex Downs
OS	Ordnance Survey
PRoW	Public Rights of Way
RMSE	Route Mean Square Error
RPG	Registered Historic Park and Gardens
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SEO	Statements of Environmental Opportunity
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
TGN	Technical Guidance Note
VP	Viewpoint
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

2. Landscape and Visual

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in respect of landscape and visual matters. In doing so, this Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) describes the relevant landscape and visual policy context; the methods used for assessment and details of the criteria used to determine significance; the baseline landscape and visual conditions at and surrounding the site of the Proposed Development (the 'Proposed Development Site'); the potential impacts and effects as a result of the Proposed Development; any mitigation or control measures required to reduce or eliminate adverse effects; and the subsequent residual effects and likely significant effects associated with the Proposed Development.

This Chapter is accompanied by a series of Technical Appendices and Figures in **Volume 3** and **Volume 4** of the ES, respectively. These include:

- Technical Appendix 2-1: LVIA Methodology and Assessment Criteria;
- Technical Appendix 2-2: Illustrative Viewpoints Photos A-F;
- Figure 2-1: Site Location and Landscape Designations;
- Figure 2-2a: Landscape Character (Hampshire Landscape Character Areas);
- Figure 2-2b: Landscape Character (Basingstoke and Deane Local Character Areas);
- Figure 2-3: Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and Proposed Viewpoints;
- Figure 2-4a: OS Screened ZTV and Proposed Viewpoints;
- Figure 2-4b: Lidar Screened ZTV and Proposed Viewpoints
- Figure 2-4c: Year 15 Lidar Screened ZTV and Proposed Viewpoints
- Figure 2-5: Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP);
- Figure 2-6: Viewpoint 1 – A339 at the Junction with Minor Road to Monk Sherborne;
- Figure 2-7: Viewpoint 2 – Public Right of Way (PRoW), North of the A339 and West of Weybrook Park Golf Club;
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- Figure 2-13: Viewpoint 8 - Minor Road to Monk Sherborne on the West Edge of the CA;
- Figure 2-14: Viewpoint 9 - PRoW West Side of Rookery Farm on West Edge of Monk Sherborne CA;
- Figure 2-15: Viewpoint 10 - PRoW North of Sherborne St John;
- Figure 2-16: Cumulative Sites within 5km; and
- Figure 2-17: Cumulative ZTV - Planning and Operational Cumulative Sites.

Chapter 1 of the ES provides a detailed description of the Proposed Development and this Chapter does not repeat it, but that description forms the basis of this assessment.

2.2 Contributors/Author(s)

The LVIA chapter was prepared by Andrew Jones, a Chartered Landscape Architect with over 20 years of professional experience in undertaking LVIAs with particular focus on renewable energy development.

2.3 Consultation

Consultation on the scope and extent of work for the LVIA was carried out with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) between September 2021 and May 2023, through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening and Scoping process.

As part of the Screening advice provided in December 2021, BDBC stated concerns over the proximity within the fringes of the North Wessex Downs (NWD) Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) now renamed a National Landscape (NL) and its setting. This has been considered in the design iteration of the Proposed Development as described in Chapter 1 of this ES.

Due to the location of settlement, roads, lanes, public footpaths and byways running within and near to the Proposed Development Site, it was also BDBC's view that there could be adverse visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development due to the scale proposed including reference to impacts on residential amenity and environmental impacts. This has also been considered in the design iteration of the Site and subsequent assessment. However, consultation did not specifically request a separate Residential Visual Amenity Assessment.

As part of the EIA Screening Request in November 2021 and the pre-application advice requested in July 2022, the Applicant sought agreement on the number and location of assessment viewpoints (VPs). Confirmation of VPs was not provided in the EIA Screening response or pre-application advice response on 11 November 2022. However, the pre-application response noted that the number of VPs were considered low and would need to:

> *"include all key vantage points around the perimeters of the site, along rights of way which run in close proximity to the proposals, and along the track which runs through the site. Viewpoints will also be needed from key locations further out into the landscape around the site, also capturing public vantage points along rights of way and roads/lanes. Views from within local villages will also need to be included, as well as views from within the North Wessex Downs AONB."*

As such, the number of VPs was reviewed and a revised list was presented in the EIA Scoping Report of January 2023. This was also discussed in a design meeting held with the Applicant and the case officer, Nicola. Williams and Terry Martin the landscape officer at BDBC on 21St April 2023. This led to acceptance of the methods and scope of the main LVIA in the EIA Scoping Opinion of June 2023, which noted:

> *"The scope of the study area including additional and repositioned viewpoints as updated are acceptable as basis for visual assessment."*

Since that time, the extents of the Proposed Development Site has undergone several iterations to respond to various technical and environmental factors, including landscape and visual inputs.

As a result, there were changes in the Proposed Development Site boundary to include a further land parcel to the west. This was partly to incorporate some initial landscape and visual principles

and embedded mitigation. Whilst this additional change to the Proposed Development Site boundary has not been formally consulted upon, the general principles of scope noted in the BDBC Landscape EIA Scoping responses have been taken account of in updating the proposed scope for assessment.

Further details of the design iteration process and how the current design has been established to lessen the visibility of the Proposed Development are set out in the Planning, Design and Access Statement that supports the application for the Proposed Development.

2.4 Methodology and Approach

The assessment was undertaken in accordance with a range of guidance documents. These are noted in full in the references section. The key documents for the LVIA methodology include:

- 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment: Third Edition' (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute (LI) and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA), 2013);
- LI Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 01/20 'Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)' (LI, 2020);
- 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (Natural England, 2014); and
- 'Planning guidance for the development of large-scale ground mounted solar PV systems: Appendix A' (The Building Research Establishment (BRE), 2013).

The full LVIA methodology and the assessment criteria for this assessment is presented in **Technical Appendix 2-1** in **Volume 3** of this ES.

The LVIA has involved a combination of desk study, computer analysis, field work and interpretation using professional judgement. The Proposed Development Site and surrounding area have been extensively visited to gain a clear understanding of the landscape and the likely effects of the Proposed Development. Fieldwork was undertaken during periods of clear visibility between March 2023 and March 2024.

2.4.1 Study Area and Zone of Theoretical Visibility

The LVIA is based on an initial 5km study area and a detailed 2km study area for both landscape and visual assessments. These study areas have been determined through fieldwork and desk study with the detailed study area in proportion with the zone in which the principal landscape or visual effects could arise.

To assist with defining the study areas, a bare earth and screened ZTV (**Figures 2-3** and **2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES) were used during both the desk study and fieldwork as part of the baseline appraisal.

All ZTVs were generated in ArcGIS 10.6 using the Viewshed tool located in the 3D/Spatial Analyst extension. ZTVs that incorporated the screening effects of obstacles above the bare earth DTM used woodland.

It was identified onsite that the potential for notable adverse landscape and visual effects were unlikely to be experienced beyond 2km from the Proposed Development Site boundary given the low height of the Proposed Development and screening by localised undulations in landform and existing features including buildings and vegetation.

Principal Zones of Theoretical Visibility

The ZTV studies shown in **Figures 2-3** and **2-4a-c** in **Volume 4** of this ES and fieldwork confirmed the following principal patterns of visibility principal areas of visibility:

- Over bare ground the potential theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development and the greatest potential for visibility (i.e. the red and yellow tones on the ZTV plan), would extend across principal areas up to c. 0.8km to the south, 0.7km to 1.2km to the east, and west up to 1km to the north before it becomes more intermittent. The visibility would be generally more restricted from the south, southeast and northwest indicating the falling nature of land to the north and to the east. Further zones of more extended theoretical visibility would then potentially stretch over intermittent areas between 1.8km and 5km to the north, as evidenced by the ZTV in **Figure 2-3**, although this would be noticeably modified and reduced by landcover features as noted below;
- The screened ZTV indicates that notable areas of woodland (modelled using layers from Ordnance Survey (OS) Open-Map Local data in **Figure 2-4a** and Lidar data in **Figure 2-4b**) typically combine with local landform variations to reduce the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development. It shows that views would be more restricted from most points beyond principal zones up to c. 0.4km towards the A339 south of Rookery Farm Lane, up to circa 0.5 km to the north and up to 1.5km to the southwest;
- Within these principal zones, the areas of greatest visibility (i.e. yellow tones), would be restricted to the Proposed Development Site landscape and sections between the two parcels along Rookery Farm Lane extending up to c. 0.5km to the northeast and southwest. A further area of higher visibility would also be gained from an adjacent isolated section upon the northeast corner of Weybrook Park golf course within 0.1km to the east;
- Visibility levels would be generally more limited from points beyond the immediate Proposed Development Site boundary to the northwest, north and southeast, as shown by the paler yellow / blue tones on the screened ZTV with Lidar data in **Figure 2-4b**;
- Fieldwork confirmed that visibility of the Proposed Development Site would be as reflected in the detailed screened ZTVs and reduced due to tiers of vegetated field boundaries. As such, the Proposed Development Site would only be very partially visible in a range of filtered views from most points beyond the immediate Proposed Development Site boundary and only the edges of outer sections likely to be visible from such points; and
- Beyond the Proposed Development Site boundary, the nearest views towards the Proposed Development Site from publicly accessible locations lie along the PRoWs to the east and west but this would be in heavily filtered views and from the minor road that bisects the Proposed Development Site parcels. Visibility from settlement areas would also be limited to the nearest edges of settlement and to lower levels of visibility to smalls sections of the Proposed Development Site.

2.4.2 Landscape Receptors

Landscape receptors that could be affected by the Proposed Development include:

- Landscape elements and features such as landform, vegetation, etc;
- Landscape Character Types and Areas (LCTs and LCAs);
- Areas of recognised landscape value, such as NL and Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV); and
- Other recreational, natural or cultural heritage interests that contribute to landscape character such as CAs and Registered Historic Park and Gardens (RPGs).

2.4.3 Visual Receptors

Visual receptors are defined as those individuals or groups of people within the study area who may be affected by the Proposed Development. The main groups of visual receptors in this case are considered to be:

- Residents;
- Walkers and recreational users; and
- People travelling through the area by road or rail.

2.4.4 Fieldwork Survey

The LVIA has been informed by initial desk-study and fieldwork undertaken at separate points in March 2023 and March 2024. The Proposed Development Site was surveyed from publicly accessible land to identify areas, features and viewpoints of landscape and visual amenity value within the study area.

2.4.5 Appraisal of Potential Effects

The LVIA focuses on an appraisal of the effects on the landscape and visual receptors from a number of agreed VPs. Together with the desk-based analysis and fieldwork, the detailed VP assessment informed the general appraisal of effects within the study area.

The desk work refers to a range of maps, photographs, the ZTV analysis and computer-generated representations. The method used to create the ZTVs, photographs, wireline diagrams and photomontages follows good practice guidance (LI, 2019a).

Each viewpoint was assessed, in order to identify, predict and evaluate the potential effects arising from the Proposed Development. Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified and the prediction of magnitude and appraisal of the landscape and visual effects based on pre-defined criteria in order to provide greater consistency.

The criteria used in this LVIA have taken account of paragraph 3.26 of the GLVIA (LI and IEMA, 2013), which recommends that factors affecting the sensitivity of the receptor (susceptibility and value), and those affecting the magnitude of the effect (size, extent, duration and reversibility) are each assessed separately. Refer to **Technical Appendix 2-1** in **Volume 3** of this ES for details.

2.4.6 Significance of Effects

Significance indicates the importance or gravity of the effect. The process of forming a judgement on the degree of significance is based upon the assessments of magnitude of effects and sensitivity of the receptor to come to a professional judgement of how important this effect is.

For landscapes, major loss of landscape features or characteristics across an extensive area that are important to the integrity of a nationally valued landscape are likely to be most substantial. Short-term effects on landscape features or characteristics over a restricted part of a landscape of lower value are likely to be least so.

Visual effects are more likely to be substantial / significant on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity, when experienced at recognised and important VPs, or from recognised scenic routes. Large scale changes which introduce new, discordant or intrusive elements into the view are also more likely to be substantial than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.

GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013) notes that:

> *"when drawing a distinction between levels of significance is required (beyond significant/not significant) a word scale for degrees of significance can be used."*

This is defined below.

Degrees of Landscape and Visual Effects

The asserted 'degrees of effect' grades used within in this LVIA are classified by considering the relationship between the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of change. It uses a matrix as provided in **Table 2-1** which is used to achieve consistency when judging ratings. However, this is only a guide and final classifications have been based on professional judgement.

These degrees indicate a gradation between categories and a 'sliding scale' of the relative importance of the effect, with 'Major' being the most important and 'Negligible' or 'No Change' being the least. Effects that are towards the higher level of the scale (Major) are those judged to be most important, whilst those towards the bottom of the scale are "*of lesser concern*" (GLVIA, 3rd edition, Paragraph 3.35). Intermediate or transitional categories are sometimes used within the sliding scale where effects fall between categories in the matrix.

Table 2-1: Degrees of Landscape and Visual Effect

Sensitivity (Susceptibility & Value)	Magnitude of Change				
	High	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**	**None**
High	**Major**	**Major to Moderate**	Moderate	Moderate to Minor	No Change
Medium	**Major to Moderate**	Moderate	Moderate to Minor	Minor	No Change
Low	Moderate	Moderate to Minor	Minor	Minor to Negligible	No Change
Very Low	Moderate to Minor	Minor	Minor to Negligible	Negligible	No Change

GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013) notes that:

> *"It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided that it is made clear whether or not they are considered significant. (…). These tend to vary from project to project but they should be appropriate to the nature, size and location of the proposed development."*

It is generally considered that effects of Major and Major-Moderate (or Moderate – Major) are deemed to be 'Significant', as highlighted bold in the Matrix in **Table 2-1**.

TGN 01/24 (LI, 2024) also notes that:

> *".....moderate effects may or may not be significant and justification would be needed in the methodology or receptor assessment as to whether a moderate effect is significant or not."*

GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013) notes that for both landscape and visual receptors:

> *"there cannot be a standard approach since circumstances vary with the local and landscape context and with the type of proposal".*

As such, this matrix approach, while helpful, is not a prescriptive tool, as at times the table may not provide a clear correlated value, which is where professional judgment plays an important role in determining the gradation in the overall degree of effect and the subtle variations between these categories. Where intermediate ratings are noted, e.g. 'Moderate-Minor', this indicates an effect that is both less than Moderate and more than Minor, rather than one which varies across the range.

Direct and Indirect Effects

Direct landscape effects result directly from the Proposed Development, such as the loss of landform. Indirect effects are consequential changes resulting from the Proposed Development, such as changes to vegetation following the restoration of new access tracks.

2.4.7 Cumulative Assessment

Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development.

This is defined in GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013), which notes that cumulative effects:

> *"result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future."*

Cumulative effects are assessed on the same groups of landscape and visual receptors as the main LVIA. Cumulative landscape effects may occur to the landscape components e.g. loss of hedgerows or landscape characteristics by introducing new features.

This is noted in GLVIA (LI and IEMA, 2013), which states cumulative landscape effects:

> *"can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it."*

Cumulative visual effects are also noted in GLVIA (LI and IEMA, 2013), where developments may be seen within combined and sequential views. These comprise:

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

The BDBC EIA Scoping Opinion (June 2023) indicated that, although at the time there were no other solar farm developments in the detailed 2km study area, there are other residential and mixed use developments. These are shown on **Figure 2-17** in **Volume 4** of this ES. These are considered within Section 2.6.4 of this Chapter. They include;

- 17/00818/OUT (Manydown) for a Residential development of approximately 3,200 homes between c.0.9 and 4.2km to the southeast on the settlement edges of Basingstoke (Approved); and
- 23/00205/OUT for up to 350 dwellings at Land at Kiln Farm, Kiln Road, Sherborne St John at c.1.7 and 2.2km to the east between Sherborne St John and Basingstoke (In planning).

Operational and commercially scaled solar schemes in the planning system which are considered in combination with the Proposed Development include:

- 13/01007/FUL Hill End Farm, 2.8MW at c.1.5km to the north (Operational);
- 23/03012/FUL 30MW Solar Farm at Hook Lane, Malshanger (Application Submitted December 2023); and
- 24/01968/ENS Land Adjoining Aldermaston Road Basingstoke (Request for a Scoping Opinion submitted).

2.4.8 Residential Amenity

BDBC makes reference to the potential impact on residential amenity and environmental impacts in a consultation letter of 11 November 2022. However, the letter does not specifically request a separate Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) to accompany the LVIA.

As such, this LVIA does not include a separate RVAA. It is considered that the effects resulting from the Proposed Development would fall below the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold referred to in LI TGN 02/19 as visual effects "*of such nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity*" (LI, 2019a).

The guidance note further indicates that:

> *"It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before."*

However, effects on residents has been considered in the broader context of the LVIA and from publicly available views within surrounding settlement areas.

Glint and Glare

The detailed assessment of glint and glare is a specialist area of expertise that is outwith the scope of an LVIA. However, a comprehensive technical assessment of Glint and Glare has been prepared by Pager Power and has been submitted in support of the application (refer to: 58759 R5 Stokes Lane Solar Farm Glint and Glare Assessment). The LVIA and Glint and Glare assessment have been prepared in collaboration with findings from each informing both assessments.

2.4.9 Landscape Figures and Photopanels

Topographical modelling is based on the 50m resolution OS Terrain 50 Digital Terrain Model (DTM), available for the whole of the UK mainland. OS Terrain 50 data has been verified to be 4m Route Mean Square Error (RMSE). Within 5km of the Proposed Development, the terrain model has been augmented using OS Terrain 5 DTM data and data has been verified to be 2m RMSE.

Landscape photography and visualisations have been produced in accordance with LI TGN 06/19 (LI, 2019b).

Site photography for landscape VPs was captured using a full frame (Canon 6D Mk II) digital camera with a 50mm lens. The camera was mounted and levelled on a Manfrotto panoramic tripod head at 1.5m – 1.7m above the ground (depending on any foreground obstacles such as vegetation), which itself is mounted on a sturdy tripod.

2.4.10 Assumptions and limitations

The following assumptions and limitations were used during the assessment:

- The assessment draws upon landscape and visual surveys undertaken between March 2023 and March 2024. All fieldwork has been undertaken from publicly accessible locations and as such professional judgement has been used to assess residents' views, aided by aerial photography and fieldwork observations from the surrounding area;
- Where appropriate, visual receptors were grouped rather than identified individually for the purposes of the assessment;
- The assessment uses a range of representative VPs across the study area as the scope of the study does not allow for all potential visual receptors to be assessed individually;
- ZTV studies (see **Figures 2-3** and **2-4a-c** in **Volume 4** of this ES) have been produced and used as a tool to inform the professional judgements made in this LVIA during the iterative plan process. The ZTV study has been modelled on the maximum development parameters available at the time of assessment but does not take into account smaller scaled, local screening features such as hedgerows, individual trees or micro topography; and
- This assessment only considers the Proposed Development as per the layout shown on the LEMP in **Figure 2-5** in **Volume 4** of this ES. This includes the cable route connections. The visualisations indicate the approximate extent of the Proposed Development Site and potential for where the proposed solar panels might be visible within that extent.

2.5 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

This section considers the relevant planning framework in the context of landscape and visual issues. Not all policies are referred to or listed in full but those of most relevance to the Proposed Development Site and the nature of the Proposed Development are included.

2.5.1 National Planning Policy

At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, (last updated February 2025) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (Section 2), and that design (Section 12), and effects on the natural environment (Section 15) "*are important components of this*".

Paragraph 11 sets out that in determining applications for sustainable development this means that developments which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved. Paragraph 11 also directs that permission should be granted unless:

> *"any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole" or "the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan."*

The areas or assets of particular importance in respect of landscape and visual matters referred to within the relevant footnote 7 are:

- A National Landscape;
- A National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast.

The list also includes important habitats sites, irreplaceable habitats and / or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt or Local Green Space; designated heritage assets or heritage assets of archaeological interest; and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

Section 11 sets out considerations in 'Making Effective Use of Land' and notes in Paragraph 129 that in respect of development density, the considerations should include whether a place is well-designed and "*the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting … or of promoting regeneration and change*".

In section 12, 'Achieving well-designed places', Paragraph 135 sets out policies and decisions for achieving well designed places, ensuring that [inter alia] 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, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; and*
>
> *e) optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks."*

In section 15, 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment', Paragraph 187 sets out [inter alia] that:

> *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*
>
> *a] protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (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 the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;"*

In respect of valued landscapes, Paragraph 188 states that planning policy should:

> *"distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework ; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries"*

Paragraphs 189-190 require that:

> *"189. 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 conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. 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 area.*
>
> *190. When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development 67 other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:*
>
> *(a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy.*
>
> *(b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
>
> *(c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated".*

Footnote 67 notes that:

> *"whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined."*

Paragraph 198 requires decisions to ensure that:

> *"… new development is appropriate for its location …" including by limiting the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation."*

The 'National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3) (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2024) (read with the overarching 'National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1) (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2025)) includes objectives and policies aimed at the understanding, protecting, managing and planning of the landscape and visual impact of proposals.

Paragraph 2.5.2 notes that:

> *"Proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design, particularly in respect of landscape and visual amenity, opportunities for co-existence/co-location with other marine and terrestrial uses, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology and heritage."*

Figure 2-1 in **Volume 4** of this ES details the relevant policies and designations for LVIA. For further details of the National Legislative and NPPF refer to Chapter 1 of this ES.

National Planning Practice Guidance, Natural Environment (NPPG) (2025)

Paragraph 042 of the Natural Environment Guidance of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government et. al., 2025) addresses how development within the setting of protected landscape should be dealt with. It states that:

> *"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 area will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account."*

2.5.2 Local Landscape Planning Policy

The Proposed Development Site and study areas lie entirely within the administrative area of BDBC.

The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) (BDLP) was adopted in May 2016 (BDBC, 2016). It guides future development and use of land in the borough and contains the following policies which are relevant to this LVIA:

Policy EM1 – Landscape states that:

> *"Development will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated, through an appropriate assessment, that the proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned. Development proposals must respect, enhance and not be detrimental to the character or visual amenity of the landscape likely to be affected, paying particular regard to:*
>
> *a) The particular qualities identified within the council's landscape character assessment and any subsequent updates or relevant guidance.*
>
> *b) The visual amenity and scenic quality.*
>
> *c) The setting of a settlement, including important views to, across, within and out of settlements.*
>
> *d) The local character of buildings and settlements, including important open areas.*
>
> *e) Trees, Ancient Woodland, hedgerows, water features such as rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks.*
>
> *f) Intrinsically dark landscapes.*
>
> *g) Historic landscapes, parks and gardens and features; and*
>
> *h) The character of the borough's rivers and tributaries, including the River Loddon and Test, which should be safeguarded.*

Development proposals must also respect the sense of place, sense of tranquillity or remoteness, and the quiet enjoyment of the landscape from public rights of way. Development proposals will not be accepted unless they maintain the integrity of existing settlements and prevent their coalescence.

Where appropriate, proposals will be required to include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings. The assessment of character and visual quality and the provision of a landscaping scheme should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed."

Designation of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty reflects the national importance of that landscape and its setting. Development proposals in the AONB or its setting will also be determined in accordance with national planning policy and criteria set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan."

Policy EM2 – Strategic Gaps states (inter alia) that:

"In order to prevent coalescence of built-up areas and to maintain the separate identity of settlements, the generally open and undeveloped nature of the following gaps will be protected:

Basingstoke -Sherborne St John

Development in gaps will only be permitted where:

a) *It would not diminish the physical and/or visual separation; and*

b) *It would not compromise the integrity of the gap either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development; or*

c) *it is proposed through a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order, including Community Right to Build Orders."*

Policy EM5 – Green Infrastructure states (inter alia) that:

"Development proposals will only be permitted where they do not:

a) Prejudice the delivery of the council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (and subsequent updates);

b) Result in the fragmentation of the green infrastructure network by severing important corridors/links; or

c) Result in undue pressure on the network which cannot be fully mitigated.

The council will support proposals which seek to improve links and remedy identified deficiencies in the green infrastructure network in accordance with the council's Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The council will seek to protect and enhance the quality and extent of public open space and public rights of way. (…)

Development proposals will be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that green infrastructure can be provided and phased to support the requirements of proposed development and be in accordance with the council's adopted green space standards."

Policy EM8 – Commercial Renewable/Low Carbon Energy Generation states (inter alia) that:

"Development proposals for the commercial generation of energy from renewable and low carbon resources (excluding wind turbines) will be permitted unless there are adverse environmental, economic or social impacts, including any long term and cumulative adverse impacts which are not outweighed by the benefits."

Policy EM11 - The Historic Environment states (inter alia) that:

"All development must conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance."

2.5.3 Local Guidance

In addition to the policy documents identified above, there are a number of local guidance documents with associated policies and guidance relevant to this LVIA. For a full list of references refer to Section 2.12 of this Chapter. The key guidance documents include:

- The Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (BDBC, 2021a);
- Landscape and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (BDBC, 2018a);
- Appendix 14 - Countryside Design Summary (CDS) SPD (BDBC, 2008);
- Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Sensitivity Study (BDBC, 2021b).
- Green Infrastructure Strategy for Basingstoke and Deane 2018-29 (BDBC, 2018b);
- NWD AONB Management Plan 2019-2024 (extended to November 2025) (North Wessex Downs Council of Partners, 2019);
- ANOB Position Statement on Renewable Energy (NWD Council of Partners, 2012);
- AONB Setting Position Statement (NWD Council of Partners, 2019);
- Historic Landscape Characterisation (Hampshire County Council, 1999); and
- Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan 2011 – 2029 (Sherborne St John Parish Council, 2017).

These documents form part of the documented baseline and are considered in the assessment.

2.6 Baseline Conditions

This section provides a review of the key local guidance documents and identifies those landscape and visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects and those which are scoped out from further assessment as effects have been "*judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further*" in line with GLVIA, Paragraph 3.19 (LI and IEMA, 2013).

2.6.1 The Proposed Development Site Context and Landscape Fabric

The Proposed Development Site is located on land north and south of Rookery Farm Lane, to the south of Monk Sherborne, North of Basingstoke. It is centred at National Grid Reference (NGR) 460512,155345 and covers a total area of c. 87.5 hectares including the grid route (the main solar development area is 82.9ha over two separate land parcels).

Proposed Development infrastructure would comprise solar panels and other infrastructure mostly within the lower lying sections of up to five large arable fields totalling c. 48.5ha, dispersed into two parcels. Up to c. 13ha would be retained as farmland with c. 21.4ha retained for mitigation, environmental and Green Infrastructure (GI) enhancements, and management of existing features.

In general, the Proposed Development Site parcels lie on sloping, north to northeast facing land to the north of the A339 between Weybrook Park Golf Club and the villages of Sherborne St John and Monk Sherborne. It is c. 0.7km northwest of the built-up fringes of Basingstoke.

The Proposed Development Site context embraces an area of open, large-scale, gently undulating, arable farmland to the northwest of Basingstoke. It is slightly elevated between c. 125m above ordnance datum (AOD) and c. 95m AOD, with varying degrees of intervisibility but with a general fall of terrain and focus to the north and east to face Basingstoke, from the higher points to the south. Areas surrounding the Proposed Development Site to the south embrace expansive, large scale open, arable farmland and major road corridors, while to the north it embraces a lower lying, heavily wooded, settled landscape. At other points to the east, it includes a variety of contrasting land uses including for leisure in the form of recent golf course development, woodland, settlement expansion and the urban edges of Basingstoke.

Given this context, the Proposed Development Site is influenced by a range of surrounding landscapes and a mix of built and natural influences which indicates a simple, large scaled transitional landscape. To the east the larger urban edges and infrastructure influences provide taller focal points and man-made elements within the landscape, while to the lower lying, undulating and more wooded north side, there are more enclosed rural areas with smaller villages.

At points to the south, beyond the A339, further areas of large-scale rolling, open farmland continue to provide a gradual transition across the more valued landscapes associated with the southeastern fringes of the NWD NL, formerly an AONB. However, the rising landform and the A339 road corridor and associated vegetation patterns, reduces visibility and connectivity from slightly lower points to the north of the road, around the Proposed Development Site context, with the A339 road corridor forming a local ridgetop element in most views across the Proposed Development Site from the north. Further views south and southwest are then reduced from within the NL.

The large-scale, frequently unenclosed arable fields are strong characteristics of the host landscape, within and around the southern half of the Proposed Development Site and contribute to a simple and open landscape pattern in these areas where farm intensification has removed some field boundary hedgerows. Within this context there are occasional long lines of mature, wooded, often intermittent, scrubby, reduced hedgerows and some shelter belt planting, but few woodland blocks. The sloping context and transition from south to north continues to a more wooded, and enclosed landscape across the northern half of the Proposed Development Site context. Within this context, local landform variations slope down to the east and to the northwest from higher points along Rookery Farm Lane to the south, which bisects the Proposed Development Site running from the A339 to the villages of Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John.

A number of PRoW run adjacent to the eastern and western Proposed Development Site boundaries and between the eastern parcels at Stokes Lane including the long-distance route the St James Way along the eastern Proposed Development Site boundary. These PRoW then continue to connect with a wider network of PRoW with a stronger focus to the north, connecting the two nearest settlements of Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John to further recreational routes and long-distance paths to the south. However, to the south side of the Proposed Development Site some PRoW stop and are severed by the road network and the A339, limiting wider connections in the direction.

Beyond the mix of settlement patterns to the north and east, there are just isolated scattered residential dwellings and farmsteads adjacent to the Proposed Development Site at Queens Cottages (3no. dwellings), Manor Farm and Rookery Farm to the north, but elsewhere there are no other properties within the Proposed Development Site or on the boundary.

The Proposed Development Site does not lie within a NL nor any locally defined landscapes such as AGLV but does lie close to the NWD NL at the southernmost tip of the NL. At this point the area is marked by gradual transitions though arable farmland. In this context the Proposed Development Site lies within land that faces away from the designation and is physically separated from it by the A339 road corridor. This combination of elements limits clear intervisibility with the NL and particularly from defined Special Qualities, the focus of which is more clearly to the west and northwest.

The elements and features of the Proposed Development Site will have varying value and susceptibility to change, with the field boundaries being more sensitive to change than the areas of farmland.

Together these elements contribute to the Proposed Development Site fabric having a **Medium Sensitivity** to this Proposed Development type. i.e., a landscape of moderately valued characteristics, overall condition and scenic quality and with a moderate level of susceptibility to change from the Proposed Development within a large, open scale and simple transitional landscape influenced by a contrasting mix of surrounding urban and natural influences.

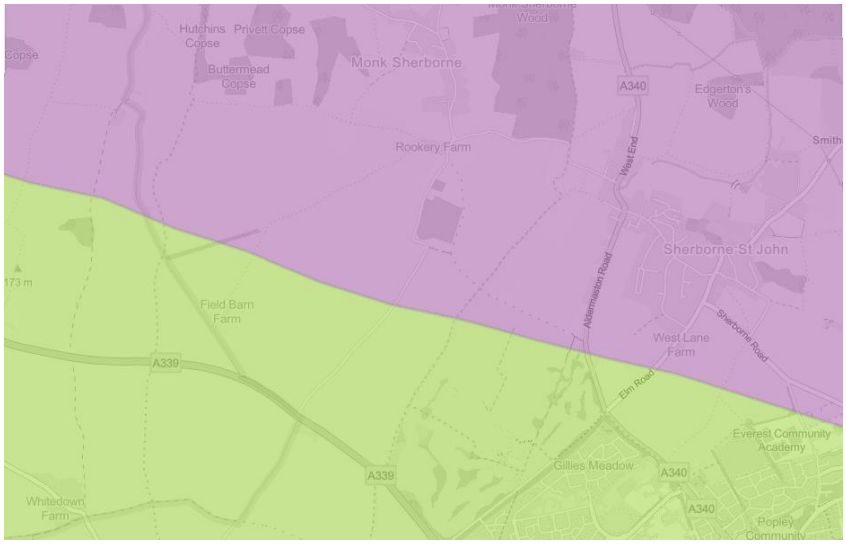
2.6.2 Landscape Character

The following section provides a summary of LCAs and LCTs identified in published landscape character assessments, which are likely to be affected by the Proposed Development. It also includes published assessments, undertaken at national, and district scales.

National Character Areas

The area that has potential to be affected by the Proposed Development is defined at the national level by Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) Profiles. The Proposed Development Site straddles two areas with NCA Profile: 129 - Thames Basin Heaths covering the northern half of the Proposed Development Site and NCA Profile: 130 - Hampshire Downs covering the southern half. These are shown on excerpt **Plan 2-1** below.

Plan 2-1: National Character Areas



The NCA129 (purple tone in **Plan 2-1**) covers the immediate setting of the Proposed Development Site to the north. It extends in a broad band up to 10-12km wide from north to south and up to c. 60km east to west and covers the principal zones of visibility from the Proposed Development. Of relevance to the Proposed Development Site, the NCA Profile summarises the area (inter alia) as:

> *"West of the greenbelt, 20th-century development has given rise to large conurbations including Camberley and the 'new town' of Bracknell. (…) a major road network incorporates the M25 and M3. This densely settled area can be a significant source of pollution and rapid run-off.*
>
> *Further from London, in the west, the settlement pattern is a mix of dispersed hamlets, farmsteads and houses interspersed with villages, many of medieval origin.*
>
> *(…)*
>
> *Woodland accounts for a quarter of this NCA, reflecting the predominance of low-grade agricultural land. Only 20 per cent of this woodland is on ancient woodland sites, with the majority of it having grown up or been planted on former heathland. (…) In this heavily wooded landscape, there are significant timber and biomass opportunities ".*
>
> *(…)*
>
> *Non-agricultural land uses are widespread and include large plantations and military bases (including Aldershot). Formal and informal greenspace is concentrated in the east of the NCA, and includes country parks, woodlands and golf courses (such as Wentworth). The Kennet and Blackwater valleys are a focus for sand and gravel extraction.*
>
> *(…)*
>
> *In the far west, the chalk scenery of the Hampshire Downs escarpment and the countryside around the River Pang are both designated as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), which makes up 17 per cent of the NCA."*

Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) are included within the NCA 129 profile. For this LVIA they include (inter alia):

- *"SEO 1- … manage and create woodlands, highway verges, field margins, reedbeds and other features in urban and rural settings to intercept run-off and to filter pollutants"*
- *"SEO 2: Maximise the variety of ecosystem services delivered by wooded features (…). Conserve soils, water, biodiversity and the sense of place and history; enhance timber and biomass production; and provide for recreation and tranquillity as appropriate."*
- *SEO 3: Enhance the sense of history and biodiversity by conserving, restoring and building the resilience of long-established habitats such as heathland, ancient woodland and meadows;*
- *SEO 4: With a focus on the Blackwater Valley, Newbury and nearby major settlements such as Reading, provide good-quality green infrastructure (incorporating commons, woodlands and restored gravel pits) to facilitate people's sustainable engagement with the local landscape."*

The NCA130 (green tone in **Plan 2-1**) covers the immediate setting of the Proposed Development Site to the south. It extends in a more rounded area from Basingstoke to Winchester and c. 25-30km from north to south and east to west. It covers the principal zones of visibility from the Proposed Development. Of relevance to the Proposed Development Site the NCA Profile summarises the area (inter alia) as:

> *"The Hampshire Downs are part of the central southern England belt of Chalk, rising to 297 m in the north-west on the Hampshire-Wiltshire border. A steep scarp face delineates the Downs to the north, overlooking the Thames Basin, and to the east, overlooking the Weald. The majority of the area is an elevated, open, rolling landscape dominated by large arable fields with low hedgerows on thin chalk soils, scattered woodland blocks (mostly on clay with- flint caps) and shelterbelts. To the east hedgerows are often overgrown and there are larger blocks of woodland. A fifth of the area is within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and 6 per cent in the South Downs National Park due to the scenic quality of the landscape. Flower- and invertebrate-rich remnants of calcareous grassland remain mostly along the northern scarp and on isolated commons throughout."*

SEOs are included within the NCA130 profile. For this LVIA they include (inter alia):

- *"SEO 2: Ensure that the remnant areas of biodiversity-rich chalk grassland are retained and managed to ensure good condition and seek opportunities to restore areas in poor condition and extend the area of this habitat. Protect and manage the associated historic features of these sites."*
- *"SEO 3: Work with landowners and the farming community to encourage sustainable food and fodder production that also retains or enhances landscape character, provides habitats for wildlife, and minimises the impacts on ecosystems such as water and soil and on the historic features in the landscape."*
- *SEO 4: Encourage woodland management regimes that: ensure good condition of priority habitats and species; maximise the potential ecosystem benefits of woodland such as carbon sequestration, water quality and regulation, timber provision, recreation and biomass potential; and enhance the landscape visually."*

County and District Landscape Character Assessments

At the county level, the Proposed Development Site lies within the Basingstoke Open Downs (8b) LCA as defined within the Hampshire County Council assessment (1999) and shown on **Figure 2-2a** in **Volume 4** of this ES.

At the district level the Proposed Development Site and study areas lie within the BDBC administrative area. Within this area, the most recent published character study is included within the Basingstoke and Deane Landscape Character Assessment (BDLCA) (BDBC, 2021a).

Within the context of this study, the Proposed Development Site and surrounding study lies within a section of LCA16: Basingstoke Down (see **Figure 2.2b** in **Volume 4** of this ES) to the northwest of Basingstoke. The host LCA16 covers the Proposed Development Site and immediate setting up to 0.75km to the north, 2km to the south and east and c. 3km to the west. Two further areas of LCA16 exist to the south of Basingstoke.

It therefore provides the key focus of landscape character across the detailed study area for the Proposed Development and covers most of the principal zones of visibility in the surrounding landscape (see **Figures 2-3 to 2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES).

The BDLCA notes the location and boundaries at LCA16:

> *"…This irregularly-shaped area lies in the centre of the Borough, taking its form from the settlement of Basingstoke, which defines its eastern boundary and, for a part to the south, its northern edge. Most of its northern boundary is defined by the distinct change in geology, relief and vegetation characteristics between chalkland and lowland mosaic landscapes. The western and southern boundaries mark a transition to a more enclosed mosaic of farmland and woodland characteristic to the surrounding Character Areas. The north-westernmost extent of the northern part of the Character Area, is within the North Wessex Downs AONB".*

The BDLCA notes the overall character of LCA16 as:

> *"…an area of relatively consistent landscape character, the urban form of Basingstoke creating a unifying element within a landscape of varying landform, which predominately falls to face Basingstoke. The area is characterised by a large-scale pattern of arable fields with low, well-trimmed hedges that have become weak and broken in places. These elements, together with the infrequent woodland blocks and small-scale woodland blocks, give a feeling of openness to the area. Urban influences, such as golf courses on the edge of Basingstoke, and main roads/motorway development, adversely affect the rural character of parts of the landscape. The major settlement of Basingstoke, and its associated infrastructure, exerts a strong urban influence on the character of the immediate surrounding landscape, affecting its rural character. In terms of settlement pattern, however, development outside Basingstoke is limited to a scattering of isolated farmsteads and small villages/hamlets."*

The overarching key characteristics of LCA16 are defined in the BDLCA. Those relevant to the Proposed Development Site include (inter alia):

- *"Rolling landform to the north, becoming more undulating and northward sloping to the south to face Basingstoke;*
- *Predominantly large-scale farmland, lacking a distinctive sense of place;*
- *Provides landscape setting for the western and southern parts of Basingstoke, whilst the western quarter of the area lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB. Urban influences affect much of the area, with Weybrook golf course to the north-west of Basingstoke, and Dummer golf course to the south-west of Basingstoke, and significant noise intrusion from the M3 motorway and A-roads;*
- *Open character formed by large-scale, arable fields, the mix of track-bound fields, large wavy-edged fields and parliamentary fields reflecting enclosure from post-medieval to 19th century times;*

- *Low, well-cut hedgerows and very few woodland blocks, although shelter belt planting exists north of Basingstoke, and very occasional remnants of ancient semi-natural woodland exists, especially concentrated in the south of the area;*
- *High intervisibility within the area due to the lack of woodland or strong hedgerow structure, enabling views of Basingstoke from many parts of the Character Area;*
- *The Character Area adjoins a number of settlements, including Basingstoke to the east, the village of Sherborne St John to the north-east, Monk Sherborne to the north-west, and the small village of Dummer to the south. The Character Area provides the setting to these settlements and the village Conservation Areas, and helps maintain the separate identities between each settlement;*
- *There is limited settlement within the Character Area itself, the main exceptions being (…) part of Wootton St Lawrence to the west. Elsewhere, there are scattered isolated farmsteads, linked by relatively small, narrow roads, contrasting with direct but intrusive road network linking Basingstoke with surrounding areas via the M3 and A-roads. Roman road defines the abrupt, straight, western built edge to Basingstoke, and the M3 corridor marks a similar sharp edge on the southern side;*
- *Public Rights of Way link Basingstoke to the surrounding countryside, and provide walkers with a sense of tranquillity within the AONB, but views of settlement on slopes facing Basingstoke limit the sense of remoteness;*
- *Various Scheduled Ancient Monuments, including Woodgarston ring motte, and a Roman site north-west of Woodgarston Farm, within the northern part of the Character Area, north-east of Upper Wootton."*

The BDLCA also notes key issues for LCA16 as:

- *"Under-management of some ancient semi-natural woodlands;*
- *Weakened hedgerow structure across the more extensive, open landscape types, resulting from previous hedgerow removal;*
- *Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture through scrub encroachment and agricultural improvement, particularly conversion to arable farmland;*
- *Areas of intensive farming with low biodiversity levels;*
- *Management of grass field margins, road verges, hedgebanks, and uncultivated buffer strips adjacent to sensitive wildlife habitats to maintain or increase biodiversity*
- *Intrusion of built development, urban land uses and major roads on the landscape;*
- *Pressure for housing development, including extensions to Basingstoke and Sherborne St John, encroaching into the Character Area."*

The BDLCA goes on to provide some points for guidance and aims for the landscape of LCA16, noting:

> *"…maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland; limiting the effect of settlement expansion on the landscape and maintaining the separate identities of settlements where possible. Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland. Areas which are within the AONB or form part of its setting should be considered with regard to the landscape, land management and development key issues and polices set out in the North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan, including those related to dark skies, siting of new development and intrusion from certain types of development".*

Landscape Guidelines of relevance for the Proposed Development for land management include:

- *"Conserve, enhance and restore the woodlands;*
- *Ensure consistent management and restocking of hedgerows across the Character Area, and particularly within extensive open areas, to enhance the hedgerow network;*
- *Encourage landowners to maintain an appropriate management regime using traditional farming techniques where these will conserve and enhance key landscape features such as hedgerows and woodlands, and improve biodiversity through enhanced field margins and chalk grassland;*
- *Raise awareness of the historic dimension and underlying archaeology of the landscape to landowners and conserve historic elements of the landscape;*
- *Encourage the use of suitable fence styles, in keeping with the local style or material."*

Guidelines of relevance for the Proposed Development for built development include:

- *"Carefully site new development, ensuring it is consistent with the pattern of existing settlement and limits inappropriate urbanisation of the landscape from expansion of built form, particularity on the edge of Basingstoke;*
- *Conserve existing historic settlements, and maintain the character of associated conservation areas;*
- *Limit the effect of development on the separate identities of Sherborne St John, Oakley and Basingstoke by retaining existing landscape structure including boundary hedges and trees in the area, to help to retain essential gaps between settlements;*
- *Encourage any new built development to use locally characteristic building forms and include sympathetic contemporary architecture, through high quality detailing, architectural features, and use of natural building materials;*
- *Avoid the location of new large or bulky structures where visually intrusive on this Character Area. Subject any development to rigorous landscape and visual impact assessment, site carefully, and design to minimise impact and integrate with the rural context;*

- *Conserve the rural roads lanes, minimising small-scale incremental change such as signage, fencing and kerbing, or improvements to the road network which could change their character. Promote the use of traditional signage features with particular regard to local style and materials;*

- *Ensure that road lighting schemes are assessed for visual impact and encourage conservation of the existing 'dark skies' on the skyline."*

This LVIA has reviewed the host LCA from the published documents above and in light of further sitework and desktop review and appraised the baseline sensitivity below with reference to the methodology criteria in **Tables 5.1-3** of **Technical Appendix 2-1** in **Volume 3** of this ES.

Landscape Value

The landscape surrounding the Proposed Development Site is representative of some of the defined characteristics noted in the BDLCA descriptions with a patchwork of largely "*northward sloping" and "large-scale farmland".* The Proposed Development Site has an "o*pen character formed by large-scale, arable fields"* and there are *"few woodland blocks, although shelter belt planting exists".* This provides varying degrees of *"high intervisibility"* with increased visibility focused from higher points to the south across the Proposed Development Site to the north.

Within this visual context of landform sloping to the north, there are variations with land also sloping down to the east and northwest. These variations increase visibility, where "*urban influences affect much of the area, with Weybrook golf course to the north-west of Basingstoke"* and also to the north settlements are present in the wider landscape.

To the south, the rising landform reduces or curtails visibility and consequently connectivity. Also at this point the "*direct but intrusive road network"* along the A339 forms a local ridgetop element in views from the north across the Proposed Development Site. Further views south and southwest are then reduced to more distinctive valued landscapes and further sections of the LCA to the west, around the edges of the NWD NL and, its more valued, intact, distinctive and immediate setting.

The Proposed Development Site therefore lies within an open, large scale, transitional landscape influenced by man-made features and a range of urban influences which reduces the distinctiveness, intactness and scenic quality.

The landscape fabric of the Proposed Development Site is dictated by "*areas of intensive farming with low biodiversity levels"* and a somewhat *"weakened hedgerow structure"* with many hedgerows that are reduced and intermittent, which reduces the condition and unity across the Proposed Development Site. It is also defined as *"infrequent woodland blocks and small-scale woodland blocks",* which add some isolated structure.

The extensive areas of arable farmland have also reduced the *"extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture"*, which are noted as key issues for LCA16 in the BDLCA and affect natural heritage interests. The settlements to the north however include CAs which provides some cultural heritage interest.

There are several PRoW adjacent to the Proposed Development Site, some that run between Proposed Development parcels and a minor lane bisects the Proposed Development Site. Elsewhere, there is a golf course to the east but no other access or recreational opportunities within the immediate Proposed Development Site setting to the north of the A339 where experience of the landscape is important. These areas lie further to the south of the A339 and to the west.

These factors contribute to value at a community level. As such the landscape value within this section of the host LCA is assessed as **Medium Value**.

Landscape Susceptibility

The LCA is dominated by large scale sloping agriculture with a weakened landscape structure with lower levels of diversity landcover and pattern and influenced by a range of settlement and infrastructure and urban influences with trunk roads sitting at higher ridge and skyline points to the south. LCA16 is considered to be of **Medium Susceptibility** with moderate potential to accommodate the Proposed Development.

Landscape Sensitivity

The combination of the **Medium Value** and **Medium Susceptibility** results in a **Medium Sensitivity** to the Proposed Development.

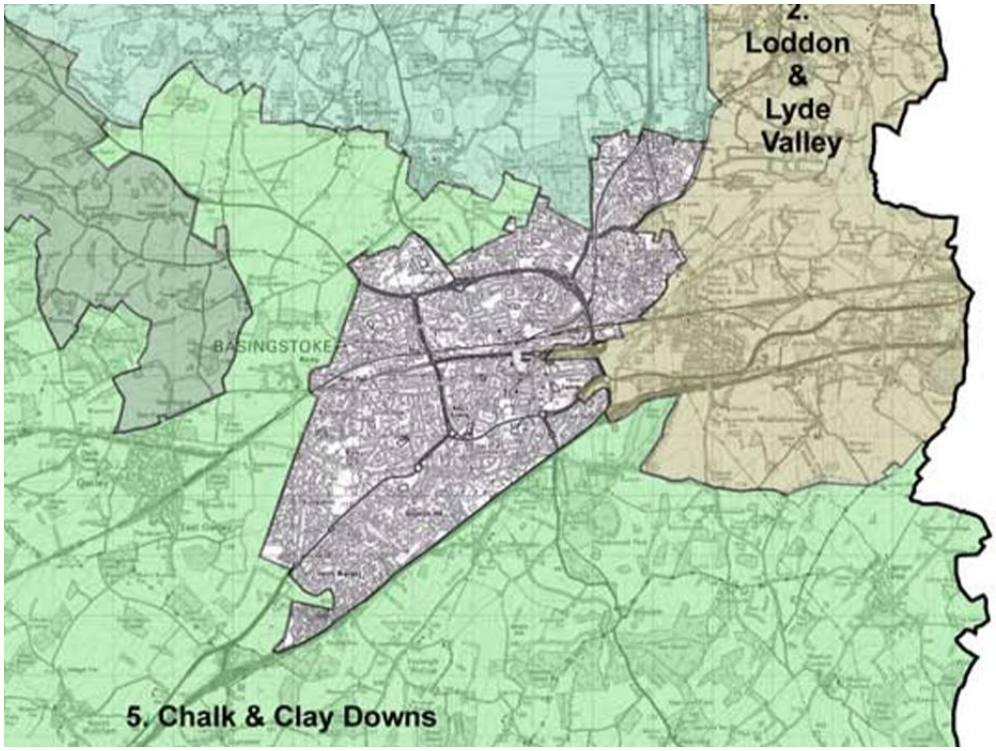
Countryside Design Summary

The CDS (BDBC, 2008) explains the design relationship between the borough's landscape, settlement patterns and buildings. It provides design criteria against which any future development can be assessed and aims to ensure that careful consideration is given to the way in which new development will relate to its surroundings. The CDS now forms part of the council's Design and Sustainability SPD.

The Proposed Development Site lies within the northeastern fringes of the Countryside Design Area 5 - Chalk and Clay Downs as shown on **Plan 2-2** below. The general description in this study notes that:

> *"This area comprises rolling chalk downland with deposits of clay and flint. There is a flat clay plateau in the east, which merges southwards into a distinct ridge and valley landscape. The area is distinguished from the North Wessex Downs by the greater degree of woodland cover, trees and hedgerows, which create a more enclosed landscape. Settlements are small and dispersed."*

Plan 2-2: Countryside Design Areas



The study goes on to note:

> *"Settlement density is fairly low and dispersed. There are few long views of the settlements, which are well integrated into the landscape through their positioning in relation to landform, woodland, hedgerows and trees."*

Design Implications are noted and include "*The woodlands, trees and hedgerows should be managed and conserved, to retain the sense of enclosure and avoid opening up long views.*"

The study then notes:

> *"New development should be carefully sited in the landscape with consideration for long distance views and traditional settlement form. Development should generally be located along the lower valley slopes, and be placed carefully in relation to existing woodland, trees and hedgerows.*
>
> *Where necessary, new development should allow sufficient room for a framework of trees to be planted, to integrate the built form into the surrounding landscape. Native trees and shrubs should be planted around development adjacent to open countryside."*

Surrounding Landscape Character Types

Within the detailed study area and within the principal areas of visibility note above, there are two further character areas of some relevance, where there could be some potential for theoretical visibility as illustrated in the ZTVs (see **Figures 2-3 to 2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES). These include LCA04 - North Sherborne, which is defined in the BDLCA (2021a) and covers the wooded landscapes to the north of Sherborne St John.

It also includes the nearest character area from the NWD NL Management Plan (NWD, Council of Partners, 2019b) LCT2G - Hannington Downs, which overlaps with the higher western sections of LCA16, to the south of the A339 at its nearest eastern point, as shown on **Figure 2-2b** in **Volume 4** of this ES.

These two areas cover separate sections of the landscape with different orientations, aspects and focus.

While the ZTVs **in Figures 2-3 to 2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES indicate some theoretical visibility from the nearest fringes of these areas, the potential for clear view and prominent changes to character patterns would be restricted. From the LCA04 to the north views would be restricted to isolated boundary points to the north side Sherborne St John, where the Proposed Development Site would be seen outwith this area and in filtered views south, as evidenced by VP 10 (**Figure 2-15** in **Volume 4**).

From the LCT2G to the south and west, views and the potential for effects would be limited from points beyond the nearest Proposed Development Site boundary. This is evidenced by VP 7 (**Figure 2-12** in **Volume 4**) and further by illustrative VP F in **Technical Appendix 2-2** in **Volume 3** of this ES. These show the Proposed Development Site would only be partially visible in lower lying undulations, in falling ground to the northeast and away from views with and across this character area.

This was evidenced through the site visit and photography where the Proposed Development would be filtered and screened from most publicly accessible locations from these surrounding areas and in views clearly outwith these areas and would therefore have limited potential to affect the

characteristics. As such these areas are not considered further in detail within this assessment. However, views are considered in more detail within the assessment of effects section.

Landscape Designations

Landscape designations are landscapes which are attributed special protection at national (Legislative) to local (Local Development Plan) level, to protect against inappropriate development. These are outlined in this Chapter and are indicated on **Figure 2-1** in **Volume 4** of this ES. Historic and Ecological designations also contribute to the overall landscape character and quality but these are dealt with separately in **Chapter 3: Cultural Heritage** of this ES and 'R1 Stokes Lane Solar Farm Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' submitted in support of the application.

The Proposed Development Site is not covered by any national or local landscape designations. However, it does lie c. 0.28km to the northeast of a nationally designated area, the NWD NL. The relevant aspects for LVIA are detailed below. Refer to 'Stokes Lanes Solar Farm Planning, Design and Access Statement' for full details of the national and local policies regarding landscape designations.

North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan

The 'North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan' (NWD, Council of Partners, (2019b) is currently under review, with a view to publishing a revised Plan in late 2025. It reinforces the primary purpose of the NL (AONB) designation is "*conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area*."

The NWD Plan defines the location as;

> *"From their western tip at Calne in Wiltshire, the North Wessex Downs reach across central southern England in a broad eastward arc through southern Swindon and Oxfordshire and West Berkshire. They abut the Chilterns AONB along the River Thames in the Goring Gap area north-west of Reading, dipping south and then sweeping west along the River Kennet valley then south to encircle Newbury, encompassing the northern reaches of the rolling chalk hills of the Hampshire Downs. They then stretch back towards Devizes, across the northern fringes of the high chalk upland of Salisbury Plain and the low-lying Vale of Pewsey."*

The NWD Plan notes a Vision for the NL as a:

> *"Vast dramatic, undeveloped and distinct chalk downlands with nationally significant areas of seminatural chalk grassland, contrasting with well-wooded plateaux, arable farmland, heathland and intimate and secluded valleys, all rich in wildlife and cultural heritage; a high quality landscape of national and international significance which persists in increasingly urbanised surroundings; where people live, work and relax; where visitors are welcomed and contribute to a vibrant rural economy; and access to which supports the health and wellbeing of local residents and visitors alike."*

Special Qualities defined in the NWD Plan relating to the theme of 'Landscape' include;

- *"Open Downland extending from Roundway Down near Devizes to Lardon Chase overlooking the Thames at Streatley is dissected by dry valleys and long steep scarps, with limited tree cover and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity.*
- *Downland with Woodland on the dip slope descending to Kennet Valley and south across the Hampshire Downs, offering softer contours, woodland cover and a mix of field patterns.*

- *Centred on Savernake Forest and West Woods, the Wooded Plateau consists of extensive tracts of semi-natural ancient woodland, wood pasture with majestic veteran trees, and 18th and 19th century Beech plantations, as well as more recent coniferous plantations.*

- *At the northernmost tip of Salisbury Plain, the open rolling landform of the High Chalk Plain creates a bleak, spacious landscape under arable production and devoid of settlement, with long views and a strong sense of remoteness and isolation.*

- *The distinctive northern Downs Plain and Scarp plunges down from the chalk plain to the Vale of White Horse, creating a dramatic recognisable horizon.*

- *The Vales of Pewsey and sections of the Thames Valley floor adjoining the Chilterns AONB offer productive loamy and alluvial soils where springs issue from the chalk and compact settlements contrast with scattered farmsteads.*

- *The River Valleys of the Kennet, Lambourn, Pang and Bourne form very distinct linear landscapes, characterised by a rich mix of grazed pastures, water meadows, wetland and woodland. Steeply rising slopes create an intimate and enclosed character.*

- *The Lowland Mosaic, curving around Newbury and the lower Kennet Valley has a varied geology of clays, silts and sands giving rise to a diverse mix of soils and, in turn, a mosaic of ancient semi-natural woodlands, plantations, remnant heathland and more open farmland areas where sunken lanes heighten the sense of seclusion."*

In this context of the NL and its Special Qualities, the Proposed Development Site lies within falling terrain to the northeast side of the southeasternmost tip of the NL. At this location it encompasses the eastern edges of the Hampshire Downs noted above, where they descend down towards Basingstoke. It therefore lies at a point away from core areas of the NL and many of the more distinctive central sections associated with the "*broad eastward arc*" and within the fringes with "*increasingly urbanised surroundings; where people live, work and relax.*"

The NWD Plan also highlights key issues and defines plan strategies and polices. Of relevance to the Proposed Development Site and the wider setting to the east of the southeasternmost tip of the NL include (inter alia):

- *"a) The potential for development beyond the AONB boundary to visually damage or undermine the scale and critical qualities of landscape character areas;*

- *The need to conserve and enhance the remoteness and expansive open scale of the downland landscape;*

- *Encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes, husbandry and ecology and ensuring future veteran tree succession*

- *k) The need to maintain the pattern of discrete villages set within a quiet rural landscape, ensuring that the views to the surrounding dramatic scarps are undamaged*

- *o) Intense pressure for development throughout the AONB and its setting that threatens the character and quality of its landscape and risks merging of small settlements, encroachment by larger settlements and changes to the scale and nature of development boundaries."*

North Wessex Downs AONB Position Statement on Renewable Energy (2012)

The AONB Position Statement on Renewable Energy (2012) prepared by the NWD, AONB Management Working Group and the Council of Partners including Local Authorities provides the NWD, AONB view on a variety of forms of Renewable Energy proposals based on existing planning policy.

It reinforces the primary purpose of AONB designation, which is: *"…to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act).*" It then notes "*This includes potential developments outside the AONBs that might, affect the natural beauty (including visual amenity and tranquillity) of the AONB or its setting.*"

The statement goes on to note the setting of the AONB as:

> *"The North Wessex Downs AONB is 'one of the most expansive, open and relatively remote AONBs in the south of England. Its natural beauty largely emerges from the characteristic open downland landscapes, with long views of beautiful landscapes, with little visual or noise disturbance. As such, The North Wessex Downs AONB is particularly sensitive to developments that are visually prominent, of an urban, suburban or industrial nature or are noisy…"*

The Statement notes forms of energy schemes and appropriateness within the setting. For Solar PV Farms it does not explicitly note locations in its setting but does note (inter alia) criteria including:

- *"that solar / PV farms should not result in the loss of the best agricultural land (Grades 1,2 3a) or land of ecological value;*
- *that sites are visually very well contained by hedgerows and trees; that no new access or power cables need to be constructed above ground to serve the site and that equipment and fencing on the site is also well designed, sympathetic to the setting and screened;*
- *that existing contours are used without the need for site levelling;*
- *if the land has been restored to grassland then subsequent reversion back to arable should be discouraged);*
- *that measures are taken within the site to improve ecology in line with local BAP/LNP objectives; consideration given to grazing options, agricultural production and sward management of land between and around the PV arrays; to improve boundary landscaping where required in accordance with the AONB Management Plan and agree suitable management of the land e.g. through grazing; and*
- *a clear commitment to community gain."*

North Wessex Downs (NWD) AONB Position Statement Setting (2019)

NWD, AONB Position Statement, Setting (Development Affecting the Setting of the NWD, AONB) (2019) was prepared by the NWD, AONB Management Working Group and the Council of Partners as an extension to the principles laid out within the NWD, AONB Management Plan (2019-2024).

The Statement reinforces the purposes of the AONB:

> *"….to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The AONB also has secondary purposes to increase awareness and understanding of the special qualities of the AONB, to take account of the needs of agriculture, forestry and other rural industries and to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities and those who live and work in the area."*

The Statement addresses the setting of the NWD and notes that it:

> *"…does not have a defined geographical boundary but it should be addressed as the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design can be considered to have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the North Wessex Downs AONB."*

The Statement goes on to note:

> *"The surroundings of the North Wessex Downs AONB and the protected landscape of the AONB add value to each other as the landscape and landforms link visually and functionally, joining the surroundings to the AONB. Proposals for change in the setting should, therefore, have regard to the inter-relationship with the AONB and the landscape character and special qualities."*

The Statement defines examples of adverse impacts on the setting of the AONB could include (inter alia) the following:

- *"development which would have a significant visual impact on views in or out of the AONB;*
- *breaking the skyline, particularly when this is associated with developments that have a vertical emphasis and / movement (chimneys, plumes or blades for example);*
- *loss of tranquillity through the introduction or increase of lighting, noise, or traffic movement or other environmental impact like dust, vibration, spatial associations and historic relationships;*
- *introduction of abrupt change of landscape character;*
- *loss of biodiversity, particularly if of habitats or species of importance to the AONB;*
- *loss of features of historic and natural landscape interest, particularly if these are contiguous with the AONB;*
- *change of use of land such that to cause harm to landscape character; and*
- *development individually or cumulatively giving rise to significantly increased traffic flows (…), resulting in loss of tranquillity and erosion of the character of rural roads and lanes."*

In terms of potential harm to the setting, the statement notes that:

> *"The North Wessex Downs AONB Partnership does not set out to judge the precise extent of the setting of the AONB. The scale, height, siting, use, materials or design of a proposed development will determine whether it affects the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB."*

The statement also notes that:

> *"…many issues in relation to new development within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB can be resolved through careful design, appropriate materials, location and layout and mitigation measures."*

It also notes expectations for development within or affecting the setting that include (inter alia):

- *"measures to consider impact on the setting of the AONB, through Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments;*
- *care over orientation, site layout, height and scale of structures and buildings;*
- *consideration not just of the site but also the landscape and land uses around and beyond it;*
- *careful use of colours, materials and non-reflective surfaces;*
- *restraint and care over the installation and use of (…) external lighting to prevent harm to the dark night skies of the AONB;*
- *the grouping of new structures and buildings close to existing structures and buildings to avoid new expanses of development that are visible and out of context; and*
- *detailed mitigation measures, for example including native landscaping (where possible contributing to BAP targets), and noise reduction (though again landscaping in certain contexts can be damaging to historic features/deposits/landscape/character so again will require careful consideration)."*

Other Relevant guidance on Landscape Setting and Views

Further advice and guidance on the landscape setting and views connected with heritage assets is provided within 'The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice (GPA) in Planning Note 3' (Historic England, 2017).

This GPA makes reference to the NPPF Glossary for definitions which are noted as:

> *"The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral."*

This is reinforced in GLVIA in Paragraph 6.5, where is also notes that:

> *"Where there are heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposed development their settings will need to be taken into account when mapping visibility and defining important views that may be altered by the proposal."*

The GPA goes on to note for wider landscapes:

> *"Extensive heritage assets, such as historic parks and gardens, landscapes and townscapes, can include many heritage assets, historic associations between them and their nested and overlapping settings, as well as having a setting of their own. A conservation area is likely to include the settings of listed buildings and have its own setting, as will the hamlet, village or urban area in which it is situated (explicitly recognised in green belt designations)."*

It then goes on to note in Paragraph 9 "*Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset or to the ability to appreciate that significance*."

The GPA also notes the contribution of views in Paragraph 10, noting:

> *"The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset."*

The GPA then addresses views which contribute more to understanding the significance of a heritage asset and it notes elements (inter alia) to include aspects for wider landscapes as:

- *"those where the composition within the view was a fundamental aspect of the design or function of the heritage asset*
- *those with historical associations, including viewing points and the topography of battlefields*
- *those with cultural associations, including landscapes known historically for their picturesque and landscape beauty, those which became subjects for paintings of the English landscape tradition, and those views which have otherwise become historically cherished and protected*
- *those where relationships between the asset and other heritage assets or natural features or phenomena such as solar or lunar events are particularly relevant."*

The GPA notes that views may be identified and protected by local planning policies and guidance. Such views include (inter alia):

- *"views identified as part of the plan-making process,*
- *views identified in character area appraisals or in management plans,*
- *important designed views from, to and within historic parks and gardens that have been identified as part of the evidence base for development plans, and*
- *views that are identified by local planning authorities when assessing development proposals."*

Other Designations and Features

There are several heritage and historic landscape features such as CAs and RPGs which can contribute to landscape character and be important in terms of their landscapes and landscape settings. These are detailed and assessed in full in **Chapter 3: Cultural Heritage** of this ES.

The nearest CAs lie to the north of the Proposed Development Site and include settlement at Monk Sherborne and two sections of settlement at Sherborne St John. As the screened ZTVs indicate (see **Figures 2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES) there would be some potential for views from the nearest sections of these CAs and they are considered in the visual assessment section of this Chapter.

While further CAs are present at Park Prewett and Ramsdell, these lie clearly beyond the principal zones of visibility as demonstrated by the screened ZTVs (see **Figures 2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES) and as such they are not considered further.

The nearest RPG as noted on the Historic England National Heritage List for England, Parks and Gardens at The Vyne lies c. 1.3km to the north of Proposed Development Site. The potential for visibility from key areas of the RPG would be limited, as the screened ZTV indicates (see **Figures 2-4a-b** in **Volume 4** of this ES), particularly with the wooded character of the RPG to the west.

While the grid connection point extends to a connection point on the southwestern boundary of the RPG, this aspect includes an underground cable connection to an existing SSEN overhead line, where it crosses Morgaston Road within an area of woodland. Visibility would be very limited and restricted to just points of construction contained within the immediate Proposed Development Site area. As such, no further assessment is considered necessary.

The farmland areas to the north of Basingstoke, up to the edges of Sherborne St John and including the Weybrook Park Golf Club and its landscape to the east of the Proposed Development Site, is also covered by a locally defined Strategic Gap, as defined by Policy EM2 – Strategic Gaps of the BDLP, which is a designation to "*prevent coalescence of built up areas and to maintain the separate identity of settlements" and also protect the 'generally open and undeveloped nature."*

As the ZTVs indicate, there is some potential for visibility across the western sections of the gap including parts of the golf course. It also shows that these would be at the lower end of visibility. As such, this area has been taken forward for further assessment.

Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan

The 'Sherborne St John Neighbourhood Plan' (Sherborne St John (SSJ) Parish Council, 2024) was originally published in 2017 and has since been modified; the updated version of the Plan was made by Full Council on 16 May 2024. The Plan forms part of the Development Plan and will be used to guide planning decisions in the Parish.

As an overview, the plan notes that the settlement of Sherborne St John:

> *"is recorded in the Domesday Book and has been closely linked with the influence derived from the inhabitants of The Vyne (a Grade II listed Tudor mansion, and its Registered Park and Garden – now belonging to the National Trust) since the 16th Century."*

The Plan notes further reference to the Strategic Gap above and notes that:

> *"The avoidance of coalescence is of utmost importance and proposals for a gap were firmly supported by the Parish. It is one of this Plan's objectives that the closing of the gap between Sherborne St John village and Basingstoke town should be avoided. Policy EM2 seeks to ensure that this erosion is avoided."*

The Plan also noted two constraints of particular importance, when considering the delivery of development. They are:

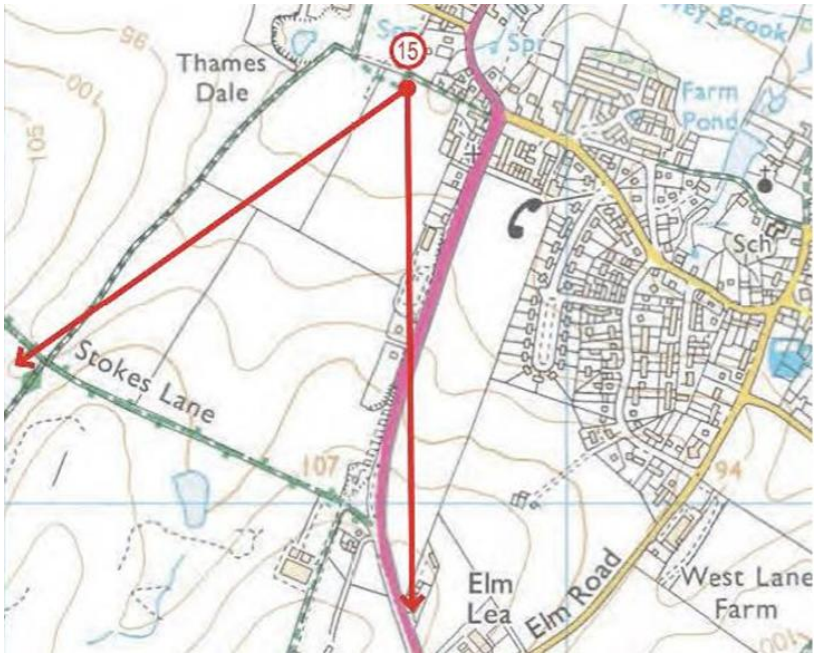
> *"…an extensive conservation area that covers both the northeastern and northwestern extremities of the village and the area of countryside to the south of the village edge which maintains the vital separation between Sherborne St John and Basingstoke."*

Regarding *"landscape"* matters, the Plan confirms (inter alia) that:

> *"The village of Sherborne St John itself is generally well contained by the surrounding landform. It rests within a hollow on the spring line, where the upper chalk to the south abuts the mottled clay to the north. The centre of the village is low-lying and contains areas prone to flooding, while the area to the north and south is generally on higher land. The rural area of the Parish does not contain any areas of significant sensitivity, although the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies around two miles to the east of Sherborne village."*

With regards to visual amenity and views, the plan notes key views within and around the Parish. Of relevance to the Proposed Development is 'Key View 15: View looking south from public footpath heading west from Dixon's Corner'. This key view is focussed on the rising farmland to the south of the settlement but on fields primarily to the east of the Proposed Development Site, as indicated by the Key View inset map in the Plan, as reproduced below as **Plan 2-3**. This view is represented by VP 5 in the VP assessment (see **Figure 2-10** in **Volume 4** of this ES).

Plan 2-3: Key View 15 Inset Map



For full details of the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan, refer to 'Stokes Lane Solar Farm Planning, Design and Access Statement'.

2.6.3 Visual Baseline

As defined in GLVIA3, the purpose of the visual assessment is (Paragraph 3.15):

"to establish the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points."

The extent of visibility is firstly considered within the ZTV and subsequently from a number of representative VPs that cover a broad range of sensitive receptors to represent different types of view and different types of viewer (i.e., visual receptors). Integral to this process is the need to define the visual value and susceptibility to change, against which the assessment of effects can be made.

Extent of Visibility

The extent of visibility is noted above in Section 5.3 of this Chapter and visibility is shown on the ZTVs on **Figures 2-3 and 2-4a-c** in **Volume 4** of this ES.

In summary, these show that with the different tiers of screening features shown on **Figures 2-4a-b**, theoretical visibility would be restricted from most points beyond principal zones up to c. 0.6km to the east, c.0.4km to the south up to and across the A339 south of Rookery Farm Lane, up to c. 0.5 km to the north and up to up to 1.5km to the southwest.

Within these principal zones, the areas of greatest visibility (i.e. yellow tones) would be restricted to the Proposed Development Site landscape and sections between the two parcels along Rookery Farm Lane extending up to c. 0.4km to the north and south. A further area of higher visibility would also be gained from an adjacent point at the northeast corner of Weybrook Park golf course within 0.1km to the east.

Beyond these points, the level of visibility or the extent of Proposed Development Site visible is quickly reduced to low levels of visibility (as shown by the blue areas on the ZTV on **Figure 2-4b**). Beyond these principal areas, the nature of intervening landform, landcover and settlement would restrict visibility towards the Proposed Development and the potential for effect is considered to be reduced. This includes most areas within the settlement beyond the immediate settlement edges of Sherborne St John and Monk Sherborne, with views from most of the lower lying settlement areas more restricted by rising landform and field boundaries as shown principally by VPs 5 and 9 (**Figures 2-10 and 2-14** in **Volume 4** of this ES), but also evident from an elevated point at VP 10 (**Figure 2-15** in **Volume 4** of this ES).

In the medium to long term, with environmental mitigation and enhancements incorporated, the level of visibility would be reduced further within these principal zones and the potential for clear views would be limited to lower levels of visibility as shown in the Year 15 screened ZTV in **Figure 2-4c** in **Volume 4** of this ES.

Key Visual Receptor Groups

A range of visual receptors and receptor groups can be expected to be affected by the Proposed Development from both static and sequential points. These receptors would include, but are not limited to residents, road users and those visiting the area for recreational, amenity and tourism purposes.

The extent of the effect upon certain groups would vary according to their value, level of susceptibility and sensitivity to the nature of development. These are detailed in Table 2.2.4 of **Technical Appendix 2-1**.

Representative Viewpoint Appraisal

The representative VP appraisal has been undertaken from ten representative VPs.

As noted in the introduction, the Proposed Development has undergone several design iterations to respond to various technical and environmental factors, including landscape and visual inputs and a further land parcel to the west was included. This was partly to incorporate some initial landscape and visual principles for removing development from higher, more visible slopes to the south. This required some additional VPs (such as VPs 8 and 9 and also illustrative VPs D and F).

Whilst this additional change has not been formally consulted upon, the general principles of scope noted in the BDBC Landscape responses have been taken account of in updating the proposed VPs for assessment.

The VPs represent a range of visual receptors and view types and were selected following the GLVIA3 guidance (LI and IEMA, 2013) and further LI guidance for the 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals'. They are used as 'samples' on which to base judgements and have helped establish how visible the Proposed Development would be from specific locations and help to gauge the effects upon visual amenity.

The photographs have also been taken from a range of 'publicly accessible' points, to cover a representative range of viewing distances, elevations and orientations, with different viewing experiences, in line with GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013). The VPs are defined in **Table 2-2** below and the VP Panoramas are shown in **Figures 2-6 to 2-15** in **Volume 3** of this ES and supported by the Illustrative photo panoramas in **Technical Appendix 2-2**.

Table 2-2: Representative Viewpoint Baseline

VP	Location	Grid Ref	Approx. Distance*	Key Receptor Group	Sensitivity to change
1	A339 at the junction with minor road to Monk Sherborne (illustrative photo view G and VP 8 detail sequential views)	460100, 154506	0.22km	Road users on major road - edge of the NL	Medium to Low
2	PRoW, north of the A339 and west of Weybrook Park Golf Club (illustrative photo view B details sequential views)	460683, 154612	0.04km	PRoW users on the eastern Proposed Development Site boundary	High-Medium
3	PRoW Stokes Lane, west (illustrative photo view C details sequential views)	460966, 155354	0.07km	Nearest residents and PRoW users on western Proposed Development Site boundary	High-Medium
4	PRoW Stokes Lane, east	461595, 155001	0.58km	PRoW users / recreation to the east	High-Medium
5	PRoW, Sherborne St John (key view 15 from the Neighbourhood Plan)	461786, 155724	0.51km	PRoW users and residents to the northeast	High-Medium
6	PRoW east side of All Saints Church, Monk Sherborne CA	460970, 155725	0.04km	PRoW users and visitors to the northwest	High-Medium
7	PRoW, east of Basingstoke Road and Field Barn Farm	459885, 155585	0.25km	PROW users to the west	High-Medium
8	Minor road to Monk Sherborne on the west edge of the CA	460742, 155678	0.1km	Road users on Proposed Development Ste boundary	Medium-Low
9	PRoW west side of Rookery Farm on west edge of Monk Sherborne CA	460627, 156114	0.4km	PRoW users to the northwest	High-Medium
10	PRoW north of Sherborne St John	461688, 156119	0.66km	PRoW users at elevated point to the north	High-Medium
Illustrative Photo locations – refer to Technical Appendix 2-2**					

VP	Location	Grid Ref	Approx. Distance*	Key Receptor Group	Sensitivity to change
A	Weybrook Park Golf Club				
B	Adjacent to PRoW at Weybrook Golf Club – scoping view 2a				
C	PRoW Stokes Lane – scoping view 3a				
D	Western boundary, to the east of a PRoW				
E	Monk Sherborne Road, east of Memorial, Salters Heath Road, Monk Sherborne – scoping view B				
F	Basingstoke road south of Field Barn Farm – scoping view C				
G	Rookery Farm Lane				
Notes					
*Distances are approximate to the nearest proposed infrastructure. **Given the changes to ZTV areas since EIA Scoping resulting from design iterations, the illustrative VPs D-I proposed within the EIA Scoping Report have been omitted due to lack of visibility from more distant fringe points of the detailed study area and replaced with the illustrative views above. This also accounted for fieldwork observations.					

2.6.4 Future Baseline

Only visual receptors present at the time of assessment have been considered within the main LVIA sections. However, a review has been undertaken to determine whether the existing baseline conditions might change between the time of undertaking the assessment and the future years in which the Proposed Development is planned to be constructed and become operational. This review included an evaluation of the planned development projects noted above in the introduction and consultation sections and as shown on **Figure 2-16** in **Volume 4** of this ES.

While the future developments and receptor groups noted above will add additional receptors to the wider study area, these would be beyond 0.8km to the south and east on the edges of Basingstoke, which are at points beyond the principal zones of visibility note above and shown on the screened ZTVs in **Figures 2-4a and 2-4b** in **Volume 4** of this ES. As such, they would not have clear views to the development and would not be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.

For an assessment of other developments in combinations with the Proposed Development refer to Section 2.10 of this Chapter.

2.7 Embedded Mitigation

Landscape mitigation proposals are incorporated into the Proposed Development design and are illustrated on the LEMP at **Figure 2-5** in **Volume 4** of this ES. The landscape mitigation proposals include measures that aim to avoid, reduce, or remedy adverse impacts on the landscape by ensuring that the Proposed Development has a good fit within the landscape setting.

It also includes measures that would reduce the visual prominence of the proposed solar PV panels in local views by enhancing the condition of key field boundaries on the perimeter of the Proposed Development Site or more exposed sections of the Proposed Development Site.

Primary measures have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development to reduce potential impacts and improve the layout of the Proposed Development. This included several iterations and layout changes to remove proposed infrastructure from higher sections of the Proposed Development Site so that it is less visible from surrounding points and better integrated into the immediate and wider landscape. This included reducing the potential for influence on NWD NL or key areas of its setting.

Key design changes included:

- Removal of panels from higher central Proposed Development Site areas and field sections along both sides of Stokes Lane, which are more visible from the surrounding landscape. At these points panels are set back from the road on both the east and west sides by c. 60m at the narrowest point to the south adjacent to field 1 and up to c.150m to the north adjacent to field 2. This would help to break up the expanse of panels and scale of development and retain views along the road and across the landscape to the north. This would also reduce visibility and / or the prominence from surrounding points including high points to the south, along the A339, across the golf course to the east, from PRoW to the west and from lower lying points to the north;
- These set back areas would be retained as farmland with new environmental enhancement buffers to the development edges and adjacent to sensitive receptors such as residents along Stokes Lane. These areas would incorporate GI initiatives to enhance biodiversity and retain and enhance amenity with new mitigation planting and hedgerow gapping up and management. This would also include a new permissive footpath to link and provide better connections within the PRoW network. This is in line with SEOs for this area on the boundary of two NCAs (129 and 130) including NCA129 SEO 1:

  "…manage and create woodlands, highway verges, field margins, SEO 2: Maximise the variety of ecosystem services delivered by wooded features and SEO 3: '…restoring and building the resilience of long-established habitats such as heathland, ancient woodland and meadows' and also NCA 130 SEO 2-4 for chalk grassland to 'seek opportunities to restore areas in poor condition' and 'provides habitats for wildlife";
- Removal of panels from the northern field sections to the north of field 5 to reduce visibility from adjacent points to the north and west, including the edges of settlement, PRoW and the edges of the Monk Sherborne CA. These areas would be retained as farmland with new environmental enhancement buffers to the development edges and adjacent to sensitive receptors. These areas would incorporate GI initiatives to enhance biodiversity and recreational interest with new permissive path to link with wider network of PRoW and retain and enhance amenity with new mitigation planting and hedgerow gapping up and management in line with SEO 1-4 for this area, as noted above;
- Management of existing field boundaries which are intermittent scrubby and overmature, with new understory and infill planting to gap up and maximize screening potential of these boundaries;
- Screening elements of the Proposed Development from key receptor locations, e.g., users of the PRoW and residential properties adjacent to the Proposed Development Site boundaries; and
- Reflecting existing landscape elements and character in new mitigation planting and tying in with local character objectives such as "*Manage, enhance and extend the woodland resource*".
- The cable route has been selected to minimise direct effects on landscape fabric elements.

The key landscape and mitigation measures are as follows:

- Up to c. 35 ha retained for mitigation, environmental and GI enhancements including management of existing features. This would include new areas of wood pasture, scrub, field trees and tree belt enhancements. These would be planted within perimeter buffer areas, where residential properties exist and where PRoW run adjacent to or through the Proposed Development Site, using a native mix species of local provenance. These would be allowed to mature up to heights of 6m for scrub and hedgerows and 10-12m for woodland and tree belts;
- These enhancement areas and perimeter buffer areas would also include new species-rich native wildflower meadows. This would be maintained mechanically twice per year as a hay meadow;

- Gap up and reinforce existing tree belts and hedgerows, within the Proposed Development Site and at points on the Proposed Development Site boundaries. This would comprise native mix species hedgerows of local provenance, which would be allowed to mature up to heights of 6m to screen views from the PRoW and residential properties;
- Close further small gaps of the existing field boundaries and allow hedgerows to grow out and mature up to 6m along boundaries (comprising native species of local provenance); and
- Low intensity grazing areas throughout the Proposed Development Site in fields with panels, with a conservation grazing regime to enhance biodiversity.

The proposed landscape management would produce landscape features of varied heights to provide robust and effective screening towards the Proposed Development in the medium to long term in line with the Methodology in **Technical Appendix 2-1** in **Volume 3** of this ES.

The proposed elements would also enhance the local landscape character and provide additional screening towards the Proposed Development.

2.8 Potential Effects

The main features of the Proposed Development which could potentially result in landscape and visual impacts are:

- Changes to land use and pattern;
- New infrastructure elements such as solar PV panels, transformers, substation, fencing and CCTV cameras;
- Access arrangement and temporary road and footpath closures and diversions;
- Hard surface areas;
- Potential loss of existing vegetation; and
- New planting areas.

It is noted that the solar panels would be a maximum of 3.1m in height, the spare parts container up to 2.4m and the customer station up to 4m (refer to 'Stokes Lane Solar Farm Technical Drawings 1, 4 and 5', respectively). As such, the Proposed Development can be screened by a combination of woodland, scrub and / or hedgerows from most near and middle-distance views at points where views and the Proposed Development Site context are at similar elevations.

2.8.1 Landscape Effects

The following sections assess the magnitude of effects that the Proposed Development would have on the landscape character and the physical features of the baseline landscape.

These effects would be combined with the value attached to the landscape and the landscape's susceptibility and sensitivity to the Proposed Development, as mentioned in the baseline section above, to determine the extent of effects.

The assessment firstly considers the effects of construction on the Proposed Development Site and then assesses the operational effects at completion and in the long term when mitigation measures have established as well as the decommissioning phase. Further details of assessment timescales can be found in the Methodology section within **Technical Appendix 2-1** in **Volume 3** of this ES.

Construction Effects - Landscape Character

The construction works would require a temporary disturbance to the Proposed Development Site's arable fields to install the Proposed Development and its associated infrastructure including the access point. The work would be phased and would last approximately 12 months.

Any disturbed ground resulting from the movement of machinery and installation of the various structures and underground cabling trenches would be gently graded back and reseeded with grass upon completion. No notable tree removal is anticipated to construct these elements of the Proposed Development.

The underground cabling trenches for the grid connection route would also be graded back and resurfaced to original surface level and finish. The route has also been selected to minimise direct effects on landscape fabric elements and visual amenity.

The design of the Proposed Development and its structures would be offset by 5m from the nearest existing hedgerows, woodland, drainage ditches and surface water. Surrounding field boundary vegetation would help to screen and filter these features in some Proposed Development Site areas particularly to the east and western boundaries and help to minimise any disturbance to the existing landscape elements and features found across the Proposed Development Site.

The retained field boundary hedgerows and trees around the Proposed Development Site boundaries would be gapped up and managed to provide more robust, mature field boundaries. In addition, further measures for mitigation include new field boundaries on exposed Site edges and along PRoW that run through the Proposed Development Site. New wildflower meadows would be planted within the offset areas within the fields particularly in more sensitive views from dwellings and edge of settlement.

During the temporary construction phase, there would be a notable increase of activity within the limits of the Proposed Development Site with access to the Proposed Development Site and activity at the construction compound. The works would have a localised temporary disturbance to a small portion of the landscape within the LCA16. This would relate to the undulating arable farmland of larger scale, rather than higher valued features such as the boundary vegetation, hedgerows and trees. Although the Proposed Development Site has a mix of enclosure to the north and more open areas to the south of the Proposed Development Site, the area is also reasonably well contained from points beyond immediate the Proposed Development Site boundaries given the careful siting and location extents mostly within the lower lying sections to the south and more vegetated sections of the Proposed Development Site to the north.

Movement of construction traffic to and from the Proposed Development Site and along the cable grid route would result in some temporary disturbance along the local short section of the A339 before dissipating. Traffic would be quickly absorbed across the wider road network.

The direct effects upon the Proposed Development Site during the construction phase would be temporary and short-term lasting for the construction period. They would have a **Medium** magnitude of effect, which together with the Proposed Development Site's **Medium Sensitivity**, would result in a **Moderate Adverse** effect during construction and at year 1, which is considered to be **Not Significant**. These effects would be very short lived with earth works and grass re-establishment and the mitigated by the inclusion of a wider mitigation strategy to enhance the weakened or reduced, intermittent hedgerow structure and provide better connection in the landscape. This would reduce effects to **Minor Adverse Not Significant** beyond construction and the short term.

Operational Effects - Landscape Character

During operation, direct landscape effects would include replacing the prevailing arable land use within the Proposed Development Site with energy infrastructure elements that have the potential for dual use with grazing. The energy infrastructure principally contains rows of single axis tracker solar panels together with low intensity grazing.

The proposed solar panel infrastructure would be located within two separate parcels of the large scale arable farmland area to the west side of Basingstoke, where it *"predominantly falls to face Basingstoke"* (BDLCA) and is influenced by a contrasting mix of natural and built or urban features, infrastructure and land use. This contributes to a transitional landscape between more in intact areas to the north and south.

The extent of the Proposed Development has been carefully designed to break up the expanse of panels and scale of development by removing panels and other infrastructure from the higher, most visible sections of the Proposed Development Site, particularly to the south which are more visible from wider sections of the surrounding landscape.

These setbacks include more visible sections of the Proposed Development Site closer to more distinctive valued landscapes in the wider study area to restrict visibility from the NL and across the fringe landscapes that lie adjacent to it. This would assist with reducing the potential for effect on the wider setting of the NL and views from and towards the NL where development has been removed from higher more open landscapes and ridgelines to the south in views from the north.

At other points, the development has also been removed from the nearest outward facing field sections of field 5, closet to the nearest settlement and CA at Monk Sherborne, and mitigation planting proposed, the intention being to help "*Conserve existing historic settlements, and maintain the character of associated conservation areas"* (BDLCA) in line with guidance for this LCA.

At other points to the north, the Proposed Development has not been proposed in the nearest field sections to the southwest of Sherborne St John and where development is proposed this includes new mitigation planting in the form of wooded tree belts to the north of field 3. The intention here is to "*Limit the effect of development on the separate identities of Sherborne St John (…) by retaining existing landscape structure including boundary hedges and trees in the area, to help to retain essential gaps between settlements."* This is in line with guidance for this LCA.

Within the large set back areas across the higher southern sections of the Proposed Development Site, a mix of retained arable farmland and new environmental mitigation and enhancements would be provided to enhance the landscape fabric and structure within the farmland which is noted in the BDLCA as *"lacking a distinctive sense of place",* which has *"become weak and broken in places"* and includes *"large wavy-edged fields".*

The mitigation and enhancement features are noted above and shown on the LEMP in **Figure 2-5**. They include a number of measures including new hedgerows, wildflower grassland, trees and small areas of woodland. This is to address key issues noted for the LCA in the BDLCA, including *"Weakened hedgerow structure across the more extensive, open landscape types, resulting from previous hedgerow removal"; "Decline in extent of unimproved chalk grassland and sheep pasture"; and "low biodiversity levels".* It also embraces wider strategies in the NWD Plan for *"Encouraging restoration of wood pasture landscapes".*

This in turn embraces guidance for the area which notes *"…maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland" and "…Opportunities for enhancement are in management of the hedgerow network and woodland".*

Whilst the southern sections of the Proposed Development Site are currently defined by more open arable farmland this partly forms a transition to a more wooded, enclosed landscape across other central and northern parts and the mitigation strategy has sought to embrace that.

The proposed solar panel infrastructure would therefore sit within specific sections of the arable fields. This would include fields 1 and 2 and 4 as shown on the LEMP in **Figure 2-5** in **Volume 4** of this ES, that are generally lower lying and sloping gently to the north away from the NL with variations to the east and west. These areas, and fields 3 and 5 are also more reasonably contained along the site boundaries to the east and west and this combination of elements would help to reduce the extent of visibility towards the infrastructure from much of the surrounding landscape beyond Proposed Development Site boundaries.

The proposed layout has also been set back from field boundaries to retain existing vegetation within and around the outer edges of the Proposed Development Site as far as possible. As such, no notable tree or hedgerow sections would be removed and the overall field scale that is characteristic of the Proposed Development Site would remain.

The developable area has also been pulled back from Proposed Development Site boundaries to allow for suitable field boundary margins and mitigation planting where access, PRoW and residential properties are present. In addition, existing field boundaries which interface with publicly accessible points would be reinforced and elsewhere managed and gapped up. This includes field boundaries alongside Stokes Lane, up to Rookery Farm and the St James Way long distance path.

The proposed landscape mitigation and enhancement planting at these boundary points would help to gap up and screen the Proposed Development from most near and middle-distance views, as well as integrating the development into the surrounding landscape with a more resilient landcover pattern, in the longer term.

In respect of the characteristics for the LCA16 and the sensitivities of this host landscape outlined in the baseline, particular considerations for the Proposed Development would include:

- Integration with the "*open character"* and the *"Rolling landform to the north, becoming more undulating and northward sloping to the south to face Basingstoke"* and the *"large-scale farmland",* but note that it is *"lacking a distinctive sense of place"* in areas with *"Weakened hedgerow structure";*
- Consider the effects of potential for *"High intervisibility within the area due to the lack of woodland or strong hedgerow structure, enabling views of Basingstoke from many parts of the Character Area";*
- Consider the settlements to the north and east and the *"…setting to these settlements and the village Conservation Areas' and 'the separate identities between each settlement";*
- Incorporate access and recreational needs where *"Public Rights of Way link Basingstoke to the surrounding countryside and provide walkers with a sense of tranquillity within the AONB, but views of settlement on slopes facing Basingstoke limit the sense of remoteness";*
- In line with other key issues and guidance in the LCA, consider opportunities to strengthen landscape pattern, visual integrity and provide positive contributions to the farmland character to *"…maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland; limiting the effect of settlement expansion on the landscape and maintaining the separate identities of settlements where possible";* and
- Recognise other aspirations and the vision within wider strategies including the AONB (NL) and the NWD Plan including the setting, albeit persisting *"…in increasingly urbanised surroundings; where people live, work and relax."*

The Proposed Development primarily involves the addition of elements rather than removal of notable existing features. The solar farm would create a temporary new land use for renewable energy generation, within northward sloping sections of the fields and within a reasonably large simple scaled framework of fields. The Proposed Development Site is also surrounded by hedgerows with trees from points to the north and east where there is a transition to more settled enclosed landscapes.

The elements of the Proposed Development would be regular in form and reasonably low, in keeping with the broad scale of existing features in and around the Proposed Development Site (such as hedgerows and trees). The nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation to the panels appearance at different times of the day with the front face of panels facing downslope during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day they would be seen as flat panels and later in the day they would be seen with the front face of the panels facing upslope. This would add some movement and change in texture and tone into the development at different parts of the day.

Other effects would be effects on views from areas of landscape outside the Proposed Development Site. From close distances and principally within c. 0.5km to the northeast and southwest, elements of the solar farm (such as fencing, solar PV panels or small buildings) and sections of the Proposed Development Site would be partially discernible from intermittent points at completion and in the short term. These include areas of greater visibility (i.e. yellow tones on **Figure 2-4b and c**). Whilst the ZTVs show some further potential beyond these point the level of visibility would be very limited and not clearly visible i.e. blue tones on the ZTV.

Beyond most boundary or adjacent points, the height and regularity of the solar panels, would more often be seen as minor tonal or textural change and as partial horizontal elements in the large scale arable farmland. In general views would be maintained over the Proposed Development Site to existing boundary vegetation and to surrounding features in the wider landscape which are frequently defined by urban influences, large scale land uses and a mix of natural and built elements on the edges of Basingstoke which affect much of this transitional area.

Over time, the establishment of reinforcement hedge planting combined with field boundaries, trees small areas of woodland and wildflower enhancements and the management of other existing field boundaries to allow hedgerows to grow out, would help to reduce these effects and integrate the proposals into the landscape to a greater extent and to reduce perception of the Proposed Development in the surrounding landscape. This is illustrated on the Year 15 Screened ZTV in **Figure 2-4c** in **Volume 4** of this ES.

As a result, the magnitude of effect on landscape character within the LCA16 would be **Medium to High** on completion and in the short term. Given the **Medium Sensitivity** of the LCA16, the extent of effect would be on balance **Moderate to Major Adverse** on completion in the short term, which is **Significant**. With the establishment of the mitigation and enhancements this would reduce the magnitude of effect to **Medium to Low** in the medium to long-term and by year 15 with a slightly enhanced structure, pattern and balance of scale in the landscape. This would reduce the effect to **Moderate to Minor Adverse**, which is **Not Significant**.

All relevant and notable direct and indirect effects would arise within the northeastern sections of the LCA 16 where they are more influenced by a mix of other surrounding landscape and urban influences. The remaining western and southern sections of the LCA and its key sensitivities where they overlap with and form the fringe landscapes and clearer setting to the NL would remain unaffected. As noted in the baseline, no adjacent LCAs or LCTs would be affected to any notable extent given the levels of enclosure and intervening tiers of screening.

This would also be the case for other local designations including the Strategic Gap to the east. Although there would be some potential for views from the western extents of this area, across other modified landscapes including the golf course, the Site is located to the rear of notable wooded field boundaries to the west of this area which would help to reduce the overall influence across this area.

In terms of the geographical extent or area over which the landscape effects would be felt, the general effects would have an influence at the immediate setting of the Proposed Development Site within the lower lying northern and eastern sections of the LCA closer to Basingstoke, in line with GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013). It would not therefore extend to affect the wider scale or extent of the LCA within which the proposal lies or on a larger scale, notably influence several landscape types or character areas.

Decommissioning Effects - Landscape Character

During the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development, there would be some localised disturbance to the rural landscape while structures are dismantled and removed from the Proposed Development Site. However, at the end of decommissioning, the land with infrastructure on it would be reinstated to its former full agricultural use, aiding the reversal of any effects on the landscape character.

By this stage, the retained field hedgerows and new mitigation field boundaries would have filled out and have an improved condition. Where new field boundaries are provided these features would be left in situ.

The direct effects upon the Proposed Development Site during the decommissioning phase would be temporary and short-term lasting. They would have a **Low** magnitude of effect which together with the Proposed Development Site's **Medium Sensitivity**, would result in a **Moderate to Minor Adverse, Not Significant** effect during decommissioning.

While there would still be some potential for views to this activity from the surrounding landscape, this would be in the context of an enhanced landscape fabric and activities would be more contained. This would reduce the potential for Significant effect on the character of the surrounding landscape.

Landscape Designations

The Proposed Development Site does not lie within a NL nor any locally defined landscapes such as an AGLV but does lie c.0.2km to the northeast of the NWD NL at the southernmost tip of the NL. At this point the area is marked by gradual transitions though large-scale arable farmland. In this context the Proposed Development Site lies within land that faces away from the tip of the designation and is physically separated from it by the A339 road corridor. This combination of elements limits clear intervisibility with the NL and particularly from defined Special Qualities, the focus of which is more clearly to the west and northwest.

As noted in the baseline above, the ZTV of the Proposed Development is limited by topography and landcover patterns to the south which restricts views from most points to the south of the A339 corridor and the Basingstoke Road to the southwest. These elements act to screen and break up views towards the Proposed Development Site considerably.

Where the Proposed Development Site is potentially visible it would only be from the very eastern tip and boundary points of the NL alongside the A339. This is evidenced by Figure 2-6 and VP F in **Technical Appendix 2-2**.

At these points, the Proposed Development would be seen in lower lying sections of the falling arable farmland towards the north and east to Basingstoke and in the wider context of a notably wooded

low lying landscape to the north. At these points, the Proposed Development would also not be seen in the wider context of the more elevated open landscapes to the south and west, with view across the tip of the NL at these points restricted to short distance views across further undulating arable farmland. The Proposed Development would also form a minor tonal change within lower lying points of the arable fields and as a modest low-lying component in a mid to distant section of the surrounding landscape, which embraces a mix of natural and built features.

Effects on the NL and its Special Qualities would not exceed **Low to Negligible** (minor limited or barely noticeable alterations to key elements of the landscape area such that post development the baseline would be largely unchanged despite discernible differences), leading to effects of no more than **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the short term, which is **Not Significant**. With mitigation screening incorporated, this would reduce views further but would still be **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the medium to long-term and by year 15, which is **Not Significant**.

NL (AONB) Setting

NPPF notes in Paragraphs 189-190 that development within the setting of NL's *"…development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area."*

As NPPG further notes, the important factor in setting is where land *"…makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty"* and 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".*

GPA also notes the contribution of views in Paragraph 10, noting *"The contribution of setting to the significance of a heritage asset is often expressed by reference to views, a purely visual impression of an asset or place which can be static or dynamic, long, short or of lateral spread, and include a variety of views of, from, across, or including that asset."*

Given the extent of ZTV and principal zones of visibility noted above, the potential for views and visual influence of the Proposed Development Site within the setting of the NL is considered to be low on account of the falling terrain to the north, the A339 road infrastructure and intervening roadside and field boundary screening, which restricts visibility from points around the NL and in views back to the NL from the north.

This is coupled with the careful siting, location and design of the solar panel infrastructure within the lower lying sections of the large-scale farmland to reduce the visual influence of the Proposed Development Site within the wider elevated landscape around the NL. As such, it is considered that the Proposed Development is not likely to result in a negative impact on the setting of the NL (AONB).

2.8.2 Visual Effects

The following sections consider the potential effects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase of the Proposed Development; on completion (at year 1 / short term) and in the long term (by year 15), upon existing views and visual amenity. It is anticipated that decommissioning effects would be similar to construction effects and they are therefore not considered further in detail

The analysis refers to the 10 representative VPs outlined in **Table 2-2** and summarises effects on key visual receptor groups within the detailed study area and within the ZTV. The assessment is supported by the illustrative VPs (A-F in **Technical Appendix 2-2** in **Volume 3** of this ES).

Each of the representative VPs provides a 'sample' of the potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors, including not only those actually at the VP, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and / or direction.

Viewpoint 1: A339 at the junction with minor road to Monk Sherborne

Existing View: From this elevated point on the A339 at c. 0.2km to the south of Proposed Development Site, a broad, undulating view descends over arable farmland to the north (**Figure 2-6**). This context of large-scale arable fields bound occasionally by lines of intermittent, scrubby mature field boundary vegetation, defines much of the near and mid distance view. It is directed with lower ground focussed to the northeast and with higher land rising to the east, north and west. This creates a smooth, sweeping depression in landform with a simple, large scale and indistinct landcover pattern through the arable farmland area.

This view gives way in the mid to far distance view, to a mix of woodland and evergreen forest plantations which stretch to the rear of the arable farmland areas. This adds a strong pattern of continuous landcover features and vegetated character to the mid distance and distant view north and provides a low but extensive wooded backdrop and horizon in the far distance.

Set within the arable farmland at a mid-point, there are isolated dwellings at Stokes Lane. At more distant lower points, the southern edge of Sherborne St John lies at a contained point in the overall view and as a minor settled influence to the northeast. At other points to the northeast other large scale land uses are present at high points including the Weybrook Park golf course. The view is also traversed by a minor road at Rookery Farm Lane which heads north at raised points in the undulating arable farmland.

Beyond the illustrated view to the west and south landform continues to rise gradually across open arable fields to the south of the A339 but views are short and enclosed by the foreground field, with occasional wooded features present to the rear of the local skyline. These sections of the view are included within the eastern fringes of the NWD NL.

Predicted Change: In this context, construction activity would be evident within the visibly lower lying sweeping arable farmland in the mid distance view and at a more distant slightly elevated point just to the rear of the local ridgeline through the arable farmland areas to the west of Rookery Farm Lane, during construction of the southern sections of the Proposed Development Site in fields 1, 2 and the south edge of field 4.

On completion the Proposed Development would be clearly visible within the lower lying sections of the surrounding large scale arable fields, to the east of Rookery Farm Lane where views would be gained across fields 1 and 2. At a separate point to the north, the southern edge of the panels in field 4 would just be evident where they would sit on a local high point in the arable field to the west of Rookery Farm Lane but would then sit mostly to the rear of intervening landform, as shown on **Figure 2-6**.

The remaining sections of the Proposed Development in fields 3 and 5 and most of field 4 and majority of the solar PV panels and other buildings and substation would not be visible as it would sit to the rear of vegetated field boundaries and behind the nearest sections of the Proposed Development Site.

The nearest sections of the Proposed Development Site would be seen in oblique views across the nearest rows to the in fields 1 and 2. The proposed solar panels would provide a textural and tonal change in this lower lying section of the large scale arable farmland to the west of the Weybrook Park golf course, and in front of extensive areas of woodland and forest.

These existing arable and forested landscapes contribute large, uniform elements and textural contrasts to the surrounding view which helps to accommodate the tonal change within the Proposed Development Site. This would be in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation screening to the south side of fields 1 and 4 and west side of fields 1 and 2, reinforces

existing field boundaries and provides more screening to filter and screen the view. This would also allow the nature of the surrounding able farmland to remain open between the two development parcels.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation in the view of the proposed solar panels to the rear of the field boundary vegetation, principally in fields 1 and 2, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location the panels would be seen with the rear face of the panels in fields 1 and 2 facing towards the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day they would be seen as flat panels, with some partial views to the supporting structures in the short term. Later in the day they would be seen with the front face of the panels facing towards the viewer.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation is established to provide an enhanced vegetated edge and screen to the panels. This includes measures for gapping up and bolstering of existing hedgerows to maintain a field boundary at 5-6m height it also includes measure for field margins and biodiverse grassland improvements with wider areas of enhancement in front of the dwellings on Stokes Lane with wooded pasture and biodiverse grassland features.

Assessment: This would represent a **Medium to High** magnitude of visual effect *(*partial to large change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would be clearly noticeable*).* This would be mainly in a lower lying section of the mid-distance view to the northeast. On balance this would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for users of the A339 with fleeting, views to the north from this short section of a major the road route.

This view would be available on completion and in the short term beyond which the management of the vegetated field boundaries with proposed gapping up planting would act to screen and heavily filter views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within the landscape fabric.

In the longer term, once mitigation has established the magnitude of visual effect would reduce to **Medium to Low** by year 15, with sight changes in the nature and extent of vegetated enclosures in lower lying sections of the transitional arable farmland and reduced exposure through more heavily filtered field boundaries. This would result in a **Moderate to Minor Adverse** visual effect in the long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Other representative locations: At other surrounding points, there would be potential for similar representative views from elevated roads to the south. This would include a short section of the A339 for up to c. 0.8km (shown by illustrative VP F), but also on Rookery Farm Lane between fields 1-2 and 4, shown by illustrative VP G.

As VP F shows, the view would be more distant and towards very partial sections of fields 4 and 5 alongside taller silos at Manor Farm in the view, but not to fields 1-3 as these would sit substantially to the rear of interviewing landform variations and field boundaries. These views would be reduced and filtered further from other points to the west by intervening field boundaries.

From Rookery Farm Lane (illustrative VP G) there would be a number of views to the east across the initially falling then sweeping slopes where the panels would be set within the generally lower lying eastern sections of the fields allowing views to be maintained over the top to surrounding landscapes. This would also include some set back of panels in the higher eastern margins of field 1, which would effectively pull panels off the ridge in that section of the view

Over time with mitigation the view would be more heavily filtered and screened through existing and proposed field boundary enhancements including new vegetated buffers along the western edges of

the Proposed Development. Whilst this would provide sight changes in the nature of vegetated enclosures it would add more structure, distinction and fabric enhancements into the view and assist with restoring the weakened or reduced hedgerow structure in lower lying sections of this transitional arable farmland.

Viewpoint 2: PRoW, north of the A339 and west of Weybrook Park Golf Club

Existing View: From a section of a PRoW on the eastern Proposed Development Site boundary, a short, heavily filtered, ascending view extends through mature field boundary vegetation and across relatively large arable fields. The ground rises quickly to the west to enclose much of the rest of the view but on the near to mid distance horizon further mature wooded vegetation is evident along the skyline as shown on **Figure 2-7**.

At other points land also rises to the east across a golf course. Given the low lying nature on the views are therefore contained by either landform vegetation throughout and views are focussed north along the PRoW except for infrequent glimpsed views through vegetation to the west. This type of view would exist along the whole length of the eastern boundary with only intermittent gaps in the wooded boundary.

Predicted Change: From this location on the Proposed Development Site boundary construction activity would be visible within the channelled views between field boundary vegetation with activities in a small eastern section of field 1 would be evident during construction of the Proposed Development.

On completion the Proposed Development would be visible from the PRoW in occasional, heavily filtered and channelled near distance views to the west, where it would sit to the rear of intervening field boundary vegetation and visible within the view across the rising arable field. At this point the panels would be seen as a series of rows running up across sections of the arable field. This would relate to the nearest southern sections of field 1. Further to the north the higher slopes in the view would be free of panels due to Site constraints and setbacks but at this point, this would be to the rear of panels nearer to the view.

The remaining sections of the Proposed Development and majority of the solar PV panels and other buildings and substation which would not be visible as it would sit to the rear of vegetated field boundaries and behind the nearest sections of solar panels. The nearest sections of the Proposed Development would be seen in direct views across the nearest rows to the west but these would be set back from the PRoW and field boundary by up to 5m to allow for retention of field boundaries, amenity and mitigation.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation in the partial view of the panels between vegetation, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location the panels would be seen with the front face of the nearest panels in facing towards the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day the panels would be seen as flat panels, with some views to the supporting structures. Later in the day they would be seen with the rear of the panel facing towards the viewer to the rear of hedgerows.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation is established to provide an enhanced vegetated edge and substantial screen to the panels along the PRoW within field 1 and other points along the PRoW. This includes measures for gapping up and bolstering of existing hedgerows to maintain a field boundary at 5-6m height with characteristic intermittent trees.

Assessment: This would represent a **Medium to Low** magnitude of visual effect (partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would be noticeable but with a medium to

low degree of exposure). This would be in infrequent heavily filtered views between dense vegetation in a near distance view. This would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for users of this section of the PRoW with infrequent views in gaps in vegetation.

Beyond the short term and once the proposed mitigation establishes the Proposed Development would be more notably screened and integrated within the landscape. This would reduce the magnitude to no more than **Low** by year 15 with a more subtle or slight change in more heavily screened or glimpsed views through new mitigation, and some enhancement along the PRoW and effects would be reduced to no more than **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 3: PRoW Stokes Lane, west

Existing View: From this section of Stokes Lane to the north of field 2, a view south is available from a field access point and gap in the mature field boundary vegetation which lines both sides of the lane and PRoW. The view south from this point is defined by sloping large scale arable farmland which rises and falls across the view, initially from west to east in the foreground field, then from east to west in the mid distance as shown on **Figure 2-8**.

The large sloping fields are bound at isolated points by long linear field boundaries made up of intermittent, mature scrubby vegetation which break up the expansive view. These also add to the scale and simplicity of the landscape pattern in the view south. The view south extends to slightly higher ground along the A339 which traverses the view on the skyline, intermittently behind field boundary and roadside hedgerows. At the same point on the horizon, the stone fabrication warehouses and buildings provide a build present. Further views south to the NWD NL are then restricted.

To the southeast the more elevated ground stretches across Weybrook Park golf course, which provides a modified landscape and pattern with contrasting landform and landcover variation in the view and change in land use. This section of the view is then enclosed by notable woodland areas which define a relatively flat slightly elevated skyline. At various points several urban influences protrude above the woodland, including the Parklands water tower and the tops of other residential tower blocks within Basingstoke.

At other points to the west short view stretch across rising large scale arable fields and across the Rookery Farm Lane which sits at a mid-point in the view.

Predicted Change: From this point the construction activity in fields 1-2 would be clearly visible within a large section of the view to the south and within other fields to the west and north, just the taller elements of construction would be visible.

On completion the Proposed Development would be clearly visible within the rising, arable fields to the south in fields 1-2, where the solar panels would stretch across a large section of the view. However, this would be within the lower lying eastern sections of the fields initially within the near to mid distance view which helps to contain the profile of the solar panels. Panels would also be set back from sections of the higher points of field 1 for other site constraints but this would largely be to the rear of the panels in field 2. The embedded mitigation and design set backs on the western side of these fields would help with maintaining existing views across more elevated sections of the arable field to the southwest and west and over sections of the panels to the east.

At this point the panels would be seen with view along a series of linear rows of panels with spacing between them, stretching down across the falling slopes to the southeast and within the simple, large scaled farmland between existing field boundaries. The views of panels in field 2 would largely

prevent clear views to panels within further sections of fields to the south and landform would prevent views to panels further to the west. At other points along the PRoW other sections of the Site would be visible in other field access points and gaps in vegetation.

Given the proposed nature of the tracking system, there would be some variation in the view of the panels at different times of the day. During the first part of the day the panels would be seen tilted to the east and left of the view, but with some front faces visible at further points to the south. By the middle of the day, they would be seen as flat panels, with some views of the supporting structures. Later in the day they would be seen tilting to the west with some rear faces of the panels visible.

As such the Proposed Development would be perceived as a series of similar elements which vary throughout the day. Although they would cover a large section of the view to the southeast at this point the overriding emphasis of scale, simplicity and regularity of the field pattern with gentle terrain would help reduce potential effects. Is would be combined with the location within the lower lying sections of the fields allowing more elevated sections of the view to remain free of panels to the southwest and west.

This view would be available on completion and in the short term. Once established the proposed field boundary reinforcement and mitigation planting along the northern and western edges of the solar PV panels in fields 1 and 2, would act to break up and filter or screen views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within an enhanced landscape fabric as it matures. These features would be managed to different heights allowing new features to grow out along the northern and western boundaries to provide a mix of landscape fabric elements with different heights and structure to add some diversity to the simple scaled focus of the view. This would include a mix of new grassland, wood pasture and woodland blocks which ties in with local strategies for the area. This would help to filter and reduce visibility from this distance and orientation.

Assessment: This would represent a **High to Medium** magnitude of visual effect *(*extensive to partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a clear feature*)* in a near and mid-distance view. This would result in a **Major to Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PRoW users and local residents beyond property curtilages as they move through the landscape and with more filtered ad screened views from other points of the PRoW to the east.

With mitigation and enhancement planting established within the development edge buffers and setbacks in the medium to long term the effect would be reduced to a more partial, heavily filtered and screened change to the view. This would include an enhanced landscape structure in the view. While this would foreshorten and filter the view across the arable fields directly to the south, it would also provide a more diverse and varied mix of landscape features within the intervening view to the southwest and west. This would reduce the magnitude of visual effect to **Medium to Low** by year 15 with a mix of filtered and glimpsed views through a more diverse landscape structure. This would reduce the effect on balance to **Moderate Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**, with the development heavily screened and views enhanced with a mix of new landscape features.

Other representative locations: At other points from Stokes Lane to the west, there would be potential for other similar views from the dwellings adjacent to the PRoW. Those types of views are represented by illustrative VP C. The view from this slightly higher section of the lane and PRoW would be similar to VP 3 but with more elevation there would be greater potential for wider setbacks and views focussed away from the panels which would sit at lower points to the eastern sections of the fields.

Although the panels would extend across moderately large sections of this view, the extent of the Proposed Development has been considered so that it would be set within the eastern sections of the fields alongside other changes in land use and a range of natural and built influences, allowing views to be maintained over the top to surrounding landscapes..

Over time with mitigation, the view would be more integrated within a more robust landscape framework of vegetated fields with areas of new biodiverse grassland and wood pasture at foreground points adding interest into the immediate view. Whilst this would provide sight changes in the nature of vegetated enclosures in this large simple scale transitional arable farmland it would provide some enhancement and benefit to the immediate view.

Viewpoint 4: PRoW, Stokes Lane, east

Existing View: From an elevated section of a PRoW to the northeast side of Weybrook Park golf course an undulating view extends to the west over a mix of landscapes and land uses, which are frequently enclosed by mature wooded features, particularly to the northwest and north.

The foreground view stretches across open fields to the north and the undulating edges of the golf course to the west and south. The view extends further south to some warehouses and light industrial units at a high point in the near distance. Between these separate, contrasting land uses the PRoW forms a strong focus to the west where is sweeps down and then up through well vegetated mature hedgerows and trees. This initial view falls away in the mid distance to then rise up again across large arable fields, bound by mature wooded tree belts to the northwest and north and by more intermittent sometimes clipped field boundaries to the southwest.

The minor Lane at Rookery Farm Lane traverse the view through the farmland from north to south at an elevated mid-point. To the west of this road the arable farmland continues to undulate and rise to the west and south. The distant view is enclosed by a mix of wooded features along the A339 to the south which prevents further views south and towards surrounding landscapes including the NWD NL as shown on **Figure 2-9**.

Predicted Change: From this elevated point to the east, construction activity would be partially visible in the rising farmland in the mid distance view, to the rear of the golf course and rear of the mature tree belt that runs along the eastern boundaries of fields 1, 2 and 3. However this would be very partial in fields 1 and 2 to the south given the removal of infrastructure from higher sections of the fields towards Rookery Farm Lane. Views to other sections would be partially filtered by the nature of field boundary vegetation and local landform variations.

On completion the Proposed Development would be partially visible in the rising mid distance view to the west. At this point the western edges of the solar panels in fields 1 and 2 would just be visible, sitting within the large sloping arable fields to the west and largely below the Weybrook Park golf course. Further to the north the solar panels in field 3 would be evident in a range of filtered views through and between mature wooded field boundaries.

At other points, the eastern edges of the panels in sections of fields 4 and 5 would just be evident sitting between topographic variations and in field 5 in filtered views between field boundaries. The solar panels would therefore be seen in several points but substantially to the rear of intervening landform and behind intervening tiers of vegetation providing slight to partial changes in the view which would mostly be perceived as tonal or textural changes in the view and below or between the surrounding pattern of topography and wooded boundary features visible above the solar PV panels.

From this distance and orientation, the solar panels would be seen in views across the north to south rows and perceived as a series of rows or panels staggered across the falling slopes with a textured context.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation in the partial view of the panels above and between vegetation, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location the panels would be seen with the front face of the panels, principally in fields 2 and 3 facing towards the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day the panels would be seen as flat panels. Later in the day they would be seen with the rear of the panels facing towards the view.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation is established to provide an enhanced vegetated edge and substantial screen to the panels, principally within fields 2 and 3 but also with new mitigation and boundary management around fields 4 and 5. This includes measures for gapping up and bolstering of existing hedgerows and tree belts to maintain a field boundary at 10-12m height. This would help to filter and reduce visibility from this distance and orientation.

Assessment: This would represent a **Medium to High** magnitude of visual effect (partial to large change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a noticeable feature) in mid-distance, partial and filtered view to the west. This would be from a short section of the PRoW to the west before the PRoW quickly descends to the west until you get to the Proposed Development Site boundary and consequently a low degree of exposure from the PRoW. This would result in a **Moderate to Major Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for users of this section of the PRoW at an elevated point to the east.

Beyond the short term and once the proposed mitigation establishes the Proposed Development would be more notably screened and integrated within the landscape. This would reduce the magnitude of visual effect to **Medium to Low** by year 15 with a more partial, subtle or slight change where only a small part of the Proposed Development would be visible in more heavily screened or glimpsed views through new mitigation. With these measures in place effects would be reduced to **Moderate Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**, with an enhanced wooded vegetation structure which adds to and reinforces the character of vegetated features in the view.

Other representative locations: At other points to the east of the Site, there would be potential for other similar views from intermittent points of the Weybrook Park golf course. Those types of views are represented by illustrative VPs A and B. The view from much of the golf course would be similar to VP 4 given the nature of local landform variations restricting views to the lower lying eastern sections of the Proposed Development Site. This would also be more restricted to lower mid, eastern sections of field 3 from central areas of the golf course.

As VP B shows there would be some clearer views from an isolated point to the north corner of the golf course where more of the Proposed Development would be visible. Although the panels would extend across large sections of this isolated view to the west the extent of the Proposed Development has been considered so that it would be set within the generally lower lying eastern sections of the fields allowing views to be maintained over the top to surrounding landscapes.

Over time with mitigation the view would be more integrated within a more robust landscape framework of vegetated fields with areas of new biodiverse grassland and wood pasture at more elevated sections adding interest into the view. Whilst this would provide slight changes in the nature of vegetated enclosures in this large simple scale transitional arable farmland the distinction between open down farmland to the south and wooded farmland and woodland to the north would be retained.

Viewpoint 5: PRoW Sherborne St John (key view 15 from the Neighbourhood Plan)

Existing View: From this section of a PRoW to the south side of Sherborne St John, a broad, level view initially extends across a flat arable field with mature clipped and unclipped field boundaries to

the southwest. This defines the foreground view but in the mid distance land rises to the west and south across undulating large arable fields as shown on **Figure 2-10**. These fields are contained by a mix of taller wooded field boundaries which break up the view and add patterns of enclosure to the farmland. These also undulate to provide a wooded skyline to much of the view south and west.

In this context landform undulates across the skyline with higher points to the west and south and slightly lower, but still elevated sections to the southwest. At this distant point the farmland is traversed by the Rookery Farm Lane at a mid-point in the farmland.

The distant view is also contained by further mature wooded vegetation. At the same distant point, the A339 runs along the skyline providing infrastructure elements and frequent traffic movement at a high ridge point. Also at this distant point the stone fabrication buildings sit on the skyline. These elements form the skyline to the south and heavily filter and contain further views in these directions. This would include further views south to more valued landscapes including the NWD NL.

Predicted Change: During construction from this point, there would be some potential for views to some of the taller machinery, but the majority of the construction activity would be screened or heavily filtered except for the western sections of field 3.

From this point the Proposed Development on completion, would be partially visible in the mid distance view to the southwest. It would sit to the rear of the initial flat farmland area and between tiers of taller field boundary wooded vegetation within the sloping arable farmland areas. The tiers of intervening vegetation, act in conjunction to build up screening particularly to fields 1 and 2 and the eastern and central sections of field 3. As such it would be just the higher western edges of field 3 that are likely to be visible between and above lower sections of the wooded field boundaries along the eastern boundary, with the lower eastern sections of field 3 heavily filtered and screened.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation in the partial view of the panels above and between vegetation, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location the panels would be seen with the front face of the panels in fields 3 facing towards the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day the panels would be seen as flat panels. Later in the day they would be seen with the rear of the panels facing towards the view.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation is established to provide an enhanced vegetated edge and substantial screen to the panels within fields 2 and 3. This includes measures for gapping up and bolstering of existing hedgerows and tree belts to the north side of field 3 to maintain wooded field boundaries at 10-12m height.

Assessment: This would represent a **Medium to High** magnitude of visual effect (partial to large change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a noticeable feature) in mid-distance, partial and filtered view to the west. This would include sections on the western edge of field 3 between notable wooded field boundaries and with a medium degree of exposure to the view from a short section of the PRoW up to c. 0.1km on the settlement edge. This would result in a **Moderate to Major Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PRoW users and residents away from immediate property curtilage from this short section of the PRoW.

This view would be available on completion and in the short term beyond which the management of the vegetated field boundaries with proposed gapping up planting and once the proposed mitigation establishes on the northern Proposed Development Site boundaries this would act to screen and heavily filter views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within the landscape fabric. This

would reduce the magnitude of visual effect to **Medium to Low** by year 15 with a more partial, subtle or slight change where only a small part of the Proposed Development would be visible in more heavily screened or glimpsed views through new mitigation. With these measures in place effects would be reduced to **Moderate Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant,** with an enhanced wooded vegetation structure which adds to and reinforces the character of vegetated features in the view.

Other representative locations: At other similar points to the northeast of the Proposed Development Site, there would be potential for similar views from intermittent points on the southwestern edge of Sherborne St John although this would be more filtered by domestic vegetated enclosures within or on property boundaries. This would principally include approximately four properties on the southwest side of the A430 Aldermaston Road (no's 11, 15, 17 ad 19) to the north of Dixons Garage, approximately three properties on the western side of Lavers Lea, and three further properties on the west side of A430 Aldermaston Road, which are interspersed with other light industrial land uses on the edge of the settlement.

Viewpoint 6: PRoW east side of All Saints Church, Monk Sherborne CA

Existing View: From this elevated section of a PRoW to the west side of the Proposed Development Site at field 3, a channelled view extends through gaps in mature wooded field boundary vegetation. The view extends across large arable fields which gradually fall away to the east. The initial view extends over one field bound by mature wooded field boundaries. These features are partially visible to the rear of foreground landform as shown on **Figure 2-11**.

The mid distance view is made up of further farmland to the east which gradually slopes up to the south from lower lying points to the north at which point settlement edges are present which are enclosed and surrounded by significant areas of woodland. These wooded features provide a continuous wooded, low horizon to the east and north. At other points to the southeast, landform rises up again across the Weybrook Park golf course which provides a contrasting land use and slight change in the pattern of landform and landcover features. This section of the view is also backed by wooded features but to the rear of the vegetation, several large buildings, towers and residential tower blocks provide a built, urban presence to the surrounding view.

Predicted Change: In this context, construction activity would be visible, principally within the nearest sections of the Proposed Development at field 3. Activity to the rear of these nearest sections and fields 1 and 2 would be partial and mostly to just the taller elements of construction. Some views would be in filtered views through tiers of mature field boundary vegetation.

On completion the Proposed Development would be visible in the near distance section of the view to the southeast. This would include panels and fencing principally within the higher western sections of field 3, with the panels orientated north to south this would be oblique across the view with views along the rows further to the side of the view. The remaining sections of the Proposed Development would then sit within in falling terrain to the rear and behind of these nearest rows and within fields 1 and 2 behind other intervening tiers of vegetation and barely discernible, in the view.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation in the view of the panels, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location the panels would be seen with the front face of the panels facing obliquely towards the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day they would be seen as flat panels, with clearer views to the supporting structures and at a slightly lower height. Later in the day they would be seen with the rear of the panel facing towards the view.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation features are established to provide an enhanced vegetated structure to reduce visibility towards the Proposed Development. This includes measures to maintain a field boundary up to 6m height which would reduce views to just heavily filtered partial views to the Proposed Development within field 3.

Assessment: This would represent a **High to Medium** magnitude of visual effect (extensive to partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a clear feature) in a near and mid-distance view. This would result in a **Major to Moderate, Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PRoW users as they move through the landscape and with more filtered and screened views from other points of the PRoW to the east.

With mitigation and enhancement planting established in the medium to long term the effect would be reduced to a more partial, heavily filtered views which would include an enhanced landscape structure in the view. While this would foreshorten of filter views the view across the arable fields directly to the south, it would also provide a more robust vegetated structure within the intervening view. This would reduce the magnitude of visual effect to **Medium to Low** by year 15 with filtered and glimpsed views. This would reduce the effect on balance to **Moderate Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**, with the development heavily screened and views enhanced more robust field boundaries.

Viewpoint 7: PRoW, east of Basingstoke Road and Field Barn Farm

Existing View: From this elevated section of a PRoW at c. 0.25km to the west of the Proposed Development, north of Field Barn Farm, a broad, expansive view stretches to the east. It embraces open, gently undulating, large scale arable fields, as shown on **Figure 2-12**.

From this point, the foreground view gently falls away to the east to slightly lower lying arable fields with the nearest Proposed Development Site sections between 10-20m lower down. These intervening arable fields are partially enclosed by intermittent mature scrubby field boundaries. They also slope up to the south towards the A339 road which runs across a relatively flat to gently sloping skyline lined by field boundaries in the mid distance to the south. At this point traffic and large buildings at the stone fabrication buildings provide built focus on the horizon.

Further to the east the landform continues undulate gently and rise and fall across arable fields. It then rises slightly across the Weybrook Park golf course which sits at a slightly raised point to the rear of the farmland and provides a different landform, landcover and land use pattern in the view. This area is backed by large, wooded features to the east, which define and enclose further views with the exception of several large buildings, towers and residential tower blocks which rise above is to provide an urban presence to the background view.

The view to the north is enclosed at a much closer point in the near to mid distance by mature tree lines which surround arable fields that then descend to the north. Beyond the illustrated view to the south and west the view embraces further areas of open arable farmland interspersed by wooded blocks and tree belts.

Predicted Change : In this context, construction activity would be partially visible, principally within the southern sections of the Proposed Development Site at the southern sections of fields 1 and 4. Activity within other fields would be partial and mostly to just the taller elements of construction. Some views would be in filtered views through tiers of mature field boundary vegetation.

On completion the Proposed Development would be partially visible at intermittent points in a mid-section of the view. This would also be in a section of the view that sits in front of a range of different

landscapes on the edge of Basingstoke, below the golf course, woodland and tall urban buildings. Two sections of the Proposed Development Site would be visible in the southern extents of field 4 and field 1 but the panels in field 1 would also be set back from sections of the highest points of field 1 for other site constraints. Where visible the sections of solar panels would be seen as low lying tonal or textural changes in a mix of tones and hues and field enclosure patterns across the arable fields. This would include the lower lying western side of field 4 in filtered views and slightly higher sections of field 1 surrounded by vegetated field boundaries. They would therefore be seen as two separate tonal changes in the view with gaps between them and with the surrounding pattern of features visible above the solar PV panels.

The remaining sections of the Proposed Development in fields 2, 3, north side of 4 and field 5 would sit substantially to the rear of intervening landform and behind intervening tiers of vegetation and barely discernible, in the view.

From this distance and orientation, the solar panels would be seen in views obliquely across the north to south rows and perceived as a series of rows or panels with textured context within lower lying sections of the field pattern with views extending across the southern rows of panels.

The nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some variation in the view of the panels, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location the panels would be seen with the rear face of the panels facing towards the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day they would be seen as flat panels. Later in the day they would be seen with the front of the panel facing towards the view.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation features are established to provide an enhanced vegetated structure to reduce visibility towards the Proposed Development Site. This includes measures to maintain a field boundary up to 6m height around the nearest sections in field 4 and new hedgerow and field boundaries to the west side of field 1 up to 10-12m which would reduce views to just partial intermittent heavily filtered sections of the Site in the medium to long term.

Assessment: This would represent a **Medium to Low** magnitude of visual effect in the short term (partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would be noticeable or perceptible) but in lower lying filtered sections of the view and from a short, elevated section of the PRoW section with lower exposure to the view from the rest of the route. On balance this would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PRoW users, given the proximity and exposure to the view and extent of development present.

Beyond the short term and once the proposed management of existing hedgerows and mitigation establishes within and around the edges of the Proposed Development Site, the Proposed Development would be more notably screened and integrated within the landscape, resulting in a **Low** magnitude of visual effect by year 15. This would reduce effects to no more than **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 8: Minor road to Monk Sherborne on the west edge of the CA

Existing View: At this field access point on Rookery Farm Lane to the northeast of field 5, a channelled view extends between mature wooded roadside vegetation to the west as shown on **Figure 2-13**.

The view from this point on the road is defined by gently sloping to sweeping, large scale arable farmland which falls initially then rises across the foreground view. High points of the farmland lie to

the southwest and lower points to the north and south. The foreground field is then enclosed by mature tree lines and wooded field enclosures which sweep across the skyline and enclose and heavily filtered further views to the west.

These field boundaries also break up the expansive view across the farmland further to the south and north where the view continues through lower lying points to further arable farmland. To the northwest there is more wooded enclosure which restricts further views beyond the mid distance view and prevents views to lower lying settlement at Monk Sherborne. At this point a similar channelled view would be gained from the All Saints Church to the north side of Manor Farm.

Predicted Change: From this point the construction activity in field 5 would be clearly visible within the southern half of the view to the west. Elsewhere, construction activity and the potential for views would be limited to fields 1-4.

On completion the Proposed Development would be clearly visible within the sweeping foreground arable field, where the solar panels would stretch across the southern half the view and field sections, to the west within the near distance view. At this point they would be seen with views across the north to south rows and as layers of panels across the field, stretching west across the simple scaled farmland between existing field boundaries within the view directly south. Given the set backs from the road for buffer areas and a permissive footpath, the wider view would be retained to most of the surrounding features in the wider view to the south. At other points, closest to the view and within the northern half of the field panels have been removed to allow views to be retained over the farmland and to reduce visibility from points to the north.

Given the proposed nature of the tracking system, there would be some variation in the view of the panels at different times of the day. During the first part of the day the panels would be seen tilted to the east with front faces facing the view. By the middle of the day, they would be seen as flat panels, with some views of the supporting structures. Later in the day they would be seen tilting to the west with rear faces of the panels visible.

This view would be available on completion and in the short term. Once established the proposed mitigation planting and field margin, buffer enhancements along the northern and eastern boundaries of field 5, would act to break up and filter or screen views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within the landscape fabric as it matures. These features would be managed to different heights allowing new features to grow out to provide a mix of landscape fabric elements with different heights and structure to add some diversity to the simple scaled focus of the view. This would help to filter and reduce visibility from this distance and orientation.

Assessment: This would represent a **High to Medium** magnitude of visual effect (extensive to partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a clear feature) in a near and mid-distance view. This would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for road users as they move through the landscape with a glimpsed exposure and with more filtered and screened views from other points of the road to the north and south.

With mitigation and enhancement planting established in the medium to long term the effect would be reduced to a more partial, change to the existing view which would include an enhanced landscape structure in the view. While this would break up the scale of the field and view across the arable field, it would provide a more diverse and varied mix of landscape features within the intervening view.

This reduces the magnitude of visual effect to **Medium to Low** with heavily filtered and glimpsed views through a more diverse landscape structure. This would reduce the effect on balance to

Moderate to Minor Adverse in the medium to long term and by year 15, which is **Not Significant**, with the development heavily screened and views enhanced with a mix of new landscape features.

Viewpoint 9: PRoW west side of Rookery Farm on west edge of Monk Sherborne CA

Existing View: From a section of a PRoW to the south side Monk Sherborne, a sloping view stretches across gently rising ground to the south, across arable fields which can contained by mature wooded field boundaries which break up and filter views south. These wooded boundaries also form a near to mid distance skyline directly south as shown on **Figure 2-14**.

Where lower lying land permits, the view extends slightly further to the southeast across further rising ground towards a mix of buildings on Rookery Farm Lane. These include All Saints Church and Manor Farm with its mix of outbuildings and light industrial structures which sit within a wooded backdrop on the undulating skyline. Further to the south and southwest a large arable field rises up to form a section of the near to mid distance skyline between further areas of woodland adding scale and simplicity to the view.

Predicted Change: During construction there would be some potential for views to the construction of panels in the eastern sections and to some of the taller machinery to the western sections. Elsewhere it would be screened.

On completion the Proposed Development would be partially visible in the filtered mid distance view, where it would sit to the rear wooded field boundary vegetation within a section of the gently sloping arable farmland to the west side of farm outbuildings at Manor Farm. At this point it would extend across the sloping ground that runs through the mid-point of the field, but it would not include the lower northern sections of the field that slope down to the view as sections incorporate design mitigation measures to set back the development and remove panels from the north facing slopes that face the view from around this location. As such, it would be just the eastern sections of field 5 that are likely to be visible with the central and western sections more heavily filtered and screened from these sections of PRoW. In this view just the ends of the north to south rows would be seen in in these partial filtered views.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some minor variation in the partial view of the panels above and between vegetation, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location to the north, the panels would be seen with views along the ends of the rows, with the front face of the panels facing east or to the left of the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day the panels would be seen as flat panels. Later in the day they would be seen facing to the west, or right side of the view.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before mitigation is established along the northern development edges to provide an enhanced vegetated edge and substantial screen to the panels. Once established the mitigation planting, would act to break up and filter or screen views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within an enhanced landscape fabric as it matures.

These features would be managed to different heights allowing new features to grow out along the northern boundary to provide a mix of landscape fabric elements with different heights and structure to add some further diversity into the view. This would include a mix of new grassland, wood pasture and woodland blocks which ties in with local strategies for the area. This would help to filter and reduce visibility from this distance and orientation.

Assessment: This would represent no more than a **Medium** magnitude of visual effect (partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would be noticeable). This would be mainly in higher section of field 5 to the east but a small proportion of the overall view partially

filtered by wooded field boundaries and from a short section of the PRoW with low degree exposure from most other sections of the PRoW. Given the low exposure and filtered views, on balance this would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PROW users on the edges of the settlement from this short section of the PRoW.

This view would be available on completion and in the short term beyond which the establishment of mitigation planting and enhancements coupled with the management of the vegetated field boundaries with proposed gapping up planting would act to screen and heavily filter views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within the landscape fabric.

In the longer term, once mitigation has established the magnitude of visual effect would reduce to **Low** by year 15, with new vegetated structure and reinforced field boundaries providing reduced exposure through more heavily filtered field boundaries. On balance, this would result in a **Moderate to Minor Adverse** visual effect in the long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Viewpoint 10: PRoW north of Sherborne St John

Existing View: From an elevated section of a PRoW to the north of Sherborne St John, a filtered view extends over rolling pasture farmland, buildings add settlement edges at Sherborne St John along Monk Sherborne Road and between a mix of mature tree lines and areas of woodland, as shown on **Figure 2-15**.

Beyond these initial features and settlement edges mixed farmland continues to rise and fall into the view. It is dived initially by smaller encloses directly south of the settlement but then includes large arable fields. These fields are typically bound by mature field boundaries, tree lines and at more distant points to the south by large areas of mixed woodland. In the far distance to the south the urban influences, tower and residential tower blocks within Basingstoke are evident to the rear of woodland and across the Weybrook Park golf course while further to the southwest farmland rises gradually to a relatively flat, slightly elevated skyline which is formed by further field boundary hedgerows. At this point traffic and buildings on the A339 are faintly evident on the horizon.

Predicted Change: During construction there would be some potential for filtered views to the construction of panels in field 3 and to some of the taller machinery. Elsewhere it would be screened.

On completion, the Proposed Development would be discernible in filtered views through mature trees and field boundaries where it would sit within the rising farmland in the mid distance view. At this point it would extend across the sloping farmland, but it would not include the northern half of the field that slope down to the view as these sections incorporate design mitigation measures to set back the development and remove panels from the northern field sections. As such, it would be just the higher western sections of field 3 that are likely to be more visible in the filtered view.

At this point, the nature of the proposed tracking system would provide some minor variation in the partial view of the panels above and between vegetation, with the front and rear side of the panels visible at different times of the day. At this location to the northeast, the panels would be seen obliquely with views along and across the northern rows as the descend across the field, with the front face of the panels facing east or to the left of the view during the first part of the day. By the middle of the day the panels would be seen as flat panels. Later in the day they would be seen facing to the west, or right side of the view.

This view would be available during construction and on completion in the short term before mitigation is established along the northern development edges of field 3 in the form of a new tree belt, to provide an enhanced vegetated edge and partial screen to the panels. Once established the

mitigation planting, would act to break up and filter views of the Proposed Development and assimilate it within an enhanced landscape fabric as it matures.

Assessment: This would represent a **Medium to High** magnitude of visual effect (partial to large change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would be noticeable). This would be mainly in higher sections of field 3 but a small proportion of the overall view partially filtered by wooded field boundaries, this would also be from a short section of the PRoW with low degree of exposure from other sections of the PRoW.

On balance this would result in a **Moderate to Major** visual effect at this isolated point, in the short term, which is **Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PRoW users on the edges of the settlement from this short section of the PRoW.

This view would be available on completion and in the short term beyond which the establishment of mitigation planting and enhancements coupled with the management of the vegetated field boundaries with proposed gapping up planting would act to filter views to a greater extent.

In the longer term, once mitigation has established the magnitude of visual effect would reduce to **Medium to Low** with more partial to slight changes by year 15, with a new vegetated structure and reinforced field boundaries providing reduced exposure through more heavily filtered field boundaries. On balance, this would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Summary of Visual Effects on Receptor Groups and Illustrative Viewpoints

The visual assessment above from the 10 representative VPs, supported by the illustrative VPs (A-F in **Technical Appendix 2.2**) shows that, geographically, the extent of notable visual effect would be confined to the immediate setting of the Proposed Development Site in the transitional arable farmland between Basingstoke, the A339 and the settled wooded landscapes to the north.

Beyond these points, views are more partial and mostly filtered or screened by intervening tiers of field boundary vegetation. This is summarised below.

From the representative VPs it can be seen that:

- The extent of **Major to Moderate** and **Moderate to Major Significant Adverse** visual effects, where the Proposed Development would form a noticeable to large change to the composition of views such that the baseline would be fundamentally changed, would be restricted to points within or on, Proposed Development Site boundaries where there is public access and from isolated points to the east and northeast up to c. 0.65km where there would be some potential for views from higher points of elevation on short sections of PRoW and the nearest settlement edge at Sherborne St John to the west of the A430. This would include users on the elevated sections of the St James Way along Stokes Lane. However, these effects would be in the short term before mitigation planting has established within new buffer areas and existing boundaries to screen and heavily filter the proposals in views whilst adding enhanced landscape structure and biodiversity to views. This would reduce effects to **Moderate Adverse** or less in the medium to long term at these points, which is **Not Significant**;
- Beyond this area, there would be **Moderate Adverse** effects, that are **Not Significant**, from other low lying Proposed Development Site boundary points where views are heavily filtered and glimpsed views and to a number of other close-range points within the immediate Proposed Development Site context within c. 0.5km. This would include other sections of the wider PRoW network and isolated points on the nearest settlement edges and an isolated point on the A339. These are all points within the host farmland area surrounding the Proposed Development Site where views are partial and heavily filtered to the north and within the context of lower lying arable

farmland alongside the edges of Basingstoke to the south. This is likely to be in the short term before mitigation planting has established to screen potential views and reduce effects;

- Beyond these points, the scale of effects would reduce to **Moderate to Minor Adverse** or less, which is **Not Significant**, particularly once the mitigation planting has established along development edges and gapping up and management of vegetation on other boundaries has matured, filtering and screening views of the proposals. This is likely to include other fringe areas of nearest settlement to the north where views are heavily screened and the Proposed Development Site barely discernible beyond tiers of vegetation and topographical variances. This would also include other stretches of PRoW within c. 0.6km where topography and interesting landcover patterns also screen the majority of views and central sections of the Weybrook Park golf course, as evidenced by the illustrative VP A; and
- Outside these areas, the Proposed Development would either be largely screened or heavily filtered from visual receptors by vegetation and local landform variations within the wider landscape, or the Proposed Development would form a very limited change in more distant isolated views.

Summary of Effects upon Visual Receptors

The following sections summarise the visual effects of the Proposed Development upon completion with landscape mitigation, which is implemented as an embedded part of the Proposed Development. The summary also notes the effects of the subsequent management and maturing of the existing and new landscape and planting proposals.

Settlement and Properties

Views towards the Proposed Development would be possible from isolated settlement edges and properties surrounding the Proposed Development Site. This would range from close and clear views on Stokes Lane to more distant and partial, filtered and restricted views from edges of settlement to the north and east.

The largest settlement area at Basingstoke lies c. 2.6km to the east and southeast of the Proposed Development Site. It lies beyond the principal areas of visibility and would experience no potential views towards the proposals. The magnitude of visual effect would be **None** and the effect **No Change**.

Sherborne St John lies between c. 0.4km and 1.5km to the northeast of the Proposed Development Site. A short section of the nearest settlement edge lies on the fringe of theoretical visibility where the ZTVs (see **Figures 2-4a-b**) indicate the potential for some visibility towards the Proposed Development Site but this would be at the lower extent of visibility as noted by the blue tones on the ZTV. This would include the area at Dixons Corner to the north and south side of Dixons Garage to the west side of the A430 before the road drops down into the settlement. It would also include a short section of the PRoW.

The type of view is illustrated by VP 5. This would bring about an isolated point of **Medium to High** magnitude of visual effect and **Moderate to Major** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, when combined with the baseline sensitivity for PRoW users and residents away from immediate property on the edges. From the remaining settlement areas and key central sections, there would very limited potential for visibility and the large majority of the settlement would experience **No Change**.

From Monk Sherborne to the north, views from within the settlement would be very limited, as shown on the ZTVs (see **Figure 2.4b**) and there would be **No Change** from within this settlement.

There would however be the potential for clear open views from close proximity and a small group of individual residential properties which sit on the west section of Stokes Lane at Queens Cottages. As illustrated in VP 3 and illustrative VP C, open views of the proposals would be possible, although they would be largely screened at ground floor by intervening field boundary vegetation alongside the southern side of Stokes Lane.

Views to the proposed infrastructure would also be slightly oblique from the upper stories but set at lower lying sections of the large arable farmland and in the wider context of other large, modified landscapes for recreation on the urban edges of Basingstoke. Whilst clear and noticeable in moderate sections of the view this siting of infrastructure would reduce the potential for the proposals to dominate the wider view with design set backs from these properties allowing views to be maintained to the south and west to surrounding landscapes.

Over time with mitigation, the view would be more integrated within a more robust landscape framework of vegetated fields with areas of new biodiverse grassland and trees at foreground points adding interest into the immediate view. Whilst this would provide sight changes in the nature of vegetated enclosures in this large simple scale transitional arable farmland it would provide some enhancement and benefit to the immediate view.

At worst, the magnitude of visual effect would be **Medium to High** and the level of effect would be **Moderate to Major Adverse** in the short term, which is **Significant**. This would be until mitigation planting has established to screen and integrate the Proposed Development with an enhanced foreground. This would reduce the magnitude of effect to no more than **Medium to Low** with a mix of filtered and glimpsed views through a more diverse landscape structure. This would reduce the effect on balance to **Moderate Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**.

The remaining sections of the detailed study area are very sparsely settled within the surrounding sloping farmland with just a couple farmsteads sitting within fairly contained plots at Monar Farm on Rookery Farm Lane, or at low lying points in the surrounding landscape at Rookery Farm and Filed Farm Barn. Effects are considered to be **Not Significant** from these points and although there would be some glimpsed views from points surrounding Manor Farm and Rookery Farm Lane (i.e. VPs 8 and 9) these are more glimpsed and of low exposure and in the short term before mitigation is established to fully screen the proposals.

PROW and Recreational Routes

Figure 2.1 shows that there are no national cycle routes of relevance to the Proposed Development identified within the study area and ZTV with the nearest, the NCN23 running to the east and northeast of Basingstoke.

St James Way Long Distance Path

This route is a long distance path and walking route follows "*a probable route taken by medieval pilgrims from Reading Abbey to Southampton*" and is c. 110 km long. It is judged to be of **High to Medium Sensitivity**.

The route runs broadly north to south and runs adjacent to the eastern Proposed Development Site boundary of fields 1 and 2 then heads northwest along Stokes Lane to Rookery Farm. It is represented by VP 2) and illustrative VP B to the eastern boundaries and by VP 3 and VP 6 along Stokes Lane and VP 9 to the north of field 5.

There would be a range of views from this route as demonstrated by the VP assessments above with lower lying views to the east and more elevated views along Stokes Lane to the west of field 3 and north of field 2. From most points, however, the Proposed Development would be seen in

occasional and infrequent gaps in the wooded boundary vegetation including field access points (VP 3) and although in the near distance it would be mostly heavily filtered by the intervening wooded boundaries. This would restrict views to just small partial sections of the Proposed Development Site.

From points to the east and lower lying sections of Stokes Lane, this would represent a **Medium to Low** magnitude of visual effect (partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would be noticeable but with a medium to low degree of exposure). This would be in infrequent heavily filtered views between dense vegetation in a near distance view. This would result in a **Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, with infrequent views in gaps in vegetation.

Although there is some potential for more open views at elevated points to the west on Stokes Lane these would also be at intermittent points with most of the route running between well vegetation wooded field boundaries. At these intermittent points, such as field access gates, the solar panels would stretch across larger sections of the view. Where visible to the south in fields 1 and 2 this would be within the generally lower lying eastern sections of the fields initially within the near to mid distance view which helps to contain the profile of the solar panels.

At other points to the west of field 6 views would be gained at occasional points across the higher western ends of the rows of panels with views to extending across and between the rows towards the higher land, woodland and urban features at Basingstoke. At these isolated points this would represent isolated points of **High to Medium** magnitude of visual effect (extensive to partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a clear feature) in a near and mid-distance view. This would result in a **Major to Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, on PRoW users but at infrequent points as they move through the landscape and with more filtered and screened views from other points of the PRoW.

Beyond the short term and once the proposed mitigation infill planting establishes the Proposed Development would be more notably screened and integrated within the landscape. This would reduce the magnitude of visual effect to a more subtle or slight change and more heavily screened or glimpsed views through new mitigation, and some enhancement along the PRoW and effects would be reduced to **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Other PROW

As well as the St James Way running along the eastern Proposed Development Site boundary and up Stokes Lane, there are a number of other PRoW running adjacent to the northeastern and western Proposed Development Site boundaries. These PRoW then continue to connect with a wider network of PRoW with a stronger focus to the north, connecting the two nearest settlements of Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John to further recreational routes and long distance paths to the south. However to the south side of the Proposed Development Site some PRoW stop and are severed by the road network and the A339, limiting wider connections in the direction.

To help alleviate the severance in the existing PRoW network and improve connections, to the south, a new permissive path has been proposed from PRoW on the western boundary of field 5, through the northern margins of fields of 5 and 4 to link back up with PRoW along Stokes Lane. This would help to enhance accessibility with new circular routes and assist with GI improvements.

Regarding existing PRoW, adjacent to the Proposed Development Site boundaries the PRoW are mostly enclosed by wooded field boundaries and mature tree vegetation, which restrict, and heavily filtered close-range views and it would only be occasional filtered glimpsed views available towards

the Proposed Development in gaps in vegetation. This would again be in the short term before mitigation gapping up and infill planting matures to more fully screen the Proposed Development. This would represent isolated points of **High to Medium** magnitude of visual effect (extensive to partial change to the existing view where the development or a part of it, would become a clear feature) in a near and mid-distance view. This would result in a **Major to Moderate Adverse** visual effect in the short term, which is **Significant**, on PRoW users but at infrequent points as they move through the landscape and with more filtered and screened views from other points of the PRoW.

Once the proposed mitigation infill planting establishes the Proposed Development would be more notably screened and integrated within the landscape. This would reduce the magnitude to a more subtle or slight change and more heavily screened or glimpsed views through new mitigation, and some enhancement along the PRoW and effects would be reduced to **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**.

From other points in the surrounding landscape there is some potential for views towards the Proposed Development Site from isolated points of elevation on some PRoW. This would include a short section of the PRoW to the east end of Stokes Lane (VP 4), a short section of the PRoW to the north of Field Farm Barn (VP 7) and an isolated point of elevation on the PRoW to the north side of Sherborne St John (VP 10). From these points there would be a range of partial, often filtered views, particularly from the north and west where there is a greater degree of field boundary enclosure. This is likely to bring about some potential for **Moderate to Major Adverse** visual effects in the short term, which is **Significant**. However, with mitigation planting established these effects would be reduced to **Moderate Adverse** in the medium to long term, which is **Not Significant**.

Roads

There is one major road, the A339, which passes through the detailed study area at points to the south, connecting Basingstoke and Newbury, with **Low to Medium Sensitivity** to the Proposed Development. From this route only a short section of up to c. 0.8km lies within the detailed ZTV as shown on **Figures 2.4a-b**.

The view is represented by VP 1. At this isolated point the Proposed Development would be clearly visible within the lower lying sections of the surrounding large scale arable fields, to the east of Rookery Farm Lane where views would be gained across fields 1 and 2. At a separate point to the north, the southern edge of the panels in field 4 would just be evident.

At this point solar panels would provide a textural and tonal change in a lower lying section of the arable farmland to the west of the Weybrook Park golf course, and in front of extensive areas of woodland and forest. Both of these existing landscapes contribute large, uniform elements and textural contrasts to the surrounding view which helps to accommodate the tonal change within the Proposed Development Site.

This would be in the short term before management of existing field boundaries and mitigation screening to the south side of fields 1 and 4 and west side of fields 1 and 2, reinforces existing field boundaries and provides more screening to filter and screen the view. Effects would be fleeting given the speed of travel along the road and effects are considered to be no more than **Moderate Adverse** in the short term, which is **Not Significant**, and **Moderate to Minor Adverse** in the long term, which is also **Not Significant**.

The screened ZTVs indicate that there would also be some potential for views to the Proposed Development from a couple of minor roads within the vicinity of the Proposed Development Site. This would primarily relate to a section of the Rookery Farm Lane, which broadly heads north from

the A339 to run between the two Proposed Development Site parcels. The types of views are represented by VP 1 and VP 8 and also shown by illustrative VP G.

Between the A339 and Stokes Lane for up to c. 1km the views are more open and focussed to the north and east across the large arable fields which undulate and fall away in these directions towards a wooded landscape to the north and across the wooded edges of Basingstoke to the east. Views are then restricted from most sections to the west due to rising ground and vegetation patterns. Where the Site would be visible it would be generally within the lower lying sections of the arable farmland that fall away towards Basingstoke.

At these points, substantial set backs have been incorporates into the Proposed Development to reduce the visual influence and integrate the development into less visible sections of the farmland. Effects are considered to be **Moderate Adverse** and **Not Significant** in the short term and **Moderate to Minor Adverse** and **Not Significant** in the long term.

At other points to the north, the views are more restricted on Rookery Farm Lane by mature roadside and field boundary vegetation and views would be very glimpsed through gaps in vegetation and field access points (VP 8) effects would be lower given the low degree of exposure and would be no more than **Moderate to Minor Adverse** and **Not Significant**.

At other points to the north, views are limited by roadside vegetation along Monk Sherborne Road between Monk Sherborne and Sherborne St John and where views are available at field access points (VP E) this would be limited by rising farmland with the proposals set back from the northern sections of this field. Views would also be similarly restricted from Aldermaston Road to the east.

2.9 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative assessment relates to the assessment of the effects of more than one development. This is defined in GLVIA3 (LI and IEMA, 2013), which notes that they:

> *"Result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the Development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future."*

Developments that are subject to a valid planning application are normally included within such an assessment, where specific circumstances indicate there is potential for cumulative effects to occur, with progressively decreasing emphasis placed on those which are less certain to proceed.

Typically, operational and consented developments are treated as being part of the landscape and visual baseline. i.e. it is assumed that consented schemes would be built except for occasional exceptions where there is good reason to assume that they would not be constructed. Schemes that are at earlier stages such as scoping are not usually considered in detail within such an assessment unless specifically requested by the planning authority.

Within the detailed study area for this assessment, there is one solar farm in planning at c. 2.6km to the southwest for a 30 MW Solar Farm at Hook Lane, Malshanger, Submitted December (ref. 23/03012/FUL). This is shown on **Figure 2.16** in **Volume 4** of this ES. There are no other solar farm sites 'in planning' at the time of writing. While there is another potential site to the north at Land Adjoining Aldermaston Road this site is only at the early stages, at scoping as and as such is not considered in detail in this report in line with guidance for assessment.

2.9.1 Methods and Approach

This section summarises the anticipated cumulative effects arising from the Proposed Development in combination with the developments above.

Cumulative landscape effects would occur to the landscape components e.g. loss of hedgerows or landscape characteristics by introducing new features or altering / removing existing features.

Cumulative visual effects would occur where developments are viewed in combination. This assessment considers two types of cumulative visual effect, namely effects arising from combined and sequential views. These comprise:

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

2.9.2 Cumulative Impact Assessment

Hook Lane Site

The proposed solar farm in planning at Hook Lane, Malshanger c. 2.6km to the southwest would cover a further arable fields to the south side of the A339. At this location it would sit on the southern boundary of the NL close the southeastern tip of the designation with the boundary of the designation extending along the northern and northeastern Proposed Development Site boundaries. It lies at a broadly similar elevation to the Proposed Development.

Given its location there is some potential for cumulative landscape and visual effects. However, as the cumulative ZTV shows at **Figure 2.17**, the potential for cumulative intervisibility with this site would be limited. This is illustrated by the OS screening too, with further field boundaries and lidar screening reinforcing the separate areas of visibility.

Also the visibility footprint on the cumulative ZTV does not account for potential extent of development with the different sites, visible and from these southern fringes points along the A339, the potential for greater extent of visibility towards the Proposed Development would be limited from this area to the isolated point on the A339 at the junction with Rookery Farm Lane. As such, intervening topography and intervening field boundaries and wooded areas between the two sites would act to limit views between them.

The two sites would therefore be seen in different sections of the large-scale arable farmland that surrounds the southeastern tip of the NL to the north and south sides of the designation. This is also within a broader context of large-scale farmland that is influenced by a range of natural and built features and the urban setting to Basingstoke. It is also an area of potential growth with the large scale residential and mix use housing developments that are approved as noted in the future baseline section.

As a result, the potential for notable cumulative effect resulting from the Proposed Development on the landscape is no more than **Medium to Low**, with limited visible overlap or complexity in developments from the vast majority of views in the surrounding landscape. This would be **Not Significant**, in the short and long term when combined with the baseline sensitivities of the host landscape

The location of the Hook Lane site adjacent to the much larger residential scheme to the southeast would be a more significant factor for cumulative effects but it is considered that the contribution of the Proposed Development would not be the notable cumulative factor, given the separate context within the falling arable farmland area to the north of the A339.

Equally, any effects on visual amenity would be no more than **Low to Negligible** on any defined visual receptors within this assessment and as a result there would not be any cumulative effects resulting from this cumulative development that would elevate any effects of the proposed solar development beyond those reported above. This is considered to be **Not Significant i**n both the short and long term.

Site in Scoping

At the time of writing in May 2025, there is one further cumulative scheme proposed at scoping stage that is of some relevance to the assessment of effects. It is another solar farm site to the north of the Proposed Development, within the separate low lying well wooded landscape to the north of Sherborne St John. Given the conclusions noted above with visibility patterns limited from points beyond the Proposed Development Site setting to the south of Sherbourne St John the level of cumulative effect from this further incremental change are anticipated to be **Not Significant**.

2.10 Summary of Residual Effects

The residual effects consider the effects after the incorporation of the mitigation measures.

In the context of the landscape and visual assessment, primary mitigation measures and considerations have been incorporated as an integral (or 'embedded') part of the design and layout of the Proposed Development. This has included attention to the siting, layout and heights of the Proposed Development. All of these aspects and features have been taken into account in the design of the Proposed Development and the development parameters and have therefore been assessed as part of the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

The residual operational effects assessment considers the Proposed Development 15 years after completion and takes into account the growth of the proposed and conserved planting over this time. These include the final intended effects, representing the degree of change that would occur with the proposed mitigation in place and as such additional mitigation measures are not relevant to the LVIA. These effects are detailed in the assessment above and summarised below.

2.10.1 Construction

Landscape

Well managed and controlled site activities and the application of good practices throughout the construction process would minimise the potential adverse effects arising from construction. This would include the protection of all trees and vegetation to be conserved in accordance with BS5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction- Recommendations).

The early implementation of some of the outer and perimeter landscape proposals would assist in minimising some of the indirect influences over the immediate surrounding landscape. Overall, the residual landscape effects during construction would remain as stated for the construction stages in the Landscape Effects section.

Visual

The phased and early implementation of some of the outer and perimeter landscape proposals would assist in minimising the resulting visual effects during the construction period.

Well managed and controlled site activities and the application of good practices throughout the construction process would also minimise the potential adverse visual effects arising from construction. Overall, the residual visual effects during construction would remain as described for the construction stage in the Visual Effects section

2.10.2 Operational Development

The residual operational effects assessment considers the Proposed Development 15 years after completion and takes into account the growth of the proposed and conserved planting over this time. These effects are outlined below and detailed in the Residual Effects Table 2-3.

Landscape Effects

In general, the landscape effects of the completed and operational Proposed Development would reduce over time following the establishment and subsequent maturing of the proposed planting and habitat creation. The comprehensive management of not only the proposed planting and habitats but also the existing conserved wooded hedgerows, trees and other habitats would also assist in reducing the initial operational landscape effects.

The main residual effect and benefits in landscape terms would arise from the maturing and management of the outer and perimeter landscape and planting proposals which would assist in mitigating the influence of the Proposed Development on its immediate context and in assimilating the landform and built development proposals in the Proposed Development Site`s landscape context.

Alongside the existing conserved wooded hedgerows, trees and other planting, the extensive new areas of habitat including new field boundaries, combined with the careful location and siting of other trees and small wooded features with large areas of new grassland and wood pasture in line with local strategies and initiative would grow out to form a robust and connected framework of landscape corridors and areas, sited around the perimeter of the Proposed Development Site.

The new walking route through the Proposed Development Site from surrounding areas, would contribute positively towards public health and wellbeing benefits as well as GI initiatives. An assessment of the residual visual effects of the Proposed Development (15 years post completion) on the identified receptors is included in **Table 2-3**.

Visual Effects

In general, many of the visual effects of the completed and operational Proposed Development would reduce over time following the establishment and subsequent maturing of the proposed planting and habitat creation. The comprehensive management of not only the proposed planting and habitats but also the existing conserved wooded field boundaries, trees and other habitats would also assist in reducing the initial operational visual effects.

The maturing and management of the existing and new planting would offer the most notable visual improvements to some of the receptors immediately surrounding the Proposed Development Site or with close views encompassing proposed planting in between the receptor and the solar panels or other infrastructure.

An assessment of residual visual effects of the Proposed Development (15 years post completion) on the identified receptors is included in **Table 2-3**.

Table 2-3: Residual Effects

Nature of Effects	Receptors	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance	Magnitude	Significance
			Year 1		Year 15 Residual	
Landscape Effects	Landscape Fabric (Direct)	Medium	Medium	Moderate Not-Significant	Negligible	Minor Not-Significant
	LCA 16: Basingstoke Down	Medium	Medium to High	**Moderate to Major Significant**	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant
	NWD NL	High	Low to Negligible	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant	Negligible	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant
Visual Effects	VP1 - A339	Medium to Low	Medium to High	Moderate Not-Significant	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant
	VP2 - PRoW, north of the A339	High to Medium	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant	Low	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant
	VP3 - PRoW Stokes Lane, west	High to Medium	High to Medium	**Major to Moderate Significant**	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant
	VP4 - PRoW Stokes Lane, east	High to Medium	Medium to High	**Moderate to Major Significant**	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant
	VP5 - PRoW, Sherborne St John	High to Medium	Medium to High	**Moderate to Major Significant**	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant
	VP6 - PRoW east side of All Saints Church	High to Medium	High to Medium	**Major to Moderate Significant**	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant
	VP7 - PRoW, east of Basingstoke Road	High to Medium	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant	Low	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant
	VP8 - Minor Road to Monk Sherborne	Medium to Low	High to Medium	Moderate Not-Significant	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor Not-Significant
	VP9 - PRoW west side of Rookery Farm	High to Medium	Medium	Moderate Not-Significant	Medium to Low	Moderate - Minor Not-Significant
	VP10 - PRoW north of Sherborne St John	High to Medium	Medium to High	**Moderate to Major Significant**	Medium to Low	Moderate Not-Significant

2.11 Summary

The Proposed Development would introduce a new vertically low, medium-scale renewable energy feature into large scale arable farmland, at a transitional point which is surrounded by a mix of natural and built features and land uses, between the northwestern edges of Basingstoke, north of the A339 infrastructure and the NWD NL and south of a more wooded settlement landscape.

At this point the landscape is defined by gently sloping landform to the north and northwest / northeast towards Basingstoke and by a mix of landcover enclosures with more wooded boundaries and areas to the north and larger scale, unenclosed arable fields to the south. This setting is reasonably typical of the defined character within the landscape character of the area in LCA16 in the immediate site setting.

The overall design of the Proposed Development has considered landscape and visual effects within the confines of the five arable fields to ensure the effects upon the landscape and visual receptors are limited.

To this end the development has been reduced in scale and extent through an iterative design process. This has included removal of panels from significant set back areas from the higher more open slopes to the south and also at separate points from the nearest sloping field sections closer to settlement to the north. The solar PV panels has also included various other set backs from field boundaries and PRoW where more open views are available from longer stretches such as the west side of Stokes Lane to retain and enhance the amenity of adjacent residential properties. The development has also been pulled back from key boundaries of the Proposed Development Site including eastern boundaries of field 1 with mitigation planting and new biodiversity enhancement areas at these locations.

The proposed mitigation and enhancement landscape measures along the Proposed Development Site boundaries and set back areas combined with management of other existing field boundaries would also assist in reducing the duration of effects and aid in retaining and improving the field boundaries in line with local strategies in the published character assessments for LCA16.

Direct landscape effects would include changing the prevailing arable land use to a dual use, renewable energy generation with potential for grazing and with landscape character and biodiversity enhancements. The solar PV panel layout has been designed to retain existing vegetation within the Proposed Development Site as far as possible and no notable tree or hedgerow sections would be removed.

The overall field scale that is characteristic of the Proposed Development Site and the surrounding landscape would remain but within an improved field boundary structure and views to surrounding features including hedgerows and ridgelines and to wider skylines would be retained.

LVIA effects are considered to be relatively localised to points within or adjacent to the Proposed Development Site and to a small isolated section of the nearest settlement edges at Sherborne St John, with intermittent partial visibility likely. Most other views would be limited and heavily filtered to small sections of the Proposed Development Site. Clear and open views where largely sections of the Proposed Development Site are visible are likely to be restricted, this is particularly so from more valued landscapes including the NWD NL and its immediate setting to the south of the A339, which provides a physical and perceptual barrier from points around the Proposed Development Site context to the north.

Where visible the Solar PV panels would sit at mid-points of the large scale arable sloping farmland but importantly below more distant skylines when seen from most lower points to the north and

mostly in views interspersed by a series of undulating ridges with increased wooded enclosures to the north. This would allow views to the landscape beyond the Proposed Development Site. In the medium to long term the proposed mitigation would mature, screening views towards the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development Site is not located within any landscape designations or any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value. While it does lie close to the southernmost tip of a NL the potential for effect is limited due to intervening topography and road infrastructure and landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development are likely to be limited to the Proposed Development Site itself and the immediate setting within the eastern sections of the LCA16 facing towards Basingstoke.

In the medium to long-term, the proposed landscape mitigation planting along the boundaries and set back areas would help to screen the large majority of the Proposed Development in views, as well as integrating the Development into the surrounding landscape.

This summary is consistent with the landscape related policy context and objectives for the area where the findings of this LVIA demonstrate that for the Proposed Development:

- The Proposed Development Site is *"…sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned"* (Policy EM1);
- The Proposed Development Site with its designed set backs and site reductions, maintains *"…the integrity of existing settlements*" (Policy EM1);
- The siting and design integrates with the landscape with a "*…comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings*" (Policy EM1);
- The design incorporates new permissive footpath connections which "*seek to improve links*" in accordance with the BDBC Green Infrastructure Strategy (Policy EM5);
- The mitigation measures seek to improve the "*Weakened hedgerow structure across the more extensive, open landscape types, resulting from previous hedgerow removal*" (BDLCA Key issues for LCA 16);
- The mitigation measures seek to *"…maintain the general openness of the landscape whilst enhancing the integrity of the hedgerow network and condition of existing woodland"* (BDLCA guidance for LCA 16*);*
- It is sensitively sited with a design and layout that minimises adverse environmental impacts on landscape (Policy EM8);
- There would be no unacceptable adverse impact individually or cumulatively (Policy EM8); and
- The historic environment and heritage assets and their settings are protected (Policy EM11).

At the end of the Proposed Development's lifespan, the predicted effects are reversible as the land would be returned to its former agricultural use, similar in form to its current state.

As set out above, the Proposed Development Site has been designed in a sensitive and appropriate manner and is considered to be in accordance with local and national planning policy. Where adverse effects arise, mitigation has been used to reduce the degree of harm and to provide a characteristic scheme that assimilates into the landscape.

2.12 References

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