

HIGHFIELDS FARM, THORPE ESTATE SOLAR FARM

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment



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Highfields Farm, The
Thorpe Estate Solar
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REPORT

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 RPS Group PLC has been commissioned by Elgin Energy to carry out a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the proposed ground mounted solar photovoltaic park and ancillary development at land within the Thorpe Estate at Highfields Farm, Clifton Lane, Tamworth (See Figure 1 – Application Site Location), from here on in referred to as the 'Application Site'. The LVIA is supplemented by a Glint and Glare Study prepared by Pager Power and is included at Appendix D.
- 1.2 The Application Site falls within the administrative area of Lichfield District Council (LDC). The Application Site is approximately 156 hectares. The solar farm proposals for the Application Site, are referred to as the 'proposed development'. Details of the proposed development are included within Appendix B.
- 1.3 This report provides a consideration of the site within the context of the surrounding rural landscape. It outlines the existing baseline conditions in terms of;
 - Topography,
 - Vegetation cover and land uses,
 - Published landscape character studies,
 - Landscape and other relevant designations, and,
 - The current visibility of the site.
- 1.4 The likely landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are assessed against the existing baseline scenario.
- 1.5 Planning policy of relevance to the application insofar as it relates to landscape and visual amenity matters are also considered in this document.

Baseline

- 1.6 The Application Site is located near Highfields Farm, either side of Clifton Lane, on land within the Thorpe Estate, situated to the west of Thorpe Constantine. The Application Site comprises a series of arable fields enclosed by mature hedgerows, crossed by overhead electricity lines and pylons surrounding but excluding the building complex associated with Highfields Farm, which is grade II listed. Landscape Designations are shown on Figure 2.

Assessment Methodology

- 1.7 This assessment reviews the existing situation, and then considers the likely effects of the project in relation to the baseline conditions during the construction and operational phases. The level of the landscape and visual effects are assessed through consideration of the sensitivity or susceptibility of the receptor and the magnitude of change. The following table outlines the broad approach adopted to assess the significance of effect, together with professional judgement. The detailed methodology used for this assessment is set out at Appendix A.

Table 1: Level of Effect

Landscape and Visual Sensitivity or Susceptibility	Magnitude of Change			
	Large	Medium	Small	Negligible
High	Substantial	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible

Medium	Major or Moderate	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible
Low	Moderate	Minor or Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

1.8 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on the landscape has been described and evaluated against the following criteria, defined as:

- Substantial adverse: Where the proposed changes cannot be mitigated; would be completely uncharacteristic and would substantially damage the integrity of a valued and important landscape.
- Major adverse: Where the proposed changes cannot be fully mitigated; would be uncharacteristic and would damage a valued aspect of the landscape.
- Moderate adverse: Where some elements of the proposed changes would be out of scale or uncharacteristic of an area.
- Minor adverse: Where the proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area.
- Negligible adverse: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape.
- Neutral: Where the proposals would be in keeping with the character of the area and/or would maintain the existing quality or where on balance the proposals would maintain quality (e.g. where on balance the adverse effects of the proposals are off-set by beneficial effects).
- Negligible beneficial: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the landscape.
- Minor beneficial: Where the proposed changes would reflect the existing character and would slightly improve the character and quality of the landscape.
- Moderate beneficial: Where the proposed changes would not only fit in well with the existing character of the surrounding landscape but would improve the quality of the resource through the removal of detracting features.
- Major beneficial: Where the proposed changes would substantially improve character and quality through the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.

1.9 The effect of relevant aspects of the project on views has been described and evaluated as follows:

- Substantial adverse: Where the proposed changes would form the dominant feature or would be completely uncharacteristic and substantially change the scene in highly valued views.
- Major adverse: Where the proposed changes would form a major part of the view, or would be uncharacteristic, and would alter valued views.
- Moderate adverse: Where the proposed changes to views would be out of scale or uncharacteristic with the existing view.
- Minor adverse: Where the proposed changes to views would be at slight variance with the existing view.
- Negligible adverse: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the existing view.
- Neutral: Where the project would be imperceptible or would be in keeping with and would maintain the existing views or, where on balance, the proposals would maintain the quality of

the views (which may include adverse effects of the proposals which are off-set by beneficial effects for the same receptor).

- Negligible beneficial: Where the proposed changes would be barely discernible within the existing view.
- Minor beneficial: Where the proposed changes to the existing view would be in keeping with and would improve the quality of the existing view.
- Moderate beneficial: Where the proposed changes to the existing view would not only be in keeping with but would greatly improve the quality of the scene through the removal of visually detracting features.
- Major beneficial: Where the proposed changes to existing views would substantially improve the character and quality through the removal of large-scale damage and dereliction and provision of far reaching enhancements.

1.10 In the assessment those levels of effect indicated as being 'Substantial' or 'Major' may be regarded as significant effects. An accumulation of individual 'Moderate' adverse visual effects, for instance experienced during a journey, may also be regarded as sequentially significant. If no change would occur or be experienced by a receptor, then this has been recorded as 'No Effect'.

Relevant Guidance

1.11 As a matter of best practice, the assessment has been undertaken based on the relevant guidance on landscape and visual assessment. This includes:

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) '*Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*' (GLVIA) 3rd Edition.
- The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) '*Landscape Character and Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland*' (LCA).
- Natural England (2014) '*An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment*'
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, '*Visual Representation of Development Proposals*' (September 2019).
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, '*Assessing landscape value outside national designations*' (May 2021).

Study Area

1.12 The study area has been defined for the assessment based on a visual analysis undertaken during the site survey and the preparation of a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) for the proposed development, as defined in GLVIA3. The ZTV is the area from which any part of the proposed development would be potentially visible (See Figure 3). Further information regarding the ZTV is provided later in the report.

Baseline Methodology and Consultation

1.13 A desk top review of published data, such as landscape character assessments, OS maps and aerial photography was carried out. This identified potential landscape and visual receptors that could be affected by the project.

1.14 Field surveys were carried out on 15th and 20th October 2020 and 15th and 16th March 2021 to undertake viewpoint photography and analyse local landscape and visual receptors identified during the desktop survey.

- 1.15 Initial consultation has been sought with LDC and formal feedback received 23rd December 2019. Of relevance to the LVIA is as follows;

“Impact on Landscape

Consideration will also need to be had as to whether the proposed development would have an adverse impact upon the existing landscape. The application should be supported by a full detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment to quantify and qualify the degree of harm that the development would have on the landscape. Clearly, a development of this scale and nature would result in change to the landscape and has the potential to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.

A number of bridleways which bound the overall site and a public footpath which intersects the landscape. The introduction of the proposed solar panels, facing towards these paths, the transformer kiosks, substation, 2.4m high security fencing and CCTV cameras would all combine to give the 13 fields a semi-industrial feel, at odds with the character of the surrounding undulating landscape, and adversely affecting the attractive views from the footpaths. In particular the public footpath would pass through a corridor between solar panels on both sides for some 800m. The visual experience for users of this footpath would be considered unsatisfactory.

... The Amenities of residents of Highfield House Farm

Highfield House Farm is a residential property and the only such property that adjoins the site. Access into the property is through the wider site. From the driveway/access into Highfield Farm House, which is likely to be used by residents on a daily basis, there would be views of the ends of the panels and of the gaps between the panels but also oblique views that would be of an uninterrupted band of panels between 0.8m and 2.4m in height. The closest panels would be about 15m from the driveway. The solar panels would be visually intrusive from within the property and the current open outlook across the site would be obscured.

Notwithstanding the above, it is probable that the development would be visible from other properties at further vantage points from the site. Any LVIA will need to demonstrate the degree of change that would arise from these properties.

- 1.16 As an outcome of this consultation, the extent of the proposed development was reduced in relation to the Listed Building within the Application Site and the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) through the Application Site, as highlighted by LDC.
- 1.17 In line with the advice from LDC, this LVIA provides a detailed and robust assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development upon the landscape and visual resource. It provides an in depth assessment of potential effects upon the local landscape, walkers using local PRoWs, road users of Clifton Lane and residential receptors within 2km of the Application Site.
- 1.18 A meeting was attended with LDC on the viewpoint selection, methodology and intended views to montage. Views have been included from Highfield Farmhouse, from Clifton Campville Conservation Area and from various orientations and distances to the proposed development as discussed at this meeting.

Assessment Criteria and Assignment of Significance

- 1.19 Landscape and visual effects have been determined, taking into account the receptor sensitivity and the predicted magnitude of the change arising from the project. Appendix A sets out the indicative criteria used to guide the assessment of significance. It should be emphasised that, while the criteria are set out to ensure that the methodology is robust and transparent, professional judgement has been used to determine the significance of each effect. The assessment has been undertaken by and reviewed by members of a team with relevant qualifications and extensive experience in preparing LVIAs.

LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 1.20 This assessment of visual effects is based on views from publicly accessible locations, and where effects on residential and other private views (e.g. commercial occupiers) is noted this has, necessarily, been estimated based on the nearest publicly available viewpoint and professional judgement.
- 1.21 The viewpoints identified in this assessment are illustrative of the likely effect from a representative range of receptors, including occupiers of commercial and residential properties, users of rights of way and occupiers of vehicles on the road network.

2 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 This section summarises the national and local planning policies pertinent to landscape and visual issues, which are considered to be of relevance to the proposed development. The policy documents described below have been reviewed as part of the study.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021. The document sets out broad aims to achieve sustainable development in Section 2, including an environmental objective *'to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment'* at paragraph 8.
- 2.3 Strategic policies regarding Plan-making at Section 3 include, at paragraph 20, the sufficient provision for *'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure'*.
- 2.4 Section 11: Making effective use of land recognises the need to safeguard and improve the environment when meeting the needs for development. Paragraph 120 promotes new habitat creation or the improvement of public access to the countryside. Paragraph 124 recognises the *'desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting... or of promoting regeneration and change'* and *'the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places'*.
- 2.5 Section 12: Achieving well-designed places contains policies about achieving high quality design for all development (Paragraph 130). Developments should respond to the local character and history and reflect the identity of the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. The development should incorporate appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 2.6 Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. Paragraph 152 states that the planning system should *'support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'*. Paragraph 155 supports the increase in the use of renewable energy *'while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts)'*.
- 2.7 Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment. Paragraph 174 states that *'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality)'* and by *'recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'* including the benefits of trees and woodland.
- 2.8 Paragraph 176 states that *'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.'*
- 2.9 Paragraph 1850 requires that new development is appropriate to its location, ensuring relatively undisturbed areas retain tranquillity and amenity value, and that the impact of light pollution from artificial light is limited within intrinsically dark landscapes.

National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

- 2.10 The overarching National Policy Statement for Energy at Section 5.9 states:
'The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the

proposed project. The applicant’s assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these assessments in local development documents in England and local development plans in Wales. The applicant’s assessment should include the effects during construction of the project and the effects of the completed development and its operation on landscape components and landscape character. The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts on views and visual amenity. This should include light pollution effects, including on local amenity, and nature conservation (Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), 2011a).’

Local Policy

Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy 2015

2.11 The proposed development falls within Lichfield District Council (LDC). The development plan for LDC comprises the adopted Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy 2015. The Development Plan has been prepared to help shape the way in which the physical, economic, social and environmental characteristics of Lichfield District will change between 2008 and 2029. Policies of relevance to this LVIA are detailed below and shown on Figure 2.

Table 2 Lichfield District Local Plan Policies

Plan Policy	Details (abridged)
Core Policy 3: Delivering Sustainable Development	<p><i>The Council will require development to contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities, mitigate and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, make prudent use of natural resources, reduce carbon emissions, enable opportunities for renewable energy and help minimise any environmental impacts. To achieve this, development should address the following key issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of Lichfield District and its settlements;</i> <i>...be of a scale and nature appropriate to its locality;</i> <i>...use our natural resources prudently and conserve, enhance and expand natural, built and heritage assets and improve our understanding of them wherever possible;</i> <i>maximise opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity, geodiversity and green infrastructure and utilise opportunities to facilitate urban cooling; and facilitate energy conservation through energy efficiency measures as a priority and the utilisation of renewable energy resources wherever possible, in line with the energy hierarchy.</i>
Policy SC2: Renewable Energy	<p><i>Provision should be made for renewable energy generation within Lichfield District to maximise environmental and economic benefits whilst minimising any adverse local impacts. ...Opportunities for renewable energy developments will be assessed on the following basis:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>the degree to which the scale and nature of the proposal reflects the capacity and sensitivity of the landscape or townscape to accommodate the development;</i> <i>the impact on local amenity, including residential amenity;</i>

Plan Policy	Details (abridged)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the proposal on sites of biodiversity value, ancient woodland and veteran trees; the impact on the historic environment, including the effect on the significance of heritage assets and their setting and important views associated with valued landscapes and townscapes; ...
<p>Policy NR1: Countryside Management</p>	<p>The countryside of Lichfield District is valued as an asset in its own right and will be protected.</p> <p>The District Council recognises the important economic role of the countryside and wealth of resources it provides.</p> <p>Development proposals will be supported which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...Provide for the sensitive use of renewable energy resources (in conjunction with Core Policy 3 and Development Management Policies SC1 & SC2).
<p>Policy NR4: Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows</p>	<p>Lichfield District's trees, woodland and hedgerows are important visual and ecological assets in our towns, villages and countryside.</p> <p>In order to retain and provide local distinctiveness in the landscape, trees, veteran trees, woodland, ancient woodland, and hedgerows, are of particular significance. Trees and woodland will be protected from damage and retained, unless it can be demonstrated that removal is necessary and appropriate mitigation can be achieved.</p> <p>In the case of ancient woodland and veteran tree(s), development will be resisted as mitigation for these unique assets cannot be achieved. Space will be made within developments to accommodate veteran trees and ancient woodland including sufficient land around the ancient woodland to allow for expansion through natural regeneration and ongoing long term management.</p> <p>The removal of large mature species and their replacement with smaller shorter lived species will be resisted.</p> <p>Sufficient space within developments must be reserved for the planting and sustainable growth of large trees in order to retain the important tree canopy cover in conservation areas and the built environment, and to improve tree canopy cover in the District as a whole.</p> <p>Potential long term conflict between retained trees, hedgerows and built form will be designed out at the planning stage.</p> <p>Reference must be made to the Trees, Landscaping & Development SPD which will provide further guidance with regard to trees, woodlands, hedgerows and landscaping within the context of climate change, biodiversity and amenity. This Policy must be read in conjunction with Policy BE1: High Quality Development.</p>
<p>Policy NR5: Natural & Historic Landscapes</p>	<p>Development will be permitted where it does not negatively impact upon the geological, archaeological and historically important landscapes in the Lichfield District. The character and significance of the natural and historic landscape will be safeguarded through decisions which protect, conserve and</p>

Plan Policy	Details (abridged)
	<p>enhance sites of international, national, regional and local importance.</p> <p>Where development or land use changes may affect national or locally important landscape assets, a full understanding of the context, characteristics, and significance should be provided and informed by the Historic Environment Character Assessment work of the County and District Councils.</p> <p>This Policy must be read in conjunction with Policy BE1: High Quality Development</p>
<p>Core Policy 14: Our Built & Historic Environment</p>	<p>The District Council will protect and improve the built environment and have special regard to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment through positive action and partnership working. The historic environment contributes to sustainable communities, including economic vitality, and new development must make a positive contribution to the historic environment's local distinctiveness.</p> <p>The significance of designated heritage assets including nationally protected listed buildings and their settings, ancient monuments, archaeological sites and conservation areas and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced and given the highest level of protection. Other heritage assets including locally listed buildings, and locally important parks and gardens will also be conserved and enhanced. In conjunction with Policy NR5, landscapes that form the setting to the built and historic environment will also be conserved and enhanced.</p>
<p>Policy BE1: High Quality Development</p>	<p>All development proposals should ensure that a high quality sustainable built environment can be achieved. Development will be permitted where it can be clearly and convincingly demonstrated that it will have a positive impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significance of the historic environment, such as archaeological sites, sites of historic landscape value, listed buildings, conservation areas, locally listed buildings and skylines containing important historic, built and natural features (in conjunction with Policy NR5); • Reducing carbon emissions, by appropriate use of sustainable design and renewable energy schemes (in conjunction with the relevant sections of Core Policy 3, & Policies, SC1 and SC2); • The built vernacular. New development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, should carefully respect the character of the surrounding area and development in terms of layout, size, scale, architectural design and public views; • Public safety, health and reducing inequality, including the latest 'designing out crime' principles; • Amenity, by avoiding development which causes disturbance through unreasonable traffic generation, noise, light, dust, fumes or other disturbance; • The natural environment. Effective hard and soft landscaping including tree planting will be required and should be implemented in an integrated manner, making use of green

Plan Policy	Details (abridged)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • corridors for movement of people as well as for biodiversity (in conjunction with Core Policy 13, NR3, NR4 and NR6); and • Sustainable transport. New development should be located in areas which have good safe access to public transport to reduce the need to travel by private car and should optimise • choice of sustainable travel, particularly walking, cycling and public transport, creating new public transport nodes where necessary (in conjunction with Core Policies 3 & 5 and Policy • ST1). <p><i>New development will have a positive impact on the public realm and ensure high quality, inclusive design. This will be achieved by an appreciation of context, as well as plan, scale, proportion and detail. Specifically designed features, including public art where appropriate, should be integrated into developments in order to enhance the bespoke nature and individuality of design solutions.</i></p> <p><i>Innovative and contemporary designs will be supported where they are sympathetic to the setting and context of the surrounding area and existing development.</i></p>

Summary of Planning Policy

- 2.12 The NPPF sets out overarching aims to ensure development is appropriately located, well designed and sustainable. In summary, the policies set out to improve the overall quality of an area, establish a strong sense of place and create an attractive and comfortable location, responding to the local character. National policies seek to conserve, protect and enhance valued landscapes and provide protection of scenic areas within nationally designated areas such as AONBs.
- 2.13 The Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy incorporates strategies to respect and compliment the important features, elements and characteristics of the rural landscape, the visual setting of settlements and important views, avoid visually intrusive development and promote good quality design.

3 BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 This chapter of the LVIA contains a description of the Application Site, together with a description of the features that contribute to the landscape character of the study area. It also provides a summary of existing local landscape character assessments, and a description of the types of visual receptors at each of the representative viewpoints, and further description of potential visual receptors within 2km of the Application Site (see Figure 3).

Application Site and Context

- 3.2 The Application Site is located approximately 4.2km to the north east of Tamworth and 6km to the east of Lichfield. The small villages of Harlaston, Haunton and Clifton Campville are located to the north of the Application Site at distances of between approximately 1 to 1.7km. The small village of Thorpe Constantine is located 1km to the east of the Application Site and is centred around Thorpe Hall and its associated historic parkland and the Church of Constantine, both grade 2 listed buildings.
- 3.3 The Application Site covers arable fields which are located around Highfields Farm and Highfields Cottage to the east. Highfield Farm itself consists of a dairy, a listed farmhouse, various out house buildings and associated pastoral and arable fields within the Thorpe Estate. The Application Site is split into a northern parcel of fields, north of Highfield Farmhouse, and a southern parcel of fields to the south of the farmhouse. The northern parcel of fields is also split by Clifton Lane. For the purposes of this assessment, the Application Site has been divided into nine referenced fields, A to I, as shown within Appendix B.
- 3.4 Clifton Lane runs through the site on a north-south alignment. The B5493 is located approximately 1km to the south-east of the Application Site and the M42 is located approximately 4km to the south-east.

Landform and Drainage Features

- 3.5 The landform of the study area gently rises in the south-west. The site has an undulating landform with two high points at circa 98m AOD within Field A in the western extent of the site, and circa 95m AOD within Field G in the southern extent of the site. The land falls generally to the north and northeast from these highpoints to circa 69m AOD within Field D by Clifton Lane.
- 3.6 The River Mase is located in the north of the study area and to the north of Clifton Campville. A tributary from the River Mase splits and flows across the study area in a south-east direction from the fringes of Harlaston, in the north-west. The southernmost tributary from the River Mase runs adjacent to the north-east site boundary to the east of Clifton Lane.
- 3.7 There are two small ponds in the north-west of the Application Site. In addition ponds are located in close proximity to the site, to the north of Highfield Farm House and adjacent to the east of Clifton Lane. A further three small ponds are located within the Application Site and on the southern boundary. Tributaries off the River Tame are located in the south-west of the study area and tributaries of the River Anker are located in the south and east of the study area.

Land Use and Land Cover

- 3.8 The land use of the study area and Application Site is arable/pastoral farmland consisting of a series of medium to large fields dissected by boundary hedgerows with individual trees and interspersed with isolated farm properties. Small woodlands are located within the area and a series of public rights of way run throughout the study area with a small number of local lanes providing access to the farmsteads.

- 3.9 To the east is the hamlet of Thorpe Constantine, which includes numerous listed buildings such as Church of St Constantine and the Thorpe Hall, along with areas of estate parkland. To the north the land use becomes more settled with the small residential areas of Clifton Campville to the north-east, and villages of Haunton to the north, Little Harlaston to the north-west and Edlingale further north-west, Seckilington to the south-east and Newton-Regis further south-east. The fringes of the larger town of Tamworth are located to the south-west of the study area.

Public Rights of Way

- 3.10 There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW's) within the study area. Clifton Campville 0.338 footpath is located adjacent to the Application Site, where it heads north-west to Clifton Lane where it ends. Thorpe Constantine 2 and Clifton Campville 5 are both bridleways that run in close proximity to the southern site boundary. In addition, footpaths Thorpe Constantine 0.461 and 0.462 are located to the south-east of the site and run from the B5493, northwards. Located adjacent to part of the western site boundary is bridleway Clifton Campville 33. Further west are footpaths Thorpe Constantine 0.463 and Harlaston 8. To the south-west are footpaths Thorpe Constantine 0.464 and 0.463.
- 3.11 To the north of the site are footpaths Clifton Campville 34, 30 and 31. To the north-east are footpaths Clifton Campville 32 and Thorpe Constantine 0.457.

Designations

- 3.12 There are no designated sites of international or national importance within the site or study area. The Conservation Areas of Harlaston, Haunton and Clifton Campville are located in the north of the study area and Amington Hall and Wigginton Conservation areas are located in the south. Mottle & Baily Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument located in the south of the study area in Seckington.
- 3.13 There are a number of grade II listed buildings within the study area including, Highfields Farm which is located within the Application Site itself. To the east of the Application Site Thorpe Hall and the Church of Constantine are also grade II listed, located within the village of Thorpe Constantine. The Church of St Andrew is grade I listed and located in Clifton Campville.
- 3.14 There are two small areas of Ancient Woodland located in the east of the study area around Thorpe Constantine and a further small area in the north-east in Clifton Campville.

Existing Landscape Character

- 3.15 This section includes a description of the landscape character within the study area as described within relevant published landscape character documentation. Although the National and County level studies are described here for context, the District level study has been used as the baseline against which landscape change has been assessed. A site level landscape character description is also provided to inform the assessment. Landscape assessment data of relevance to this assessment is extracted and presented within Appendix C of this report.

National Character Area Profile

- 3.16 The National Character Area profile published by Natural England (Natural England 2013) has been reviewed to develop an appreciation of the wider landscape, landscape character and context of the area, although due to its national context, will not be relied upon as a basis to assess effects on landscape character within this assessment.

- 3.17 The Application Site and the study area lie within the Mease / Sence Lowlands character area 72. The character area extends across parts of Derbyshire in the north, Warwickshire in the south, Leicestershire in the east and Staffordshire in the west. The Trent Valley Washlands character area 69 lies to the south and west of the study area and the Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield character area 71 lies to the north east.
- 3.18 The Key Characteristics of NCA 72: Mease / Sence Lowlands, considered to be of relevance to this assessment, are as follows (abridged):
- *This is a gently rolling landscape with rounded clay ridges and shallow valleys, with a more undulating landform in the north-west. This is a well-ordered agricultural landscape of open views, with a relatively tranquil character.*
 - *...Woodland cover is generally limited to scattered hedgerow trees, coverts and spinneys, and occasional groups of trees along rivers and streams....*
 - *The majority of the farmland has a strongly rectilinear pattern of low hedgerows and scattered hedgerow trees. On steeper ground and heavier clays, hedgerows are more substantial and hedgerow trees more frequent.*
 - *Extensive, open areas of arable cultivation predominate. On steeper ground and heavier clays the land is less intensively farmed, and arable and pasture are mixed. Beef and dairy farming are also common.*
 - *The main river courses of the Mease and Sence are generally very open; ...Willow and alder riparian vegetation is a feature along minor streams.*
 - *Important habitats include neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, wet woodlands, rivers and streams, all of which support characteristic and rare species.*
 - *The Ashby Canal and Coventry Canal are landscape features that are important for nature conservation and recreation. They act as reminders of our cultural heritage.*
 - *Landscaped parklands and fine country house estates, spired churches and historic farmsteads, areas of remnant ridge and furrow and deserted settlements contribute to the time depth and sense of history of the area.*
 - *... Red brick buildings and spired churches are often prominent landscape features. Isolated large 19th-century red brick farmsteads are also notable.*
 - *Larger modern urban development is present on the fringes of the NCA in Nuneaton, Hinckley and Burton-upon-Trent. Straight motorways and main roads cut through the area north-south and east-west.*

County Landscape Character Studies

- 3.19 Staffordshire County Council produced Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, 1996 – 2011. This document was adopted in 2001. It identifies nine Regional Character Areas (RCAs) within the county and then further divides these into 22 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and numerous sub-types.
- 3.20 The guidance and an online map are available on the Staffordshire County Council website guidance was originally prepared to support the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent structure plan, and although this has now been revoked the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent joint waste local plan (2010 to 2026) (adopted March 2013) requires that regard is given to planning for landscape change or its successor document which will remain a material consideration. This document was used to inform the Lichfield District Update of Landscape Character Assessment, Final Report 2019, detailed below.

3.21 The Application Site is located solely within RCA “Mease Lowlands” and LCT “Lowland village farmlands”. The Thorpe Estate falls within a sub-type “Lowland village farmlands: parkland”.

3.22 The RCA of Mease Lowlands is described below (abridged):

1. This is a relatively small Regional Character Area that also extends into north Warwickshire, south Derbyshire and Leicestershire. The landform is gently rolling with shallow valleys.

2. The fertile agricultural land watered by the river Mease generated a series of prosperous villages along its passage through this region, including Elford and Clifton Campville, which were noted as royal manors in the Domesday Book. In the medieval period the area supported a lowland arable economy with nucleated villages based around a church and manor house, typical of the ‘Midland Belt’ of open-field villages. ...

...4. With the exception of the more irregular pattern of development at Elford the villages in this region stand on land rising just above the Mease valley floor and are linear in form with the focal point of the church clearly discernible in each one. The strongly nucleated settlement pattern is a particularly distinctive feature of the area, which has never been industrialised.

*5. ...This is now largely an arable area growing mainly combinable crops including oilseed rape, peas and beans. There are also some more demanding crops grown, including potatoes, brassicas and root vegetables. The grassland area supports dairying and sheep in the main. The area as a whole has a well-kempt appearance. The field pattern is generally large scale and regularly shaped. The hedgerows are in the main closely cropped, made up only of hawthorn, and becoming gappy, as there is little current stock control function. Hedgerow trees are sparse and predominantly pedunculate oak and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), the latter often afflicted by ash dieback. The English elms that formerly graced the hedgerows survive now only as shrubby sucker regrowth. There are pockets of field sized broadleaved plantation woodland which have a marked visual effect in this open landscape, but there is no commercial forestry, and only one recorded woodland of ancient origin. This is a well-ordered landscape of open views and quiet rural character.*

3.23 Within the Staffordshire SPG, the Application Site, and the majority of the study area, is located within LCT “Lowland village farmlands”. This LCT is primarily characterised by the hedged, semi-regular medium to large fields on a rolling lowland landform. Further detail provided about this LCT is as below (abridged):

Visual character

This is a landscape predominantly of intensively farmed arable land with a well-ordered and kempt appearance. The field pattern is generally of large scale regularly shaped fields, with some areas of ancient pattern being present one field back from the road in places. The gently rolling landform does not, however, allow this ancient pattern to register strongly. The hedgerows are of mainly closely cropped thorn becoming gappy with little current stock control function. Hedgerow trees are sparse and predominantly oak and ash with areas showing signs of widespread dieback. In the vales these hedgerow trees coalesce to give a wooded effect. The eye tends to move through this landscape easily and focuses on the many large farmsteads or the intervisible village church spires before moving along the intermediate skylines to the long views. This is a well-ordered landscape of open views and quiet rural character.

Characteristic landscape features

Very gently undulating landform; intensive arable farming on large regular fields; closely cropped hedges; broadleaved plantation woodlands; tree lined pastoral stream corridors; large red brick farm complexes with modern additions; nucleated villages; intervisibility of church spires.

Incongruous landscape features

Presence of urban edge; dieback of oak and ash trees; electrified main railway line.

3.24 The parkland area immediately surrounding the Thorpe Estate to the east of the Application Site has been sub-divided within the LCT Lowland village farmlands into the sub-type of “parkland”. The details of this sub-type are stated within the SPG as copied below:

Lowland village farmlands: parkland

The parkland of Thorpe Hall, Thorpe Constantine, falls within the parkland variant of this landscape type. Each parkland is a unique product of its original design and its evolution over time. Consequently, any proposals for development or land use change which would affect such a landscape should be informed by a detailed historic landscape appraisal....

This landscape character type is very sensitive to the impacts of development and land use change.

District Landscape Character Studies

3.25 Lichfield District Update of Landscape Character Assessment, Final Report 2019 (LDLCA) produced by White Consultants in association with Ashmead – Price, has been produced to provide a standalone Landscape Character Assessment of Lichfield District. It incorporates the recently completed county wide Historic Landscape Characterisation and draws on, and reviews, work already undertaken by Staffordshire County Council in producing the SPG Planning for Landscape Change, described above.

3.26 Like the county SPG, the LDLCA divides the landscape into LCTs. The LCT’s were formed from the grouping of Landscape Description Units (LDUs) which were reviewed from those originally determined by the Staffordshire characterisation process. However, written details of the key characteristics of the LDUs within the district / county are not publicly accessible, as such this study has utilised the LCT level of characterisation for the baseline. The LDLCA uses the revised evidence base created in relation to landscape character to make judgements on the condition of the landscape and its strength of character to determine the best strategy / landscape guidelines for that type. It also provides management objectives / guidelines, a sensitivity analysis and appraisal of landscape quality for each LCT, which would be used to inform the judgements for this assessment. Plate 1 below shows the matrix used within the LDLCA for determining the landscape strategy / management guidelines for each LCT.

Condition	Good	Strengthen	Conserve & strengthen	Conserve
	Declining	Strengthen & enhance	Conserve & enhance	Conserve & restore
	Poor	Create	Restore & enhance	Restore
		Weak	Moderate	Strong
		Character		

Plate 1: Lichfield District Update of Landscape Character Assessment (2018) Figure 1: Definition of Strategy Options (Page 4)

3.27 The study area and Application Site fall within the central part of the LCT “Estate Farmlands” Landscape Character Type (LCT) which is described as;

3.1.7 In the far eastern part of the district, the Estate Farmlands within the Mease lowlands mark a change to a much more rural, former estate landscape of distinctive nucleated villages with tall church spires, often sited on local high points within this area of gently rolling topography.

Extending eastwards beyond the District boundary into Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire, this landscape has a quiet undisturbed identity, providing a strong contrast to the busy landscapes found elsewhere in the District.

3.28 The Key Characteristics of LCT Estate Farmlands detailed within the LDLCA are as follows:

- Gently rolling landform
- Productive arable farming with pockets of pasture around villages
- A planned enclosure pattern of medium to large, closely cropped hedged fields
- Many small, regularly shaped game coverts
- Tree lined stream corridors
- Large country houses, often set in mature grounds
- Small rural villages often marked by a tall church spire
- Narrow country lanes bounded by wide grass verges

Location of Landscape



Plate 2 Estate Farmlands Lichfield District Update of Landscape Character Assessment (2018) (Page 56)

3.29 The extended descriptions for LCT Estate Farmlands are contained within Appendix C of this report. Some conclusions from the LDLCA of relevance are copied below:

4.17.5 **Strength of Character** – although the natural dimension of this Estate Farmlands is rather weak and largely confined to watercourses, the historic character of this well ordered, rural, agricultural landscape is strong and characterised by country estates, discrete rural villages and small regularly shaped game coverts.

Natural: weak Cultural: strong Overall: strong

4.17.6 **Summary of Condition** - the scale and survival of the historic enclosure pattern defines the overall character and condition of this landscape and although many areas retain a peaceful, pastoral character, other parts are disrupted by agricultural intensification. Where this is the case, land use change has often caused a decline in the structure of the landscape, resulting in hedgerow deterioration and creating a fragmented/neglected appearance.

Overall: moderate

Vision Statement

4.17.7 **Conserve and restore the structure and overall integrity of this historic, rural landscape.** In particular, encourage the conservation of field boundaries and look at opportunities to restore primary hedgelines and enhance hedgerow tree cover.

4.17.8 **Sensitivity** – one of the special features of the Estate Farmlands is its rural, agricultural character. This is emphasised by the strongly nucleated settlement pattern and relatively few roads, giving this landscape a moderately high inherent sensitivity, relating primarily to the cultural dimension of the landscape. Visual sensitivity is also moderately high due to the relatively open, rolling nature of the landform and the general lack of woodland cover.

Inherent: moderate Visual: moderate

Quality of the landscape

4.17.9 The Estate Farmlands within the Mease lowlands is a farmed landscape of nucleated villages, many with tall church spires, often sited on higher ground. This landscape is defined by a strongly nucleated settlement pattern, which is reflected in the strong rural character that

distinguishes the quiet, undisturbed nature of the Estate Farmlands. The long views, quiet lanes and gentle topography make this a valued landscape of high quality.

3.30 The landscape value of the Application Site is described in more detail below.

Site Level Landscape Character

3.31 The landscape character of the Application Site at a site specific level is considered to be generally consistent with the relevant key characteristics provided at a national, county and district level. The area consists of a gently undulating agricultural landscape, predominantly comprising fields enclosed with mature clipped hedgerows with scattered mature hedgerow trees and blocks of spinney woodland adjoining the site in places.

3.32 It is also noted that although some hedgerows are well clipped and maintained, others are degraded, gappy and fragmented in places. Some of the trees along Clifton Lane and within field boundary hedgerows are in a poor condition, with deadwood and evidence of potential dieback. The tree and hedge condition in some places does provide a slight sense of neglect and reduces the quality and condition of the immediate local landscape.

3.33 The church spires at Church of Constantine in Thorpe Constantine and the Church of St Andrew within Clifton Campville are local features within views from accessible areas of the Application Site. The Church of St Andrew forms a prominent landmark within views when travelling north along on Clifton Lane where the lane rises over a hill before traveling towards the village of Clifton Campville. The overhead power lines and pylon towers are local features within open views across the landscape.

3.34 Although there aren't any villages within the immediate vicinity of the Application Site, the farmstead of Highfield Farm and Highfield Cottage, along with other isolated houses/farmsteads within the local vicinity indicate a farmed landscape.

Landscape Value

3.35 As part of the baseline description of the study area the value of the landscape that would be affected has been established. The NPPF states at paragraph 174 states that '*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by; protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.*'

3.36 GLVIA3 defines value as '*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons. A review of existing landscape designations is usually the starting point to understanding landscape value, but the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape and individual elements of the landscape may also have value.*'

3.37 GLVIA3 includes a list of eight factors within Box 5.1. The Landscape Institutes '*Technical Guidance Note 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations*' also includes these factors and additionally includes '*functionality*'. These factors are used in the following section of the assessment to establish value.

Landscape Quality/Condition

3.38 Landscape quality, or condition, measures the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.

3.39 The Application Site itself is Grade 2 quality agricultural land currently in arable production. Vegetation is limited to hedgerows with individual trees which define the field boundaries.

Following an assessment of the published character guidance and field survey, based on the methodology within Appendix A, it is considered that the condition of the part of the LCT in which the Application Site is located is **Good**, as there is a recognisable landscape structure with features worthy of conservation but there are occasional detracting features including electricity infrastructure and areas where the structure of the landscape is in decline with damaged and gappy hedgerows and poorly managed trees, causing a sense of neglect and fragmentation in need of repair.

Scenic Quality

- 3.40 This measures the degree to which the landscape appeals primarily to the visual senses. The visual baseline is analysed in more detail below.
- 3.41 It is considered that there is a positive scenic quality to this landscape due to its rolling landform, regular hedge enclosure with hedgerow trees and recognised heritage structures including church spires and Highfield Farmhouse. The fields are in arable use as opposed to pasture, so there is constant crop rotation and periods when to fields are bare earth or clipped crop.
- 3.42 Views are quite far reaching from the footpaths at the highest points of the Application Site, but views are fairly enclosed elsewhere within the lower parts of the Application Site. There are some detracting features to the scenic quality including pylons and telegraph poles, and some trees and hedgerows in a poor condition. These are localised features, notable as they contrast with the LCA description, which states the landscape is of a high quality.

Rarity and Representativeness

- 3.43 Rarity is concerned with the presence of rare features and elements in the landscape or the presence of a rare character type and representativeness analyses the features or elements within the site and its surroundings which are considered particularly important examples, which are worthy of retention.
- 3.44 The Application Site itself is not particularly rare in nature within the wider LCT of Estate Farmlands and is consistent with the surrounding arable enclosed rolling landscape. Highfields Farmhouse is a listed building which is located centrally between the parcels of the Application Site, and as such the site landscape character is influenced by this listed farmhouse, and views to spires of the surrounding listed churches. This relationship between farmland, farmsteads and churches is repeated widely within this LCT. The large formal house at Thorpe Hall and associated estate buildings, gardens and parkland are located to the east of the Application Site. The estate farmland associated with Thorpe Hall forms the location of the site and the setting of the house.

Conservation Interests

- 3.45 This considers the presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add value to a landscape.
- 3.46 The Application Site itself is not within any formal landscape designation. Highfield Farmhouse is listed and it could be considered that part of the immediate landscape forms the setting to the listed building although is more widely associated with the farmed estate of Thorpe Hall. Ecological conservation interests are detailed within the RPS ecology reports, but the hedgerows and trees are worthy of conservation and enhancement for ecological and amenity purposes. There are also a number of ponds which are proposed to be conserved due to being viable great crested newt habitat. The intensively farmed arable land which comprises the majority of the Application Site has relatively low biodiversity value.

Recreational Value

- 3.47 This considers any evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.
- 3.48 There are a large number of Public Rights of Way within the study area and two adjacent to the Application Site itself. The land of the Application Site forms the context for views and visual amenity for walkers and equestrians within the local area. Further afield, Cleat Hill Farm and Syerscote Meadow caravan and camp sites are located in the north of the study area. The Thorpe Estate consists of Thorpe Hall and over 3000 acres of parkland, a Fishery and game shooting and can be hired for private events including weddings.

Perceptual Aspects

- 3.49 A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness and/or tranquillity.
- 3.50 The landscape of the Application Site and surrounding farmland cannot be considered wild but is considered to be rural in nature with limited settlement or urban form. The intensively managed arable land and hedgerows do not have wild qualities however, do provide some visual containment and a sense of tranquillity. The presence of over-head power lines and vehicular movement along Clifton Lane limit the sense of tranquillity in close proximity to these features.

Associations

- 3.51 The following is from the RPS Heritage Report;

The Site lies on the south-eastern edge of the parish of Clifton Campville and, historically, formed part of a manor of the same name. This name is thought to derive from the Old English 'clif' (an escarpment or hill slope) and 'tun' (village), relating to the situation of its principal settlement on raised ground, and the name of the de Camville family who held the manor in the thirteenth century.

Following on the from Camvilles, the manor was successively held by the Stafford, Stanley, Heveningham, Coventry, and Pye families. The latter built and lived at Clifton Hall, on the east side of Clifton Campville c.2.5km north-east of the Site, from the early-eighteenth century until the estate as broken up and sold in 1905. It is assumed that it was at this time that the part of the estate in which the Site was situated was purchased by the neighbouring Thorpe Estate, of which it continues to form a part.

The Thorpe Estate was purchased in 1631 by William Ives, a successful Leicestershire vintner. Upon his death, the Estate was inherited by his daughter, Jane, who had married Richard Inge of Leicester. Thorpe Hall manor house, which had been constructed in 1651, became the Inge family home. In the late-eighteenth century, when another Inge family seat at Drakenlow, Derbyshire was abandoned, Thorpe Hall was enlarged and improved to reflect the architectural tastes of the day.

Thorpe Hall and the wider Estate have been stewarded by successive generations of the Inge family and remains in their private ownership to the present day. Thorpe remains a working estate, with management of the Estate focused on sustainable farming, conservation, and rural diversification.

- 3.52 There is a visual connection with the nearby historic village church spires when travelling through the landscape.

Functionality

- 3.53 This considers elements that contribute to the healthy functioning of the landscape or a strong physical or functional link with an adjacent designated landscape or its appreciation.

- 3.54 The Application Site is not located adjacent to or within the vicinity of a designated landscape and therefore does not contribute to the function of a more highly valued landscape. The arable farmland within the site is similar in character and forms part of the wider agricultural estate of Thorpe Hall. The hedgerows, trees and ponds would be retained within the scheme to function as a characteristic farmland feature and wildlife network. The function of the surrounding arable and pasture farmland is not heavily reliant on the current arable land use of the Application Site.

Summary of Landscape Value

- 3.55 In accordance with our methodology, we consider the value of the landscape of the Application Site and immediate surroundings is considered to be Medium which is defined as; *Typical and commonplace or in part unusual scenic quality, ordinary landscape quality, potential for substitution, E.g. Locally designated (SLA) or undesignated, but value expressed through literature and cultural associations or through demonstrable use.*
- 3.56 The elements of arable farmland and hedgerow and tree field boundaries which comprise the Application Site are not rare within the wider LCT Estate Farmland. The site has no formal recreational value although is partly visible from nearby public rights of way, creating some visual amenity value. The surrounding landscape incorporates several public rights of way which connect the local villages and enable walkers to gain views into parts of the Application Site, creating some visual amenity value.
- 3.57 The Application Site and immediate surroundings are not part of a wild landscape due to its intensively farmed nature. The extent of the rural landscape does offer a relatively tranquil location when away from small settlements, over-head power lines and roads. Whilst the Application Site has positive landscape elements and some wildlife and recreational interest, these are not considered sufficient to elevate this area of farmland to one that is highly valued in accordance with paragraph 174 of the NPPF.
- 3.58 The NPPF requires landscapes that are not statutorily designated to have attributes of a sufficiently high quality to ensure consideration as a valued landscape. The landscape of the Application Site does not have any particular demonstrably special qualities and is not connected to or relied upon to contribute to a neighbouring or nearby landscape of value.

Visual Baseline

- 3.59 A visual assessment has been conducted to verify the desk study findings and confirm the extent of visual influence of the proposed development. Site visits were conducted on 15th & 20th October 2020 and 15th & 16th March 2021 in order to undertake photography with both vegetation in leaf and out of leaf.
- 3.60 Principal viewpoints, sensitive visual receptors and the approximate visibility of the land within the proposal site have been recorded from representative publicly accessible viewpoints. Photographs have been taken using a digital camera from the 21 representative viewpoints as a record of the view and have been taken with a fixed 50 mm lens on a 35 mm digital camera in landscape format at eye level, approximately 1.5 m above ground level from public viewpoints. No access to private properties was obtained, and where impact to residential and other private views is noted, this has necessarily been estimated by using the nearest possible publicly accessible location.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 3.61 The ZTV produced to inform this assessment illustrated the area from which the proposed development would be theoretically visible (see Figure 3). It was prepared using a view height of 1.5 m and eleven origin points to represent the full parameters of the development at a height of

3.2m above existing ground levels. A total of eleven origin points were identified within the proposed development;

- one at the centre of each field with PVs (9 points);
- one at the highest point of the northern part of the Application Site; and
- one at the highest point of the southern part of the Application Site.

3.62 The ZTV has been developed based on visual barriers for significant blocks of woodland and settlement. As the ZTV does not account for garden vegetation or hedgerows or individual trees, the potential inter-visibility with the proposed development would in reality be lower.

3.63 The colour scale (red to blue) on the ZTV indicates how many origin points would potentially be discernible, as such, the higher the number of origin points visible, the larger the extent of the proposed development would be potentially seen from within the study area. Given the size of the Application Site, this allows judgements to be made regarding the extent of the proposals that would potentially be discernible and informed the selection of viewpoints for the study.

3.64 As shown on Figure 3, outside the immediate landscape of the Application Site, and some restricted areas to the north and north-west at Clifton Campville and Haunton, between 2–3km away, and further north over 4km, there would be limited potential to gain views of the proposed development in its entirety (shown as red areas). The rolling landform of the Application Site and local landscape do help to contain potential views of the site. The ZTV does not take into consideration the potential screening provided by hedgerows or individual trees which are prevalent in the landscape of the study area. Following field work, it became clear that the layering of hedgerows and individual trees, partnered with the rolling nature of the landform, creates a greater degree of screening of views to the Application Site during both summer and winter when compared to the ZTV.

View Ranges

3.65 For the purposes of this assessment, views have been classified according to three distance ‘ranges’ as set out in Table 3.

Table 3 : View Ranges

Range	Distance Threshold	Reasoning Description
Near	Less than 500m	At near range the proposed development could appear as a ‘prominent’ or ‘dominant’ feature and visual receptors could experience large to medium/small magnitude of change when compared to existing views.
Middle	Between 500m and 2.5 km	In middle distance range views, the proposed development could appear as ‘present’ or ‘recognisable’ features and visual receptors could experience medium/small to negligible magnitude of change compared to the existing situation.
Long	More than 2.5 km	In long range views the project could appear as ‘barely discernible’ and would read as part of the landscape and visual receptors would tend to experience a low to negligible or lower magnitude of change compared to the existing situation.

Overview of Visual Receptors

3.66 Visual receptors include, local residents, people travelling along roads, people using public rights of way, people involved with other recreational activities, people at their place of work, people

using commercial and public facilities. These groups are deemed to have different sensitivities to the proposed development.

- 3.67 For this study 21 publicly accessible viewpoints have been identified as key locations which represent the majority of visual receptors within the study area. Photography has been undertaken at these locations. Some of these views as well as being publicly accessible, also represent views gained by nearby residential receptors.
- 3.68 In addition to the representative viewpoints selected, additional descriptions of views from local roads (Clifton Lane) and PRoWs within 2km of the Application Site, where there is a potential for inter-visibility with the proposed development, have been provided to further inform the assessment upon the local landscape resource and visual amenity. Private views from residential properties are estimated based on nearby publicly accessible locations.
- 3.69 In the planning system no individual has the right to a view. The Landscape Institute has provided guidance on residential visual amenity in Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (LI TGN 2/19). For a private view to be considered significantly affected, the views of the proposed development would have to overwhelm occupiers of existing properties adjacent to the Application Site or within the study area that render these properties so *“unattractive a place to live that planning permission should be refused”*. (Inspector Kingaby, Burnthouse Farm Wind Farm, APP/D0515/A/10/2123739, Inspector’s Report, paragraph 119 (also at paragraph A1.6 of LI TGN 2/19). Inspector Kingaby noted that *“There needs to be a degree of harm over and above identified substantial effect to take a case into the category of refusal in the public interest. Changing the outlook from a property is not sufficient”* (Inspector’s Report, paragraph 120) (also at paragraph A1.7, LI TGN 2/19). The Inspector, in the Langham Wind Farm decision, noted that *“The planning system controls development in the public interest, and not in the private interest. The preservation of open views is a private interest”* (Langham Wind Farm Appeal Decision APP/D2510/A/10/2130539) (also at LI TGN 2/19, paragraph A1.11).

Representation Viewpoint Descriptions

- 3.70 The 21 viewpoints are all in public locations where the proposed development would be potentially visible and are considered to be representative of the receptors within the study area. See Figure 3 for locations and photographs at Figure 5. The baseline view from each of these representative viewpoints is described in Table 4 below. In some cases, this describes which of the Fields (A to I) within the Application Site are visible (see Appendix B for itemised field locations). The sensitivity of the receptor is also stated below for each view in accordance with the methodology within Table 3 of Appendix A.

Table 4 - Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Sensitivity	OS Ref	Distance	Detailed Baseline View Descriptions (Figure 5a – 5u)
<p>VP1: PRoW at Highfields Farm/ Clifton Lane looking west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.338)</p> <p><i>See Figure 5a Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way / Highfields Farm</p>	424088, 308714	<p>8m</p> <p>(Near)</p>	<p>This near view represents the view from the beginning of a PRoW Clifton Campville 0.338 accessed off Clifton Lane, at the entrance to Highfields Farm. The most open view towards the Application Site from this point is looking north-west to Field C of the site through a field gate. This hedgerow partially screens the far left and right of the view. The view is mostly occupied by the open agricultural land of Field C. The land rises with the landform from the foreground into the middle ground and from the right to the left, with sparse mature trees spaced along the crest of the hill. A small cluster of mature trees are visible in the centre of the view, where the hedgerows of fields A, B and C meet. Restricted views towards Field A in the background. Views to Field B are screened by hedgerows and the landform falls to the right. A distant horizon is visible across the right third of the view, above Field B, where a large, distant powerline stretches across layers of mature tree/hedge lines and built form within the background.</p>
<p>VP 2: PRoW adjoining boundary of Application Site looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33)</p> <p><i>See Figure 5b Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way</p>	423731, 308868	<p>3m</p> <p>(Near)</p>	<p>This is a near view looking east through a gap within the western field boundary of the Application Site, from the Trig Point on the public bridleway. This is the highest point on the path and enables open views of the Application Site. Highfield Farmhouse is mostly screened within the view by hedgerow vegetation with just the chimneys showing over the intervening mature hedge line at this point on the PRoW, but there are views available beyond to Highfield Cottage within the centre of the view and the church spire at Thorpe Constantine. Buildings within the Thorpe Complex are just discernible within the far left of the view. Old Gorse copse is a prominent element on the skyline. Individual trees and pylons and associated wires also break the horizon line.</p> <p>Field A forms the foreground to the view. The falling topography and vegetation screens much of Field C. The pylon within Field F, on the other side of Clifton Lane, features within the view, as does a thin section of the crop within the field behind a low clipped hedgerow. The southern part of the Application Site is located on rising ground within the right side of the view. Within this part of the</p>

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				Application Site, Fields H and G are visible, as is the pylon within Field G. Field I is cropped out of the shot in this cone of view. The view also continues to the left showing more of the site.
VP 3: Clifton Lane looking south-west <i>See Figure 5c Set</i>	Medium View from rural lane	424378, 309155	Within site boundary (Near)	<p>This is a near view gained by users of Clifton Lane travelling south from Clifton Campville. The view is orientated south-westwards through a double field gate into Field C of the Application Site. The cone of view includes countryside comprising fields with a mix of intact and fragmented hedgerows and individual trees, and a grouped area of trees and scrub associated with the pond area between Fields C and B. Hedgerow trees of various quality punctuate the horizon line.</p> <p>Field C is within the foreground to the view, with Field A and B also discernible behind. The fragmented hedgerow on the western boundary of Field A forms part of the horizon line and the hedgerow on the north-western side of Field B also forms the horizon line to the right.</p> <p>This view would be glimpsed due to the transient nature of occupiers of vehicles.</p>
VP 4: PRoW at Gorse Farm looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33) <i>See Figure 5d Set</i>	High View from Public Right of Way	423553, 308294	406m (Near)	<p>This is a near view from a bridleway looking east through a gap within hedgerow. This view is also representative of views from Gorse Farm, although it is anticipated that there would be more open views from windows within the upper storeys of this property. The arable fields within the foreground and, to an extent the middle ground to the view, are outside of the Application Site. The telegraph pole, pylons and Highfield Cottage provide built features in the view. Cars travelling along Clifton Lane are visible in the centre of the view.</p> <p>Mature hedgerow trees punctuate the view, often breaking the skyline and are of varied quality with some in a poor condition. Old Gorse copse features within the central right on the horizon and Clifton Rough copse to the far right of the view. The topography and intervening layering of hedgerow and tree vegetation screens much of the fields within the Application Site. Field I is the most visible from this particular cone of view, within the right middle ground of the view on rising ground. A small part of Field H is visible within the left side of the view, the pylon within Field G is within the centre of the view, although the field itself is screened by hedgerows.</p>
VP 5: PRoW east of Clifton Rough looking north	High	424382, 307911	188m (Near)	<p>This is a near view looking north from a public bridleway connecting Clifton Lane and Seckington. The view extends over an arable field within the foreground towards the southern boundary of the</p>

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<p>(Bridleway Ref: Thorpe Constantine 2) <i>See Figure 5e Set</i></p>	<p>View from Public Right of Way</p>			<p>Application Site which is lined by a fragmented, clipped hedgerow with mature oak trees and segments of a post and rail fence in a poor state of repair.</p> <p>The pylon in the far right of the view is located within Field G, with the crop within this field being screened due to the intervening landform. The wider Application Site is not visible from this viewpoint due to the topography of the landscape. The tip of the church spire at Clifton Campville breaks the skyline here within the far right of the view.</p>
<p>VP 6: PRoW off Clifton Lane towards Thorpe Constantine looking south-west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.335/Thorpe Constantine 0.457) <i>See Figure 5f Set</i></p>	<p>High View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>424989, 309779</p>	<p>589m (Middle)</p>	<p>This middle distance view extends over an arable field in the foreground which is outside of the Application Site. The rolling landform of the local area screens nearly all the ground level of Application Site within views from the footpath, with the exception of the higher fields within the western extent of the site, namely Field A, B and C within the right side of the view. Clifton Rough copse forms a feature of the skyline within the left side of the view. The pylons help to locate part Application Site which is concealed from view due to the rising land within the foreground and layering of field boundary hedgerow and trees. There are two pylons within Field E, one being visible within the central left part of the view, and the other within the central right of the view, with Highfields Farm complex in-between. Within the winter view, the muted colours of Highfield Farm and filtering of winter vegetation restricts the prominence of the farm complex and Highfield Cottage located further to the left, which is also behind the pylon within Field F. Fields H, G and I are barely discernible. The wind turbine at Statfold Farm provides movement within the view.</p>
<p>VP 7: PRoW west off Clifton Lane looking south (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 32) <i>See Figure 5g Set</i></p>	<p>High View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>424596, 310142</p>	<p>682m (Middle)</p>	<p>This is a mostly open view over arable fields with a prominent row of pylons and overhead power lines. The majority of the Application Site is screened by landform and vegetation, with the exception of Fields A, B and a very small part of Field C. The turbine at Statfold Farm breaks the skyline and provides movement within the view. Both copse's feature on the horizon to the view which is also regularly punctuated by trees and pylons. Buildings at Highfield Farm and Highfield Cottage are just discernible through bare vegetation in winter.</p> <p>The nearest pylon within the centre of the view and the one behind are both outside of the Application</p>

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				Site, whilst the more distant pylons are located within Fields E, F and G. The ground level of the Application Site of these fields is not discernible due to the landform and screening afforded by the layering of field boundary vegetation.
<p>VP 8: PRoW off Syerscote Lane north of Ivy Cottage looking south/south-east (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 34)</p> <p><i>See Figure 5h Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way</p> <p>High</p> <p>Residential property</p>	<p>423729, 310164</p>	<p>760m</p> <p>(Middle)</p>	<p>This is an open, middle distance view from a public footpath looking south-south-east over arable fields and rising land towards Clifton Rough copse. The patchwork of enclosed fields of this landscape character type is an evident feature in this view due to the rising nature of the landform in the right side of the view. It also depicts well the fragmentation of the hedgerows in some cases, which adds to a slight sense of neglect. Buildings at Highfields Farm break the skyline and feature within the central right of the view in front of Clifton Rough. Old Gorse copse is a recognisable feature on the horizon in the centre of the view. The fragmented hedge line along the western boundary of Field A follows the horizon line on the right of the view, the ground plain of this Field is not discernible. As the landform falls to the north-east, Fields B and part of D are visible, but C is screened by the hedgerow and vegetation between Fields B and C. A thin section of Field E is desirable over the vegetation lining Clifton Lane. The field barn north of Field D is just within the cone of view to the far left of the view, adding a built element. As with other views, pylons punctuate the vehicles travelling on Clifton Lane add movement. This view is considered representative of views from the rear elevation of Ivy Cottage. Residents within Upper floor rooms would likely have a slightly more elevated view over some of the hedge lines.</p>
<p>VP 9: PRoW West of Secklington Motte and Bailey looking north-west</p> <p><i>See Figure 5i Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>425764, 307491</p>	<p>1,357m</p> <p>(Middle)</p>	<p>This is a middle distance view north-west towards the Application Site. This view is also representative of views from Secklington Motte and Bailey, though there is additional roadside vegetation around the scheduled monument, so the view is further restricted. Much of the site is screened within the view by the falling landform and woodland vegetation of Old Gorse copse in the centre of the view and Clifton Rough in the far left.</p> <p>Buildings at Lonkhills Farm provide built features within the middle ground to the view and traffic using the B5493 also provides movement. The hedgerow along the southern boundary of Field G is just discernible on the horizon line within the right-hand side of the view. The trees and hedgerow within the view are generally in good condition and intact. The landform is plateaued with most of the Application Site on lower ground out of</p>

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				the view.
<p>VP 10: PRoW South of Clifton Campville, St Andrew looking south-west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 24 / Clifton Campville 23 <i>See Figure 5j Set</i></p>	<p>High View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>425246, 310709</p>	<p>1,445m (Middle)</p>	<p>This is a partly filtered, middle-distance view from a public footpath south of St Andrews Church in Clifton Campville conservation area, looking south-westwards. The view extends over a horse paddock with ridge and furrow in the foreground, through vegetation which lines Smithy Lane. The winter vegetation heavily filters available views to the Application Site. The gable end of The Nook forms a built feature within the view together with telegraph poles and fencing, all within the left side of the view. Highfields Farm is discernible and partially filtered within the centre of the view. The turbine at Statfold Farm also breaks the skyline, as does the Pylon within the left side of the view. Woodland at Old Gorse is a prominent landmark on the horizon to the left. The majority of the Application Site is screened within the view by the vegetation within the foreground. There is a channelled view towards Fields A and B within the central right of the view, and a glimpse through vegetation towards Fields C and E within the centre of the view. The falling topography and vegetation restrict views towards Field D. The remaining fields of the Application Site are not discernible within the view.</p>
<p>VP 11: PRoW at Haunton off Syerscote Lane looking south (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 26) <i>See Figure 5k Set</i></p>	<p>High View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>423827, 310790</p>	<p>1,274m (Middle)</p>	<p>This is a middle-distance view over an arable field from a public right of way at the residential edge of Haunton. The two copse's can be seen on the horizon filtered through intervening vegetation. The wind turbine at Statfold Farm is discernible in the central right of the view. Highfields Farm is located in the centre of the view, though partially filtered by winter vegetation. A very thin section of the western part of the Application Site on higher ground is visible within the view, over the boundary hedgerow of Field B. The land within Field A is not discernible due to the plateauing of the landform. Field C is also not visible due to the landform. There is a thin section of Field E visible within the left side of the view – though very heavily filtered by winter vegetation. The mature trees and hedging in the middle distance of the view along Syerscote Lane provide more screening of the Application Site during summer.</p>

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<p>VP 12: Lullington Road near Oakwood Barn/Willow Bottom Kennels looking south-east</p> <p><i>See Figure 5l Set</i></p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>View from main road</p> <p>High</p> <p>View from residential properties</p>	<p>423095, 312246</p>	<p>2,901m</p> <p>(Long)</p>	<p>This is a framed, long distance view south-east from a verge on Lullington Road in close proximity to residential properties. The view towards the Application Site is mostly screened by residential ornamental vegetation and hedgerows at 1.5 – 1.75m high. The view from a vehicle is glimpsed, transient and perpendicular to travel. However, it is anticipated that the upper floors view from the front elevation of Oakwood Barn would extend over the foreground restrictions to the most elevated section of the Application Site in the distance.</p>
<p>VP 13: PRoW to east south east of Highfield Cottage, looking north (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.338)</p> <p><i>See Figure 5m Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>424433, 308408</p>	<p>30m</p> <p>(Near)</p>	<p>This is a near, open view over a horse paddock and arable fields towards Clifton Campville from a public right of way east of Highfield Cottage. The spire of the listed St Andrew Church forms a prominent feature on the horizon. The view is also crossed by overhead power lines within the south-western corner of Field F, providing electrical infrastructure within the view. A pylon is just out of view to the right. The electrical fencing associated with horse keeping at Highfield Cottage is also a distinctive feature. The northern parcel of the Application Site on the eastern side of Clifton Lane form the middle distance to the view, with an open view over Field F and a partial, filtered view to Field E over the hedge line between the two fields and vegetation associated with Highfield Cottage. This view is representative of the view from the rear elevation of the property. The view from the property would be slightly more screened by vegetation but would also have a higher elevation from the upstairs available views. The field of the Application Site to the west of Clifton Lane are screened by intervening vegetation.</p>
<p>VP 14: Bridleway north of Statfold Farm, starting at Clifton Lane running west-to-east, looking north-east (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 5)</p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>423710, 307949</p>	<p>392m</p> <p>(Near)</p>	<p>This is an open, near view from a PRoW looking north-east over an arable field towards the spire at Clifton Campville. Highfield Farmhouse is screened within the winter view by vegetation. Part of Field I is visible from this viewpoint over the hedgerow. The hedgerow between Field I and H screens the ground level of Field H within this view. The fields in the northern parcel of the Application Site are not discernible. The pylon within the right middle distance of the view is located between Fields G and F. The telegraph poles on the left of the view by Clifton Lane also provide electrical infrastructure in the baseline view. Vehicles travelling on Clifton Lane provide some intermittent movement in the</p>

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See Figure 5n Set				view. Scattered hedgerow trees typically punctuate the skyline.
VP 15: PRoW Thorpegorse Cottages, northbound off B5493, looking north (Footpath Ref: Thorpe Constantine 0.461) See Figure 5o Set	High View from Public Right of Way / Residential views	424510, 307195	910m (Middle)	<p>This is a mid-distance open view which extends up to the boundary hedgerow on the southern edge of Field G. Clifton Rough copse lies to the left of the view and part of Old Gorse copse to the right. The row of pylons which cross the Application Site are prominent in the view and the barn to the south forms a built element within the view. Clifton Rough provides a dense screen even in winter and together with the rising landform restrict long distance views.</p> <p>This view is representative of views from the side and rear façade windows of properties at Thorpegorse Cottages. Garden vegetation and trees would restrict ground floor window views and some screening from the properties themselves, but it is anticipated that there would be views from upper floor windows of these properties.</p>
VP 16: PRoW on Hogs Hill, looking east (Footpath Ref: Harlaston 8) See Figure 5p Set	High View from Public Right of Way	422456, 309054	1,277m (Middle)	<p>This is an open view over rolling arable fields, bisected by native hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The farmhouse within the middle distance to the view is The Dale, which is located on lower lying ground to west of the Application Site. Much of the Application Site is screened within the view by the landform. The hedgerow adjoining the western boundary of the northern parcel of the site, and the trig point where VP2 is located is just discernible on the horizon, but the ground level of Fields A and B is not visible. A small section of Field H is just visible to the right of the church spire at Thorpe Constantine and left of Clifton Rough. The vegetation within the grounds of The Dale also restricts views to the site.</p>
VP 17: Road off Smithy Lane near The Nook looking south-west See Figure 5q Set	Medium View from main road	425351, 310203	1,125m (Middle)	<p>This is a glimpsed, middle-distance view from an unnamed road heading towards Thorpe Constantine through a gap in the hedgerow, perpendicular to the direction of travel. The structure landscape of hedged enclosures of medium scale with hedgerow trees over an undulating topography is typical of this transient, glimpsed view. Highfield Farm is visible within the centre of the view, as is a small section of Clifton Lane as it rises up the hill past the farm. The plantations at Clifton Rough and Old Gorse feature on the skyline together with individual trees</p>

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				punctuating the skyline to the left of the view. The turbine, pylons and large phone mast provide electrical infrastructure within the view. Rose Cottage is visible to the far right of the view. Vegetation within the Thorpe Estate screens views to Field F, G, I and most of Field E. Due to its more elevated nature, much of the western part of the Application Site is partially discernible from this location, with Fields A, B, C and a part of Field G being visible.
<p>VP 18: PRoW near Manor Leys looking south-east (Footpath Ref: Harlaston 2)</p> <p><i>See Figure 5r Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way / Residential edge</p>	<p>421822, 310842</p>	<p>2,604m (Long)</p>	<p>This is a long distance, open view over arable fields from the public footpath which leads out of Harlaston village heading towards Haunton village to the east. The view is representative of rear elevation views from the residential edge of the village. Pylons and telegraph poles and their associated wires cross the landscape forming prominent electrical infrastructure elements within the foreground to the view. A large agriculture building at Fishpits Barn also forms a prominent built element. The majority of the Application Site is screened within the view by topography. There is a filtered view towards the hedgerow on the north western boundary of Field A at the highest part of the Application Site. The church spire at Thorpe Constantine features on the horizon, as do the two copse's near the site.</p>
<p>VP 19: Public Byway (BOAT) off Haselour Lane near Mill View Cottages looking east (Byway Ref: Elford 11)</p> <p><i>See Figure 5s Set</i></p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way</p>	<p>419680, 309728</p>	<p>4,109m (Long)</p>	<p>The ZTV indicates potential visibility from this location however, the layering of field boundary vegetation within this long-distance view from a public byway restricts views to the Application Site itself. The two copses near to the site, and the wind turbine, form landmark features on the horizon which help to locate the position of the Application Site within the view, but the site itself is screened by vegetation and landform. The pylon within Field G is just discernible on the horizon. Landform restricts any available views to the northern parcel of the site. Pylons crossing the landscape form prominent electrical infrastructure elements within the view.</p>
<p>VP 20: PRoW off Browns Lane near Wiggington Pub looking north-east</p>	<p>High</p> <p>View from Public Right of Way / Residential edge</p>	<p>421095, 305962</p>	<p>3,680m (Long)</p>	<p>The layering of field boundary vegetation and undulating topography within this long-distance view from a public footpath on the residential edge of Tamworth screens the Application Site.</p>

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<p><i>See Figure 5t Set</i></p>				
<p>VP 21: Lullington Park Cricket Club near All Saint's Church looking south</p> <p><i>See Figure 5u Set</i></p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>View from recreational area</p>	<p>424812, 312547</p>	<p>3,033m (Long)</p>	<p>This is a long-distance view from near a bench within a recreational area at Lullington Park Cricket Club. The view extends over a post and wire fence and arable field in the foreground to Clifton Rough on the horizon. Due to the elevated nature of this viewpoint, there is a partially open view to some of the fields of the Application Site. The crop within Fields A and B is visible as is a thin section of Fields C and D. There is a very small section of Field E and F also just visible. However, the Application Site is at such a distance that it is hard to differentiate between these fields and the surrounding landscape.</p>

Representative Viewpoint Illustrations

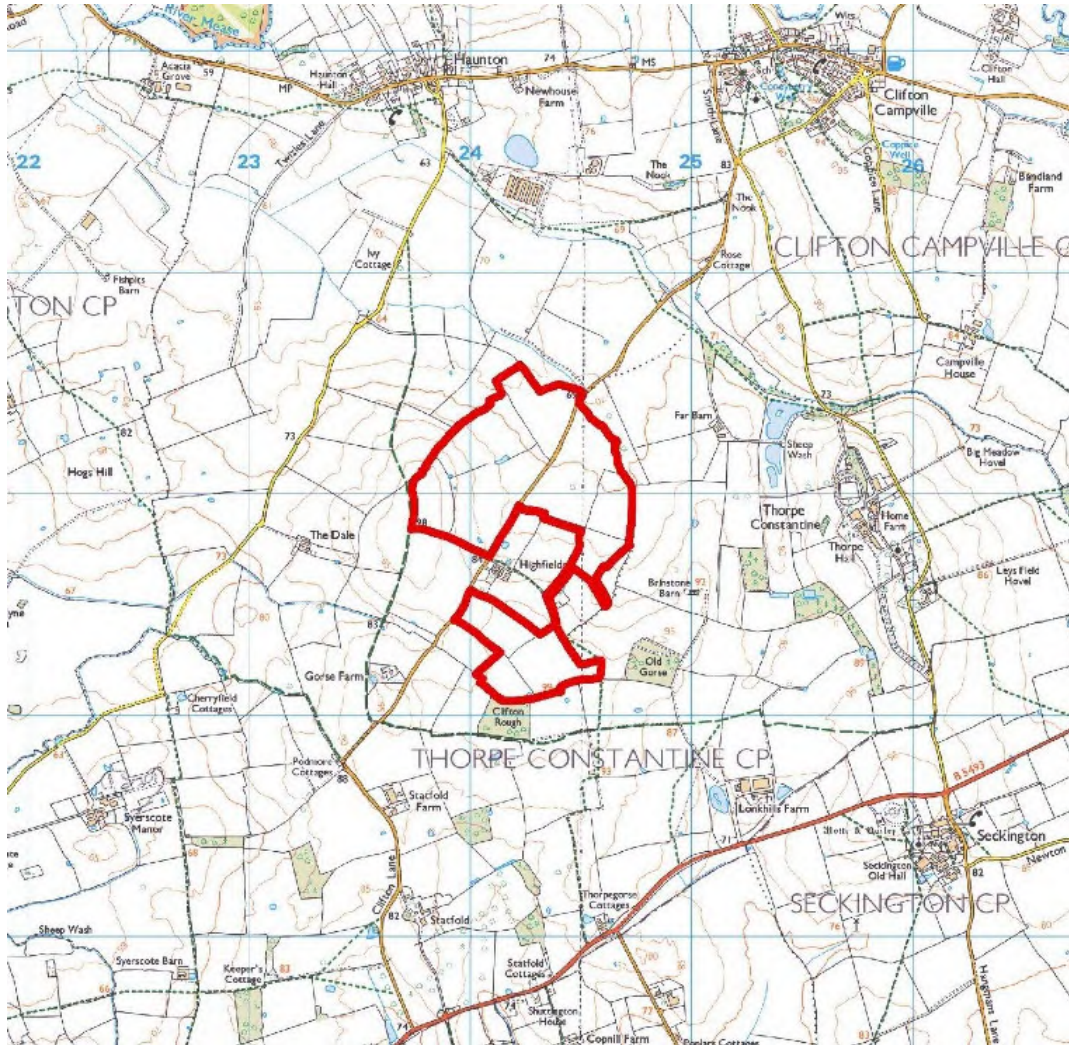
- 3.71 Figure 6 includes panoramic photographs of views from each of the viewpoints and also includes, through the use of modelling, an illustration of the parameters of the proposed development within the baseline view. The part of the illustration that is shaded represents fields of the proposed development that would be discernible within a bare earth scenario. The areas only outlined in white are fields within the proposed development where the landform screens views of these fields at existing ground level.
- 3.72 The area marked within the views includes the full extent of the proposed development, but at this stage, the illustrative shadings have not been clipped to take into consideration the retained vegetation within the view. As an example, the PV panels within Viewpoint 1 (Figure 5a(iii)) would be behind the retained hedgerow in the foreground.
- 3.73 Illustrative photomontages have also been created for views from VP1, VP2, VP8, VP10 and VP13. Please see Figure 6 for these photomontages. The images are for illustrative purposes only and are not fully visually verified.

Users of Clifton Lane

- 3.74 Clifton Lane passes through the centre of the Application Site, with parcels of the site on both sides of the road. The lane is generally lined with clipped native hedgerows with oak and ash trees intermittently on either side. There is a short section of hedgerow immediately north of Highfield Farm which is not clipped and has been allowed to grow out to 3 – 3.5m high. Most of the other hedges on either side of the road are typical of the description of the Landscape Character Assessment for the area and regularly clipped and chamfered in some cases, to a height of 1 - 1.5m which partially restrict views towards the Application Site when travelling along the lane. The trees provide some screening to views.
- 3.75 However, the rolling nature of the landform, does allow glimpsed transient views of rising land within part of the Application Site. Glimpsed views through field gates can also be gained. Views into the Application Site from the lane would be more open during winter and immediately after the hedgerows have been clipped. There is the potential to experience the Application Site sequentially when traveling along this road.

Local Public Rights of Way

- 3.76 Many of the representative viewpoints have been chosen to represent the most open views from the PRoW network within the ZTV of the study area. The majority of PRoWs within 2km of the Application Site were walked during the field surveys both during the winter and summer. There would be limited potential to experience the Application Site sequentially from the two PRoWs adjacent to the site.



Residential Receptors

3.77 Publicly accessible locations have been chosen for representative viewpoints and photography. Some locations have been chosen near to residential properties to inform the assessment of effects on private views from within properties and their gardens. The following viewpoints also represent residential views;

- VP1: PRoW at Highfields Farm;
- VP4: PRoW at Gorse Farm;
- VP8: PRoW off Syerscote Lane north of Ivy Cottage;
- VP9: PRoW West of Seckington Motte and Bailey;
- VP10: PRoW South of Clifton Campville, at St Andrew Church,
- VP11: PRoW at Haunton off Syerscote Lane
- VP12: Lullington Road near Oakwood Barn/Willow Bottom Kennels
- VP13: PRoW to east-southeast of Highfield Cottage;
- VP15: PRoW near Thorpegorse Cottages
- VP18: PRoW east from Harlaston looking south-east
- VP20: PRoW off Browns Lane near Wiggington Pub in northern edge of Tamworth

Night-time Baseline

- 3.78 The study area was not visited during the hours of darkness however, within the immediate vicinity of the Application Site, it is anticipated that residential lighting at Highfield Farm, Highfield Cottage and other local residential farmsteads would result in an element of lighting within baseline night-time views and landscape character. Vehicles traveling on Clifton Lane and the local road network would generate transient lighting at night-time. Villages within the study area would also generate light sources and potentially skyglow within views of a generally dark rural landscape.
- 3.79 The proposed solar farm development does not include lighting and would not result in a change to the existing situation, therefore night-time effects are not considered within this LVIA.

4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Scheme Description

- 4.1 The proposed development will comprise the installation of free-standing, static solar photovoltaic ('PV') panels for the purposes of generating electricity for connection to the local network. The proposed solar park comprises three separate elements as follows:
- Solar panel modules;
 - Inverters; and
 - Substation.
- 4.2 The solar panels would be arranged in a series of east to west rows, with rows spaced approximately 2 to 6 metres apart. The panels would be up to 3.2 metres high and tilted southwards (towards the sun) at between 10 and 25 degrees from horizontal.
- 4.3 The solar panels will be secured to the ground via a static table and post systems to minimise ground disruption and the amount of concrete and hardstanding required and ensure that ground conditions remain relatively unchanged.
- 4.4 The panels will generate electricity every day for the duration of the project. However, at the end of its lifespan, the project would be fully reversible so that any impacts associated with it would be temporary, although long term in nature. The land would be returned to its former agricultural use following relatively minor decommissioning works.
- 4.5 Overhead electricity lines cross the site and would form the point of connection to the electricity network via a point of connection mast and substation.
- 4.6 The solar park would also include 2.5m high timber post and wire mesh boundary fences, security cameras and aggregate surfaced access tracks.

Assets, Opportunities and Mitigation

Assets

- The location of the Application Site within a gently undulating landscape would limit extensive views of the solar park from locations within the surrounding landscape. Due to the landform and the layout of the fields selected for the proposed development, it would be difficult to see the whole of the development from one location, therefore reducing its perceived scale;
- Mature hedgerows with scattered trees define the established field pattern within the agricultural landscape. These, along with a number of single specimen trees within the fields, form positive landscape features which enclose and partly screen the land within the Application Site;
- Mature woodland at Old Gorse and Clifton Rough form prominent landscape features on the horizon and provide screening elements adjacent to the Application Site;
- Woodland, trees and hedgerows are attractive and ecologically diverse assets within the landscape and are a focus for wildlife;
- The PRoW network adjoining and around the Application Site allows access between land parcels for walkers and equestrians within the local community. The PRoW through Highfields Farm from Clifton Lane is not well waymarked and doesn't seem to be well used at present beyond the access to Highfield Cottage;

- Ponds within the site would be retained and enhanced through the provision of appropriate marginal planting linking to hedgerows in the currently intensively farmed arable landscape; and
- The existing mature green infrastructure, gently undulating landform and the local PRoW network are positive amenity, landscape character and biodiversity assets. The proposed development has taken into consideration these assets to minimise any impacts on landscape or visual receptors. It is anticipated that;
 - All trees would be retained and protected as part of the proposed development;
 - There would be only minor alterations to landform to accommodate the access tracks and substations.

4.7 These existing conditions and constraints have informed the preparation of the following opportunities and mitigation measures for the proposed development.

Opportunities and Mitigation

- The proposed development Landscape Masterplan provides appropriate landscape treatments in keeping with the field pattern of the Application Site and surrounding rural character of the landscape, which helps to minimise any adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity, see Appendix B;
- It is proposed that the mature hedgerows would be gapped up with supplementary native planting, where appropriate, and trees better managed, to retain their important boundary functions and cultural landscape structure characteristics. Mitigation measures would enhance the green infrastructure contribution to the quality of the site, the wider rural character of the landscape and increase the valuable screening function they provide;
- Some existing hedgerows would be maintained at a greater height to provide additional screening and an improved habitat. Solar panels and boundary fences would be located at an appropriate distance from existing hedgerows and copses to ensure their ongoing management and maintenance;
- Existing vegetation would be managed to enhance the screening function in views from local PRoW, roads and residential properties. Hedgerows form the primary boundary treatment and provide a structural and ecological link with the surrounding rural landscape. Any gaps or thinner parts of these existing hedgerows would be infilled and bolstered to provide greater levels of screening and improve nature corridors for wildlife;
- The proposed hedgerow, tree and shrub planting would incorporate appropriate native species to reflect and enhance the existing collection of trees and hedgerows and contribute positively to the green infrastructure of the Estate Farmlands LCT;
- Grassland incorporating a mix of native grass and flora species will be established between and beneath the solar panels to enhance the biodiversity of the currently arable fields, provide an attractive habitat and provide a dual function for grazing sheep. Specific planting details are shown on the illustrative Landscape Masterplan within Appendix B; and
- Existing ponds would be retained within the landscape with a wide, development free buffer created to allow for enhancement measures. Wet grassland and marginal planting would be established to link to hedgerows, providing a positive contribution to biodiversity within the site and enhanced wildlife corridors.

Monitoring

4.8 The assessment of landscape and visual effects at Summer Year 10 in chapter 5 of the LVIA takes into consideration the opportunities and mitigation proposals listed above, which would form part of

the proposed development. The proposals would be implemented, managed and monitored to achieve their design function. As a result of the improved management of the existing vegetation and new planting proposed, any adverse effects can be partially offset.

- 4.9 Due to climate change and biosecurity measures, ongoing monitoring of the existing landscape features and new planting would continue to ensure mitigation measures remain effective. A varied native palette of trees and hedgerow planting and grassland seed mixes would be used to ensure ecological enhancements are achieved.

5 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 5.1 The potential effects of the proposed development upon visual amenity and landscape character during the operational period at winter Year 1 and summer Year 10, and the short-term effects during construction, have been assessed using the methodology described in Appendix A.

Assessment of Operational Effects

Potential Landscape Effects

Landscape Sensitivity

- 5.2 The sensitivity of a landscape to a proposed change varies according to the nature of the existing resource and the nature of the proposed change. Within the baseline section of this report, the landscape character has been described and judgements made as to the value, condition and quality of the landscape of the Application Site and immediate surroundings. To enable a judgement to be made about the relative sensitivity of a landscape to a particular type of development, considerations of landscape value, integrity and capacity are relevant and inform the landscapes susceptibility to the change proposed.
- 5.3 For the purpose of this assessment the proposed development consists of a solar park, which requires minimal vegetation removal or major earth modelling that is reversible in nature. the Application Site, as part of the Estate Farmlands LCT, is considered to be of Good to Ordinary condition with a recognisable structure and some detracting features, and of Medium value (see Baseline section for more details). The landscape is considered to be of **Medium** sensitivity to the proposed solar park development whereby landscape value is recognised or designated locally; the landscape is relatively intact, with a distinctive character and few detractors and is reasonably tolerant of change.

Land Use and Development Context

- 5.4 The proposed development would be accommodated within nine intensively farmed arable fields. Most of the area within the red line boundary would be occupied by the rows of solar panels with species rich grassland established beneath.

Trees and other Vegetation

- 5.5 The development would not result in the loss of any existing trees. Some small sections of hedgerow may need to be removed to accommodate access tracks and field access points however, the majority of boundary and internal hedgerows would be retained. The arable farmland would be seeded with an appropriate mixed species grassland to be managed by low density sheep grazing. Some trees are in poor condition and would require removal of dead wood to ensure longevity.
- 5.6 These proposed changes would comprise a negligible magnitude of change and would result in a negligible adverse impact on vegetation.

Topography

- 5.7 There would be very little change to the topography of the Application Site due to the proposed development. The proposed development includes some new access tracks and areas of

hardstanding within the solar park, which would result in minimal changes to the topography. There would, therefore, be no change to the gently undulating character of the Application Site.

Landscape Character

District Level

- 5.8 The LDLCA defines the area in which the Application Site is located as LCT Estate Farmlands. The proposed development of nine arable fields into a solar farm within the central part of the character type would change the character of a relatively small area of farmland as a proportion of the character type.
- 5.9 The enclosure pattern, overall grain and rolling nature of the farmland in which the proposed development would be introduced would be retained. There would be no removal of landscape elements and two fields within the site would be subdivided and new hedgerow field boundaries created. By summer Year 10, the supplementary planting would provide reinforcement of the hedgerow structure. The low-level nature of the proposals would enable the structured cultural landscape of established and organised field patterns, to be remain intact and a relationship with the surrounding hedgerow network to be retained. The panels would closely follow the rolling landform, avoiding any significant conflict with the landscape's topography.
- 5.10 The proposed development would introduce a new built element into this LCT. This is a settled LCT, albeit sparsely, with overhead power lines and pylons providing some local influence. The proposed development would be located in this area and the pylon towers and overhead lines would remain the most prominent elements of energy infrastructure.
- 5.11 The proposed development would not result in significant harm to the value of the landscape of the Estate Farmland LCT as there would be no loss of important landscape features, elements and characteristics. There would be some influence over the surrounding landscape including the higher valued landscape of the Thorpe Estate within landscape sub type "Parkland" and some limited intervisibility with the surrounding historic assets, settlements and conservation areas.
- 5.12 There would be a certain degree of loss of openness following development, particularly in the larger fields of the Application Site which have fewer hedgerow boundaries. New hedgerows would be planted on the edge of the Application Site where fields would be subdivided to provide a screen for the panels and infrastructure and a continuation of the established field margin character. The additional hedgerows planted to create new field boundaries would add a positive element of character to the landscape. Generally, the well contained parcels of land within the lower parts of the Application Site are not readily intervisible with the adjoining landscape or settlements limiting the potential for people to perceive the full extent and scale of the solar farm from any one location within the study area.
- 5.13 The non-reflective surface treatment of the panels would minimise the perception of infrastructure in the wider farmed landscape and ensure the solar farm forms a relatively discrete addition to the countryside. The creation of species rich grassland beneath the panels would add greater biodiversity within the site and increase a locally less common positive characteristic feature of estate lowland farmland. Effects would be relatively localised in a rural location which is reasonably well-contained by hedgerows and landform and where screening by hedgerows can be improved through a change in management practices.
- 5.14 However, the solar farm would introduce a new type of land use and development into a rural landscape character type which would be uncharacteristic. The proposed development, although relatively low key in nature, would diminish the landscapes medium level of scenic value and perception of tranquillity through the introduction of energy infrastructure.
- 5.15 The farmland of the site currently contains no lighting. The nearby farmsteads and buildings at include some light sources within buildings which exert a limited influence over the site area at

night. Development of the site would not introduce new lighting and would not change the night-time character of the landscape.

- 5.16 Due to the development of a solar farm in an agricultural landscape and the change in character of the site from intensively farmed arable land to energy infrastructure the magnitude of change would be medium on a character area of medium sensitivity. The direct effect on the site area would be **Moderate** adverse during the day in winter Year 1, where some elements of the proposed changes would be uncharacteristic of the area, which would not be significant. By summer Year 10, the hedgerow reinforcement, new tree management, enhanced field ponds and other mitigation would have reached maturity in design and screening function. Although this would help to improve the condition and associated value of the landscape within the site the introduction of the proposed development would continue to alter the character of a cluster of fields. The significance would remain as **Moderate adverse**.
- 5.17 At a wider landscape scale development of a solar farm within a typical part of the Estate Farmland LCT the magnitude of change would be small on an LCT of Medium sensitivity. The significance of effect at winter Year 1 would be **Minor adverse**, where the proposed changes would be at slight variance with the agricultural character of the wider area, which would not be significant. By summer Year 10, the landscape mitigation and enhancement measures would be mature, providing a greater level of screening and containment in the landscape. This would help to reduce intervisibility between the wider landscape and the proposed development. However, the solar farm would continue to alter the character of a small section of the wider LCT. The significance would remain as **Minor adverse**.

Potential Visual Effects

- 5.18 Visual impacts result from change to the appearance of the landscape as a result of the development proposed either intruding into, or obstructing, existing views or by their overall impact on visual amenity. A ZTV was produced to establish the extent to which the project would be visible.
- 5.19 From most representative viewpoint locations, the view incorporates rolling arable fields enclosed by hedgerows with trees with built elements of farmsteads and church spires featuring (a local key characteristic). Further elements which influence many views within the study area are the pylons which pass through the Application Site, providing an electrical infrastructure within the baseline views, along with the turbine at Statfold Farm. Some vegetation within the views shows signs of neglect and others show a more managed landscape.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 5.20 The ZTV prepared to inform the selection of representative viewpoints is illustrated at Figure 3. The ZTV shows a much greater theoretical visibility envelope than can be experienced in reality, due to the screening provided by the layering of hedgerows and trees within the study area, as only uses blocks of woodland as vegetation barriers.
- 5.21 Areas shown to have the potential to see a high proportion of the proposed development, shows as red areas on Figure 3, in reality parts of the proposed development is screened within the winter and summer views due to the screening provided by the vegetation. For example, from VP 10: PRow South of Clifton Campville, St Andrew looking south-west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 24 / Clifton Campville 23, the ZTV illustrates that up to 11 origin points could be discernible, whereas in reality, the majority of the Application Site is screened within the view by the roadside vegetation within the foreground. There would be a channelled view towards Fields A and B within the central right of the view, and a glimpse through vegetation towards Fields C and E within the centre of the view. The falling topography and vegetation restrict views towards Field D and the remaining fields of the Application Site are not discernible. Following field survey's it can

be confirmed that the ZTV illustrates a much worse scenario than would be potentially experienced in reality.

Representative Viewpoints

- 5.22 An assessment of the likely effect on views gained by groups of different receptors at the following 21 representative viewpoint locations are described below. These viewpoints are all at public locations and have been grouped below by distance from the Application Site. Potential effects are assessed at winter Year 1 (worst case scenario) when the development is complete and operational but, the mitigation planting is immature and summer year 10 (when mitigation planting would have reached its design intention). See Figure 3 for viewpoint locations and photographs at Figures 7.

Long Distance Viewpoints

- 5.23 The views from four distant locations within the ZTV have been included within the LVIA to test the possibility of effects on a range of visual receptors within the surrounding landscape of the study area. Where views towards the Application Site are available, the existing overhead electricity pylons are the most prominent elements of energy infrastructure for views 12, 18, 19 and 21. Beyond approximately 2.6km from the Application Site, the combination of field boundary hedgerows and mature trees within views provide a dense, layered screen. Even during winter, when vegetation is not in leaf, the proposed development would be largely screened.

Viewpoint 12: Lullington Road near Oakwood Barn/Willow Bottom Kennels looking south-east

- 5.24 Occupiers of vehicles would briefly gain a narrow, framed views through a gap in the roadside hedgerow towards the proposed development, approximately 2.9 km away. Due to the presence of hedgerows, tree belts and blocks of woodland in the intervening rural landscape, views of the solar panels on the western side of the site are likely to be barely perceptible in winter only and not visible in summer when vegetation would be in leaf. Distant views of large agricultural buildings are likely to remain the most visible form of development in the vicinity of the application site. The pylon tower and overhead lines in the foreground would remain the visual focus of the view. Occupiers of vehicles would be of low sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Residents within ground floor rooms of Oakwood Barn would gain similar distant, largely obscured views of the proposed development. Receptors in these locations would be of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have slightly more elevated views across the rural landscape towards the proposed development. It is unlikely, at this distance, that a greater proportion of the solar farm would be visible or that the nature and character of the view would change. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.25 In summer Year 1 and Year 10, there would be no change in view and no effect on visual receptors.

Viewpoint 18: PRow east from Harlaston looking south-east (Footpath Ref: Harlaston 2)

- 5.26 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views across a rural landscape towards the proposed development. The majority of the development would be completely screened by the intervening rising landform. There would be potential for some heavily filtered views through

hedgerows, in winter only, of solar panels in Field A at the highest point within the solar farm development. The pair of large agricultural buildings at Fishpits Barn and the two overhead power lines would remain the most prominent development in the view. The nature and character of the view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.27 In summer Year 1 and Year 10, there would be no change in view and no effect on visual receptors.

Viewpoint 19: Public Byway (BOAT) off Haselour Lane near Mill View Cottages looking east (Byway Ref: Elford 11)

- 5.28 Walkers using the public byway would gain open views across a rural landscape towards the proposed development more than 4 km away. The whole of the northern part of the proposed development would be completely screened by the intervening rising landform and the majority of the southern part of the development would also be obscured by landform and layers of hedgerows and trees. There would be potential for some heavily filtered views through hedgerows, in winter only, of solar panels in Field G within the development. The overhead power lines and pylon towers crossing the landscape would remain the most prominent energy infrastructure in the view. The nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.29 In summer Year 1 and Year 10, there would be no change in view and no effect on visual receptors.

Viewpoint 20: Footpath off Browns Lane near Wiggington Pub looking north-east

- 5.30 Walkers using the public footpath would gain views across an open foreground and filtered views through trees to a rural in the vicinity of the proposed development, approximately 3.6 km away. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the intervening rising landform and many layers of vegetation within hedgerows. There would be limited potential for some heavily filtered views through hedgerows, in winter only, of solar panels within the development. The nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to no more than a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.31 In summer Year 1 and Year 10, there would be no change in view and no effect on visual receptors.

Viewpoint 21: Lullington Park Cricket Club near All Saints' Church looking south

- 5.32 People using this outdoor space would gain open views across a rural landscape towards the proposed development. Due to the elevated nature of the viewpoint location there would be potential for solar panels in the northern part of the development on higher land to be visible as narrow slivers of infrastructure set within the network of hedgerows and trees within and around the Application Site. At this distance of over 3 km the development would appear as a different coloured land use within the retained pattern of agricultural field boundaries. The majority of the proposed development would be heavily filtered or completely screened by the intervening landform and layers of vegetation. However, the overall nature and character of the rural view would not change. People playing outdoor sports are receptors of medium sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in the winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse effect, which is not significant.

- 5.33 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a slight reduction in potential visibility of solar panels. High sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.

Middle-Distance Viewpoints

- 5.34 The middle-distance viewpoints range from 589m to 1,445m from the Application Site and include viewpoints 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16 and 17.

Viewpoint 6: VP 6: PRoW off Clifton Road towards Thorpe Constantine looking south-west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.335/Thorpe Constantine 0.457)

- 5.35 Walkers using the public footpath would gain views across an open foreground and filtered views through trees to limited sections of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the gentle undulation in the foreground landform. Filtered and glimpsed views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees on the right side of the view would be gained of solar panels in the most elevated parts of the site at Fields A, B and C. Development would be visible within the established pattern of hedgerow field boundaries. There would be limited potential for some heavily filtered views through hedgerows, in winter only, of solar panels within the southern part of the development in front of the woodland copse at Clifton Rough, that would remain visible as a local landmark on the horizon. Whilst some views of energy infrastructure would be possible, overall the nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant
- 5.36 The two-storey house at Rose Cottage is located approximately 150m north of this viewpoint location. Residents within ground floor rooms and gardens would gain filtered views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees of solar panels in Fields A, B and C. Residents are of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have more elevated views across the foreground garden vegetation of the proposed development in the most elevated parts of the site as a prominent addition to the view. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.37 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.
- 5.38 Residents within ground floor rooms and gardens at Rose Cottage would gain filtered views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees of solar panels in Fields A, B and C. Residents are of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in summer Year 10, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have more elevated views across the foreground garden vegetation of the proposed development in the most elevated parts of the site as a prominent addition to the view. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in summer Year 10, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

Viewpoint 7: PRoW west off Clifton Lane looking south (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 32)

- 5.39 Walkers using the public footpath would gain views across an open foreground or arable fields and filtered views through trees to some sections of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the gentle undulation in the foreground

landform. Filtered and glimpsed views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees on the right side of the view would be gained of solar panels within the retained hedgerows around the most elevated parts of the site at Fields A, B and C. There would be limited potential for some heavily filtered views through hedgerows, in winter only, of solar panels on the northern edge of the site, closest to the receptor. The woodland copses at Clifton Rough and Old Gorse would remain visible as local landmarks on the horizon, together with the visually prominent row of pylon towers crossing the landscape. Whilst some views of additional energy infrastructure would be possible, the existing pylons would remain the most prominent development in the view and the overall nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.40 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.

Viewpoint 8: PRoW off Syerscote Lane north of Ivy Cottage looking south/south-east (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 34)

- 5.41 Walkers using the public footpath would gain views across an open, gently undulating agricultural landscape to rising ground within the proposed development on the right of the view. The middle distance in the centre and on the left side of the view is filtered through trees and hedgerows to some sections of the proposed development. The majority of the solar farm would be completely screened by intervening landform and vegetation. Fragmented views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees on the right side of the view would be gained of narrow slivers of solar panels within the most elevated parts of the site at Fields A and B. There would be limited potential for some heavily filtered views through hedgerows, in winter only, of solar panels in Fields D and E on the northern edge of the site, closest to the receptor. The woodland copses at Clifton Rough and Old Gorse would remain visible as local landmarks on the horizon, together with the row of pylon towers crossing the landscape. Whilst some views of energy infrastructure would be possible the overall nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Residents within ground floor rooms of nearby Ivy Cottage would gain similar distant, largely obscured views over foreground hedgerows and garden vegetation of the proposed development. Receptors in these locations would be of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have slightly more elevated views over garden vegetation and hedgerows and across the rural landscape towards the proposed development. A slightly greater proportion of the solar farm is likely to be visible, although the overall nature and character of the view would not change. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a small magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.42 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity walkers and high and medium sensitivity residents in Ivy Cottage would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.

Viewpoint 9: PRoW West of Secklington Motte and Bailey looking north-west

- 5.43 Walkers using the public footpath would gain views across an open, gently undulating agricultural landscape to rising ground south of the proposed development between the landmark copses of Clifton Rough and Old Gorse. The hedgerow on the southern edge of the Application Site at Fields G and I is visible linking the two copses. The tops of solar panels may be visible above the top of

the hedgerow as a barely perceptible addition to the view. The majority of the solar farm would be completely screened by intervening landform and vegetation. The nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.44 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional trees and supplementary hedgerow planting, the proposed development is likely to be completely screened when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity walkers would experience no adverse effects.

Viewpoint 10: PRow South of Clifton Campville looking south-west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 24 / Clifton Campville 23)

- 5.45 Walkers using the public footpath would gain views across an open foreground or a pasture field on the edge of the village and filtered views through trees to some sections of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the undulating landform and hedgerow vegetation. Glimpsed views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees in the centre of the view would be gained of solar panels within the most elevated parts of the site at Fields A, B and C. The woodland copse at Old Gorse would remain visible as local landmarks on the horizon to the left side of the view. Whilst views of new energy infrastructure would be possible the overall nature and character of the rural view would be retained. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.46 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.

Viewpoint 11: PRow at Haunton off Syerscote Lane looking south (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 26)

- 5.47 Walkers using the public footpath would gain intermittent views across a gently undulating agricultural landscape to rising ground within the proposed development on the right of the view. The left of the view is constrained by garden boundaries and vegetation and the middle distance in the centre of the view is filtered through trees and hedgerows to some sections of the proposed development. The majority of the solar farm would be completely screened by intervening landform and vegetation. Fragmented views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees on the right side of the view would be gained of narrow slivers of solar panels within the most elevated parts of the site at Field B. The woodland copses at Clifton Rough and Old Gorse would remain visible as local landmarks on the horizon. Whilst some limited views of energy infrastructure would be possible the nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Residents within ground floor rooms of nearby properties at Haunton would gain similar distant, largely obscured views over foreground garden vegetation and fences of the proposed development. Receptors in these locations would be of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have slightly more elevated views over garden vegetation and fences towards the proposed development. A slightly greater proportion of the solar farm is likely to be visible, although the overall nature and character of the view would not change. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a small magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.48 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity walkers and high and medium sensitivity residents in properties at Haunton would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.

Viewpoint 15: PRow Thorpegorse Cottages, northbound off B5493, looking north (Footpath Ref: Thorpe Constantine 0.461)

- 5.49 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views across a gently rising agricultural landscape south of the proposed development between the landmark copses of Clifton Rough to the left and the edge of Old Gorse to the right. The hedgerow on the southern edge of the Application Site at Fields G and I is visible linking the two copses. The tops of solar panels may be visible above the top of the hedgerow as a barely perceptible addition to the view. The majority of the solar farm would be completely screened by intervening landform and vegetation. The nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.50 The cluster of two storey houses at Thorpegorse Cottages is located approximately 150m south of this viewpoint location. Residents within ground floor rooms and gardens are unlikely to gain views out across the landscape due to garden hedge boundaries, mature trees and outbuildings. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have more elevated views across the foreground garden vegetation of the tops of solar panels above the boundary hedgerow to Fields G and I as a barely discernible addition to the view. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.51 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional trees and supplementary hedgerow planting, the proposed development is likely to be completely screened when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity walkers and medium sensitivity occupiers of upper floor rooms of Thorpegorse Cottages would experience no adverse effects.

Viewpoint 16: PRow on Hogs Hill, looking east (Footpath Ref: Harlaston 8)

- 5.52 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views across a patchwork of fields within a gently undulating agricultural landscape west of the proposed development. The landmark copses of Old Gorse to the left and the edge of Clifton Rough to the right. The only part of the Application Site that is visible is a small section of Field H and the surrounding hedgerow. A very narrow sliver of solar panels may be visible within this field, forming a barely perceptible addition to the view. The nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.53 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional trees and supplementary hedgerow planting, the proposed development is likely to be completely screened when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity walkers would experience no adverse effects.

Viewpoint 17: Unnamed Road off Smithy Lane near The Nook looking south-west travelling towards Thorpe Constantine

- 5.54 Occupiers of vehicles travelling on this rural lane would gain a glimpsed transient view through a gap in the roadside hedgerow across open undulating farmland to some sections of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the undulating landform and hedgerow vegetation. Solar panels within the most elevated parts of the site at Fields A, B and C would be visible set within the retained network of hedgerow field margins. Solar panels in a small part of Field G would also be visible in the centre of the view

through gaps in hedgerow trees. Woodland within the valley base and copses at Old Gorse and Clifton Rough would remain visible to the left side of the view. Whilst views of new energy infrastructure would be possible the overall nature and character of the rural view would be retained. Occupiers of vehicles in a rural landscape are receptors of medium sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.55 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. Medium sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect.

Near-Distance Viewpoints

Viewpoint 1: Public Right of Way Calverton FP 007 “Milton Keynes Boundary Walk” – High Sensitivity (User of PRoW)

- 5.56 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views through the field gate of the solar farm extending across the whole view. Timber post and wire mesh boundary fencing set within the hedgerows and rows of solar panels would occupy the majority of the view of the two fields. Wildflower and grassland seed mix would be established beneath the panels, replacing the arable farmland. There would be a loss of openness within the view and the distant glimpse of the landscape beyond would be obscured. The nature and character of the rural view would change to energy infrastructure within farmland, as the dominant characteristic. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a large magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Substantial adverse level of effect, which is significant.
- 5.57 The three-storey house at Highfields is located immediately behind this viewpoint location. Residents within ground floor rooms would gain similar near, oblique views across paddocks of the proposed development from the front elevation. Receptors in these locations would be of high sensitivity to a medium magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Major adverse level of effect, which is significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have more elevated views across the foreground paddocks and hedgerows of the proposed development as a prominent and potentially dominant addition to the view. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a large magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Major adverse level of effect, which is significant.
- 5.58 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows to a higher level, planting of additional hedgerows and trees and more established grassland habitat, there would be a slight reduction in the prominence of the solar farm, particularly when vegetation is in leaf. Due to the need to maintain a field access point the solar panels cannot be completely screened from this particular location. High sensitivity walkers would experience a medium magnitude of change and a Moderate adverse level of effect. Views gained by walkers using the remaining section of this public right of way adjacent to the Application Site would be screened, in time, by management of the boundary hedgerow which would prevent significant effects on receptors
- 5.59 Residents within ground floor rooms of the farmhouse at Highfields would also benefit from the additional hedgerow planting and management of existing hedgerows to a higher level. The tops of some rows of solar panels would remain visible. Receptors in these locations would be of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of change in the long term in summer Year 10, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have more elevated views across the hedgerow features. The proposed development would remain a prominent element in the view. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a medium magnitude of change in the long term in summer Year 10, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

Viewpoint 2: PRow adjoining boundary of Application Site looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33)

- 5.60 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views over a low gappy hedgerow of the solar farm extending across the field in the foreground which forms the central and left side of the view. Timber post and wire mesh boundary fencing set within the hedgerows and rows of solar panels would occupy the majority of the near view. Wildflower and grassland seed mix would be established beneath the panels, replacing the arable farmland. Solar panels surrounded by the boundary fence would also be visible in Fields G, H and I in the middle distance on the right side of the view. There would be a loss of openness within the foreground view and the landscape beyond would be obscured. The nature and character of the rural view would change to energy infrastructure within farmland, as the dominant characteristic. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a large magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Substantial adverse level of effect, which is significant.
- 5.61 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows to a higher level and supplementary hedgerow planting to infill gaps, a substantial visual screen would be created around the solar farm, particularly when vegetation is in leaf, and views of infrastructure would be screened. However, more distant views over the landscape would be lost. High sensitivity walkers would experience a medium magnitude of change that would combine both adverse and beneficial impacts, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

Viewpoint 3: Clifton Lane looking south-west

- 5.62 Occupiers of vehicles travelling on this rural lane would gain a glimpsed transient view through a gap in the roadside hedgerow at a field gate and wider views over the top of the roadside hedgerow. Solar panels in Fields A, B and C would be clearly visible extending across the whole view. Timber post and wire mesh fences would also be visible in the foreground. The rows of panels in the foreground would obscure panels beyond and the rising landform in the landscape. Wildflower and grassland seed mix would be established beneath the panels, replacing the arable farmland. There would be a loss of openness within the foreground view and the landscape beyond would be obscured. The nature and character of the rural view would change to energy infrastructure within farmland, as the dominant characteristic. Occupiers of vehicles are receptors of medium sensitivity to a large magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Major adverse level of effect, which is significant.
- 5.63 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows to a higher level, supplementary planting within hedgerows and additional trees and more established grassland habitat, there would be a reduction in the prominence of the solar farm, particularly when vegetation is in leaf. Due to the need to maintain a field access point the solar panels cannot be completely screened from this particular location. Medium sensitivity occupiers of vehicles would experience a medium magnitude of change and a Medium adverse level of effect, which is not significant. Views gained by occupiers of vehicles using the remaining section of this road adjacent to the Application Site would be largely screened, in time, by management of the boundary hedgerow, which would prevent significant effects on receptors.

Viewpoint 4: PRow at Gorse Farm looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33)

- 5.64 Equestrians and walkers using the bridleway would gain open views across arable farmland to limited sections of the southern parts of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the gentle undulation in the middle distance. Relatively open views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees on the right side of the view would be gained of solar panels in Field I which has no existing hedgerow on the site boundary. The tops of solar panels and post and wire mesh fences are likely to be visible above

boundary hedgerows around Fields H and G. Development would generally be visible within the established pattern of hedgerow field boundaries, although a new hedgerow would be planted to subdivide the field in which Field I is located. The woodland copses at Clifton Gough and Old Gorse would remain visible on the horizon, together with the row of pylon towers. Whilst some views of energy infrastructure would be possible, overall the nature and character of the rural view would not change. Equestrians and walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant

- 5.65 The two-storey house at Gorse Farm is located immediately south of this viewpoint location. Residents within ground floor rooms and gardens are unlikely to gain views out across the landscape due to garden hedger boundaries and mature trees and shrubs around the house. Occupiers of upper floor rooms would have more elevated views across the foreground garden vegetation of the proposed development in Fields A and C to the north as a prominent addition to the view. Receptors in these locations would be of medium sensitivity to a medium magnitude of change in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.66 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect
- 5.67 The two-storey house at Gorse Farm is located immediately south of this viewpoint location. Residents within upper floor rooms of Gorse Farm would gain slightly elevated views across the foreground garden vegetation and intervening farmland of the proposed development in Fields A and C. The management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees would reduce the potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. Receptors in this location would be of medium sensitivity to a small magnitude of change in the long term in summer Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

Viewpoint 5: PRoW east of Clifton Rough looking north (Bridleway Ref: Thorpe Constantine 2)

- 5.68 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views across a gently rising arable field south of the proposed development to the east of Clifton Rough. The hedgerow on the southern edge of the Application Site at Fields G and I is visible on the horizon. The tops of solar panels and the timber post and rail boundary fence would be visible above the top of the hedgerow as a minor addition to the view. The majority of the solar farm would be completely screened by intervening landform. The nature and character of the rural view would not change. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Negligible adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.69 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional trees and supplementary hedgerow planting, the proposed development is likely to be completely screened when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity walkers would experience no adverse effects.

Viewpoint 13: PRoW to east south east of Highfield Cottage, looking north (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.338)

- 5.70 Walkers using the public footpath would gain open views from a slightly elevated location across arable farmland to the northern parts of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be largely screened by the gentle undulation in the middle distance and trees within the landscape. Relatively open views over hedgerows and through gaps in hedgerow trees within the centre of the view would be gained of solar panels and timber post and wire mesh fencing in Field F which has no existing hedgerow on the southern site boundary. Intermittent

views of solar panels and post and wire mesh fences in Fields E and D would be visible above boundary hedgerows and through existing mature trees. Development would generally be visible within the established pattern of hedgerow field boundaries, although a new hedgerow would be planted to subdivide the field in which Field F is located. The church spire at Clifton Campville would remain visible on the horizon, together with the row of pylon towers and overhead power lines. Whilst views of energy infrastructure would be possible, the overall the nature and character of the view would remain rural farmland, albeit with introduced solar energy infrastructure. Walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect, which is not significant.

- 5.71 The single property at Highfield Cottage is located adjacent to this viewpoint location. Residents within rooms within the property and gardens would gain very similar, open views of solar panels in Fields F, E and D described above. are unlikely to gain views out across the landscape due to garden hedge boundaries, mature trees and outbuildings. Residents are receptors of high sensitivity to a small magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.72 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf, particularly where the new hedgerow to define the site boundary in front of panel in Field F would have established. High sensitivity walkers and residents at Highfield Cottage would experience a small magnitude of change and a Minor adverse level of effect.

Viewpoint 14: Bridleway north of Statfold Farm, starting at Clifton Lane running west-to-east, looking north-east (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 5)

- 5.73 Equestrians and walkers using the bridleway would gain open views across arable farmland to very limited sections of the southern parts of the proposed development. The majority of the proposed development would be completely screened by the gentle undulation in the middle distance. Views over hedgerows on the right side of the view would be gained of solar panels and tops of post and wire mesh fences in Field I. Development would not disrupt the established pattern of hedgerow field boundaries, although a new hedgerow would be planted to subdivide the field in which Field I is located. The church spire at Clifton Campville would remain visible on the horizon, together with the row of pylon towers and overhead power lines. Whilst some views of energy infrastructure would be possible, overall, the nature and character of the rural view would not change. Equestrians and walkers are receptors of high sensitivity to a negligible magnitude of impact, in the long term in winter Year 1, resulting in a Minor adverse level of effect, which is not significant.
- 5.74 In summer Year 10, due to the management of hedgerows and planting of additional hedgerows and trees, there would be a reduction in potential visibility of solar panels when vegetation is in leaf. High sensitivity receptors would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible adverse level of effect.

Residential Properties

- 5.75 Occupiers of residential properties are associated with representative viewpoints 1, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 15. Effects on receptors in these locations at Year 1 and Year 10 are described above.
- 5.76 Other residential properties within the vicinity of the Application Site include The Dale, Stratford Farm, Podmore Cottages, Lonkhills Farm and Thorpe Hall. An estimate of potential effects on private views gained by residents is based on views from publicly accessible locations within the study area.

The Dale

- 5.77 A cluster of single storey, two storey and three storey residential properties are located at this farm, approximately 400m west of the Application Site. Solar panels at the highest location within the Application Site in Field A would potentially be visible above the level of the boundary hedgerow. The development would be barely perceptible and the nature and character of the rural view would not be changed. Receptors would be of medium to high sensitivity and would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect in Year 1 winter and Year 10 summer, which is not significant.

Statfold Farm

- 5.78 A three storey house is located at this farm, approximately 600m south of the Application Site. Glimpsed views from upper storey rooms, through mature trees in the grounds, would be gained of solar panels and tops of post and wire mesh fences in Field I. The development would be barely perceptible and the nature and character of the rural view would not be changed. Receptors would be of medium sensitivity and would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect in Year 1 winter and Year 10 summer, which is not significant.

Podmore Cottages

- 5.79 Mature hedgerows, trees and garden vegetation would obscure views over the intervening landscape of the proposed solar farm development. These residential receptors are unlikely to experience a change in view.

Lonkhills Farm

- 5.80 Two residential properties are located at Lonkhills Farm, approximately 750m to the south-east of the Application Site. Large agricultural buildings would obscure views from the rear of the southern property. Occupiers of the western property would potentially gain filtered views through mature trees within the grounds to glimpses of the tops of solar panels and fences in Field G. The development would be barely perceptible and would not change the character of the rural view. Receptors would be of medium to high sensitivity and would experience no more than a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect in Year 1 winter and Year 10 summer, which is not significant.

Thorpe Hall

- 5.81 Thorpe Hall is a large, three storey house at the heart of the Thorpe Constantine estate, approximately 1.4km to the east of the Application Site. The rear of the property is orientated towards the southern part of the Application Site. Views extend over a formal parterre garden and parkland towards woodland and lakes in the valley base. There is some potential for views over the grounds towards the woodland copses beyond at Old Gorse and Clifton Rough. Glimpses of the solar panels may be possible as small additions to the wider rural landscape from upper floor rooms. Receptors would be of medium sensitivity and would experience a negligible magnitude of change and a Negligible level of effect in Year 1 winter and Year 10 summer, which is not significant.

Sequential Effects

- 5.82 A 1.1km section of Clifton Lane lies adjacent to four fields within the Application Site. In Year 1 when the solar farm is complete, but before landscape mitigation measures have been fully implemented or planting has had time to mature, occupiers of vehicles would experience a sequence of Moderate adverse effects, which is significant in terms of the methodology. The solar

panels would form a prominent element in views, usually over a relatively low roadside hedgerow. In the long term these hedgerows can be managed to a greater height (approximately 2m) to match other hedgerows along this road and in the local area, to provide an effective screen.

- 5.83 There would be no significant sequential effects on visual receptors using public rights of way within the study area. Effects of Moderate adverse of greater are confined to specific points and locations on routes and are not repeated or experienced for long sections of routes within a journey.

Summary of Operational Visual Effects

- 5.84 There would be no long term significant adverse effects on visual receptors within the study area.
- 5.85 There would be short to medium term significant effects on views gained by walkers using two public rights of way within the study area and occupiers of vehicles travelling on a local road that passes between fields within the Application Site. Footpath FP007, which links the northern and southern parts of the development via Highfields and Clifton Lane, would enable walkers to gain views of solar panels and perimeter fences in close proximity to the path (Viewpoint 1, also representative of occupiers of the residential property at Highfields who would also experience significant effects in the short to medium term), public bridleway CC33 which crosses the high point of the local landscape on the western boundary of the Application Site (Viewpoint 2) and people travelling along Clifton Lane (Viewpoint 3). Many views from these public rights of way and lane are screened by dense hedgerows and trees in the foreground. Receptors in these locations adjacent to the site would experience limited changes in views for the majority of a journey. Open views are gained in specific locations where there is a field gate or an undulation in the landform.
- 5.86 Immediately after the solar farm has been implemented receptors in some locations on these public rights of way and lane would be in close proximity to the solar panels and boundary post and wire fences with limited intervening vegetation. The solar farm would form the most prominent element in the view, initially changing the character of the view from open farmland to farmland with energy infrastructure. In the longer term (10 Years plus), when newly planted hedgerows and trees around the perimeter of the scheme have established and matured to screen or filter the panels, walkers, equestrians and occupiers of vehicles would gain a different view where the solar farm no longer results in a significant effect on receptors.
- 5.87 There would be no significant effects on visual receptors in any other locations within the surrounding landscape or significant sequential effects. Views from the wider public right of way and road network and from residential properties would not be significantly affected by the proposals. The mature hedgerows, scattered trees and woodland copses within and around the site and undulating landform would provide good levels of visual containment for the majority of the new solar farm development and would help to reduce its apparent extent and break up the scale of the solar farm and merge the scheme into the landscape of the Estate Farmlands LCT. In many views the proposals would form a minor addition to the landscape or would be barely perceptible in a framework of hedgerows and trees which define the patchwork of farmed fields. The proposed scheme would not adversely influence the setting of any settlements.

Glint and Glare Study

- 5.88 A Glint and Glare Study has been undertaken by Pager Power and is included at Appendix D of this report. The assessment considers the possible impact on road users and occupiers of residential dwellings within the study area. Pager Power have undertaken geometric reflective calculations and predicted the likely screening that would be provided by vegetation and landform. No significant effect on the safety of road users and the residential amenity of residents has been identified and no further mitigation has been recommended. No significant effects on activities at Catton, Grangewood and Twycross airfields has been identified.

Assessment of Construction Effects

5.89 Construction activities associated with the proposed solar farm development would include the following;

- Erection of temporary protective fencing for hedgerows and trees.
- Stripping and stockpiling of soil materials for track and substation construction.
- Erection of solar panels and security fencing and placement of substation and inverter stations.
- Construction of access and service track.
- Construction compound, site offices and car park.
- Implementation of soft landscape proposals.

Landscape Effects

5.90 The construction site and activities for this solar farm development would result in localised, short term direct effects on the fabric of Estate farmlands LCT and limited indirect effects on the neighbouring character areas.

5.91 The activities within the local agricultural landscape would temporarily form a discordant addition to a small part of the rural character area, although the low level and low-key nature of the activities would not be completely uncharacteristic of the landscape. The activities would be relatively well contained within the majority of the wider landscape context by vegetation within and around the Application Site and the locally undulating topography. The levels of effect previously defined for the operational stage of the development would be the same for the construction phase. Whilst the nature of the construction site and activities is more discordant in the landscape than the completed scheme, this would be balanced by the short-term nature of effects.

Visual Effects

5.92 Walkers using public right of way FP007, which links the northern and southern parts of the Application Site (Viewpoint 1) and bridleway CC33 which passes to the west of the site (Viewpoint 2), would briefly gain views as part of a journey. Receptors in these locations would temporarily gain near, open views of the construction site and activities as discordant additions to the rural view, leading to significant effects in the short term. Occupiers of vehicles travelling north or south on a 1.1km section of Clifton Lane would be in close proximity to the construction site. Receptors would experience a sequence of Moderate adverse effects, which is significant in terms of the methodology. The construction activities would form a prominent element in views.

5.93 There would be no significant effects on visual receptors in any other locations within the surrounding study area including walkers using public rights of way which pass adjacent and near to the site, occupiers of residential properties, occupiers of vehicles using the local roads, occupiers of vessels using the canal or passengers on trains. The levels of effect previously defined for the operational stage of the development would be the same for the construction phase.

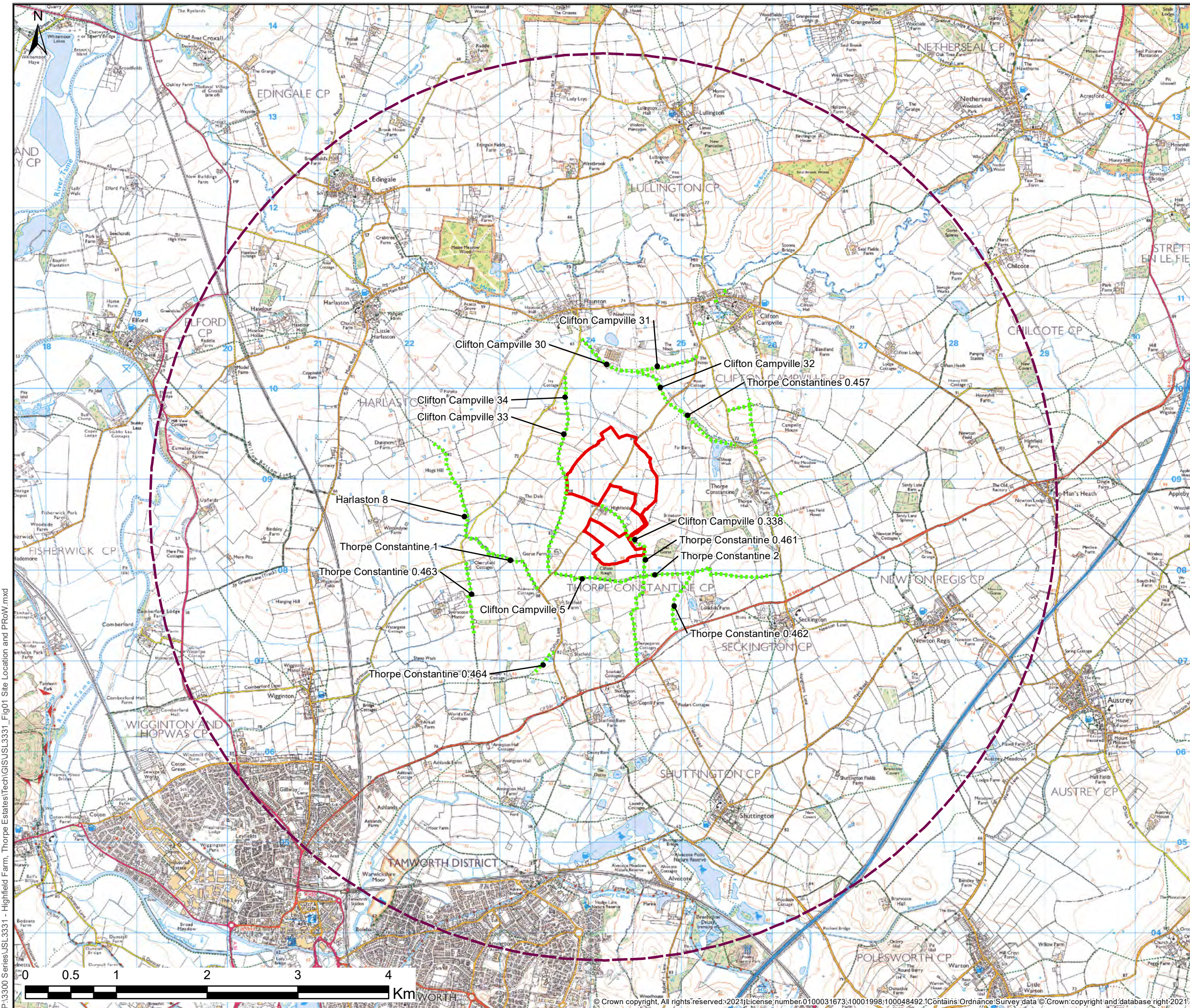
6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Application Site comprises medium sized arable fields divided by mature, mainly clipped hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees, centred around the house at Highfields Farm and its range of outbuildings of varying ages and building materials. The Application Site is also divided by Clifton Lane and contains existing electricity transmission infrastructure with high voltage overhead electricity lines and five steel lattice pylon towers, which cross the site in a north-south direction approximately 325 m to the east of Highfields Farm. The agricultural character of the Application Site is influenced by the presence of the existing electrical transmission infrastructure.
- 6.2 The gently undulating nature of the landform of the study area and the existence of the mature field boundary hedgerows with trees, and localised woodland copses combine to limit views towards much of the Application Site from the wider study area. These local characteristics limit the potential influence that the proposed development is able to exert over the wider rural landscape.
- 6.3 The solar farm scheme would change the character of the arable farmland within the Application Site however, the mostly low level and relatively low-key nature of the energy infrastructure would limit conflict in terms of the character of development in this particular agricultural location. Although there would be a loss of openness and change in character within the nine field parcels following development, the retention of the existing hedgerows, trees and woodland copse's around the edges, and additional new boundary hedgerows and management of hedgerows and trees would enable views to be directed over the new development whilst views to the surrounding landscape would be largely retained, limiting change to the perceived character of the rural landscape.
- 6.4 Supplementary planting to improve the structure and appearance of gappy hedgerows and the opportunity to manage hedgerows through traditional practices to extend their longevity would provide long term benefits to the farmed landscape. The proposal responds to site specific constraints and opportunities and the local context of the LCT, wherever possible. The development has been designed to avoid removal of, or impact on, existing hedgerows and trees within the site, wherever possible, to retain landscape pattern and to partly conceal the solar panels and ancillary energy infrastructure in an agricultural landscape which contains several public rights of way.
- 6.5 The change from arable use to solar panels with pastoral use would expand and enhance elements of the local character and ecological value of the location. The additional hedgerow and tree planting would slightly enhance site conditions in the long term, resulting in some beneficial effects that would help to partly offset the adverse effects on landscape character.
- 6.6 The proposed development would not result in significant harm to the value of the landscape of the Estate Farmlands LCT, as there would be no loss of important landscape features, elements and characteristics. There would be a Minor adverse effect upon the LCT as a whole which would increase to Moderate adverse within the Application Site. This is due to the direct impact on the character of the Site locally, which would not be considered significant in the context of this assessment and would be for the duration of the site's operation and fully reversible. The relatively well contained nature of the proposal in views from the west, south and east, within a landscape structure provided by hedgerows and trees, infilled where required and suitably managed long term, would limit the effects on the wider landscape. It is considered that there would be no significant effects on the landscape resource within the 5 km radius study area.
- 6.7 The mitigation planting implemented as part of the scheme, would achieve its designed intention by summer Year 10 and together with improved hedgerow and tree management would provide beneficial effects and help to reduce the perception of change within the local landscape and wider study area.

- 6.8 Significant effects on visual receptors would be limited to walkers and equestrians at specific locations on two Public Rights of Way that are located alongside the Application Site, and sequential effects on transient users of Clifton Lane. Due to the receptors' proximity to the site the short-term construction activities and short to medium term operational impacts, before landscape mitigation measures have matured, significant effects would occur.



FIGURES



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- Legend**
- Study Area (5km radius)
 - Application Site Boundary
 - Local Public Rights of Way

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



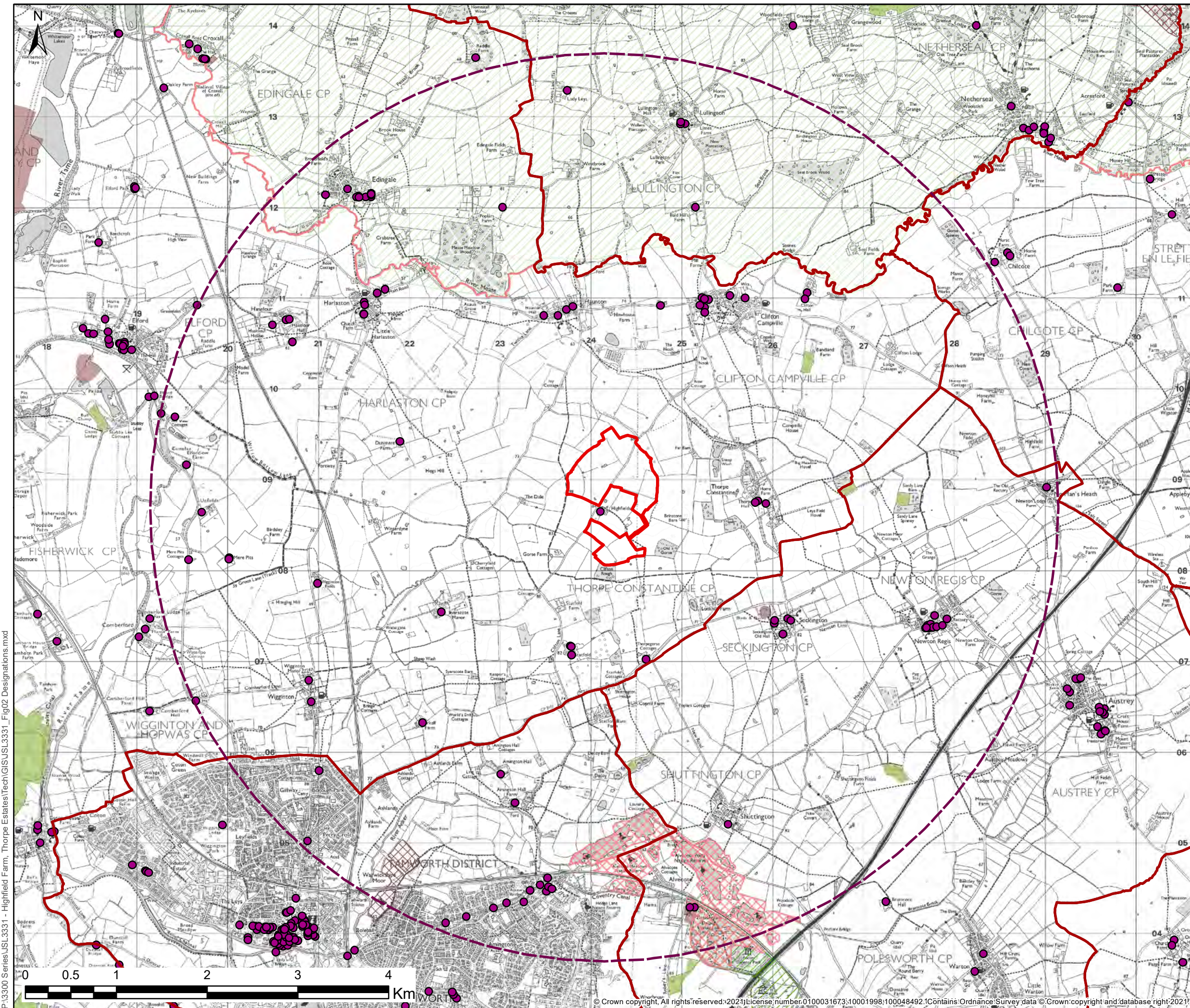
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Client ELGIN ENERGY EsCO LTD
Project Highfields Farm Solar Farm
Title Application Site Location & Public Rights of Way

Status Final
Drawn By KH
PM/Checked By PE
Project Number JSL3331
Scale @ A3 1:40,000
Date Created OCT 2021
Figure Number 1
Rev -

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- Legend**
- Study Area (5km radius)
 - Application Site Boundary
 - District Boundary
 - Listed Building Point
 - SSSI
 - Scheduled Monument
 - CRoW Access Land
 - Country Parks
 - Ancient Woodland
 - National Forest

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date



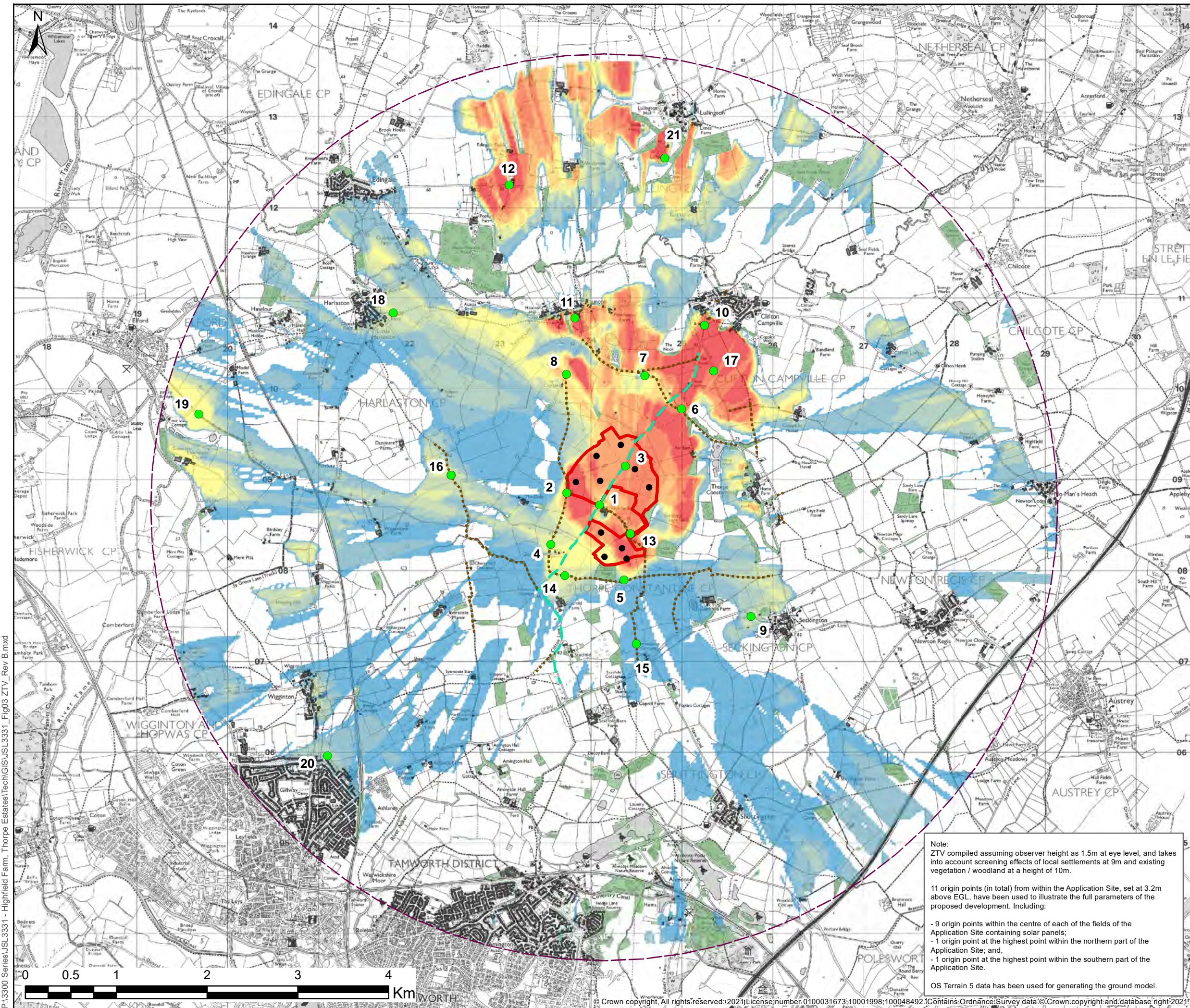
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Client ELGIN ENERGY EsCO LTD
Project Highfields Farm Solar Farm
Title Designations

Status Final
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Project Number JSL3331
Scale @ A3 1:40,000
Date Created OCT 2021
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Legend

- Study Area (5km)
- Application Site Boundary
- Settlement Barriers (9m)
- Woodland Barriers (10m)
- ZTV Origin Points
- Representative Viewpoints
- Local Public Rights of Way
- Clifton Lane

Indicative extent of surrounding landscape from which views to the proposed solar panels may be available

- Low Visibility (1 origin point)
-
-
- High Visibility (Up to 11 origin points)

B	New height of PVs	KH	GL	05/21
A	New layout and new viewpoint locations	KH	GL	03/21
Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

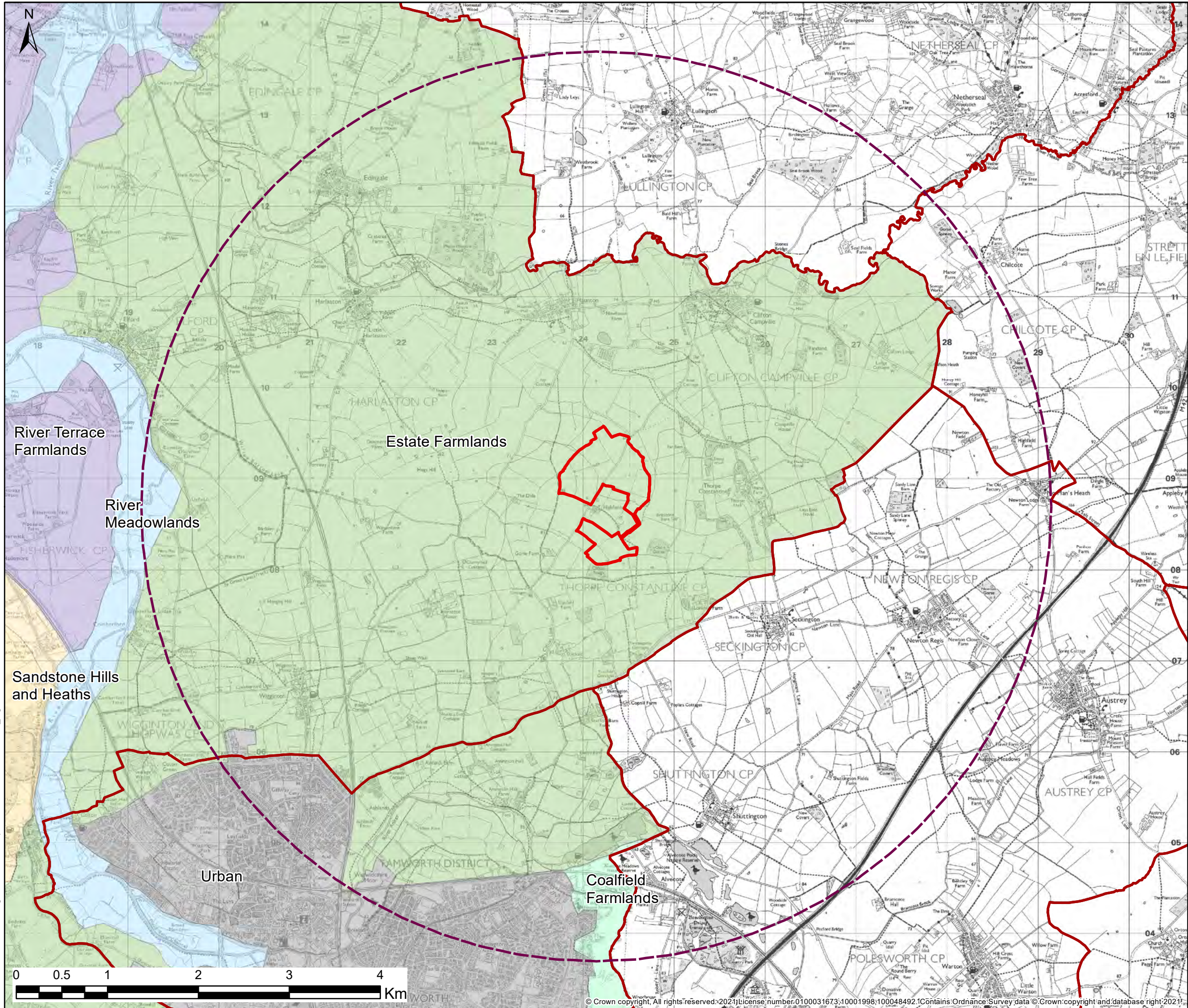
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Client ELGIN ENERGY EsCO LTD
Project Highfields Farm Solar Farm
Title Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) with Representative Viewpoints

Status Drawn By PM/Checked By
Final KH PH
Project Number Scale @ A3 Date Created
JSL3331/ 1:40,000 **OCT 2021**
JPW1425
Figure Number Rev
3 **B**

Note:
 ZTV compiled assuming observer height as 1.5m at eye level, and takes into account screening effects of local settlements at 9m and existing vegetation / woodland at a height of 10m.
 11 origin points (in total) from within the Application Site, set at 3.2m above EGL, have been used to illustrate the full parameters of the proposed development. Including:
 - 9 origin points within the centre of each of the fields of the Application Site containing solar panels;
 - 1 origin point at the highest point within the northern part of the Application Site; and,
 - 1 origin point at the highest point within the southern part of the Application Site.
 OS Terrain 5 data has been used for generating the ground model.

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- Legend**
- Study Area (5km radius)
 - Application Site Boundary
 - District Boundary
- SCC Draft Landscape Character 2018 for Lichfield and Tamworth**
- Draft Landscape Character Types**
- Coalfield Farmlands
 - Estate Farmlands
 - River Meadowlands
 - River Terrace Farmlands
 - Sandstone Hills & Heaths
 - Urban

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

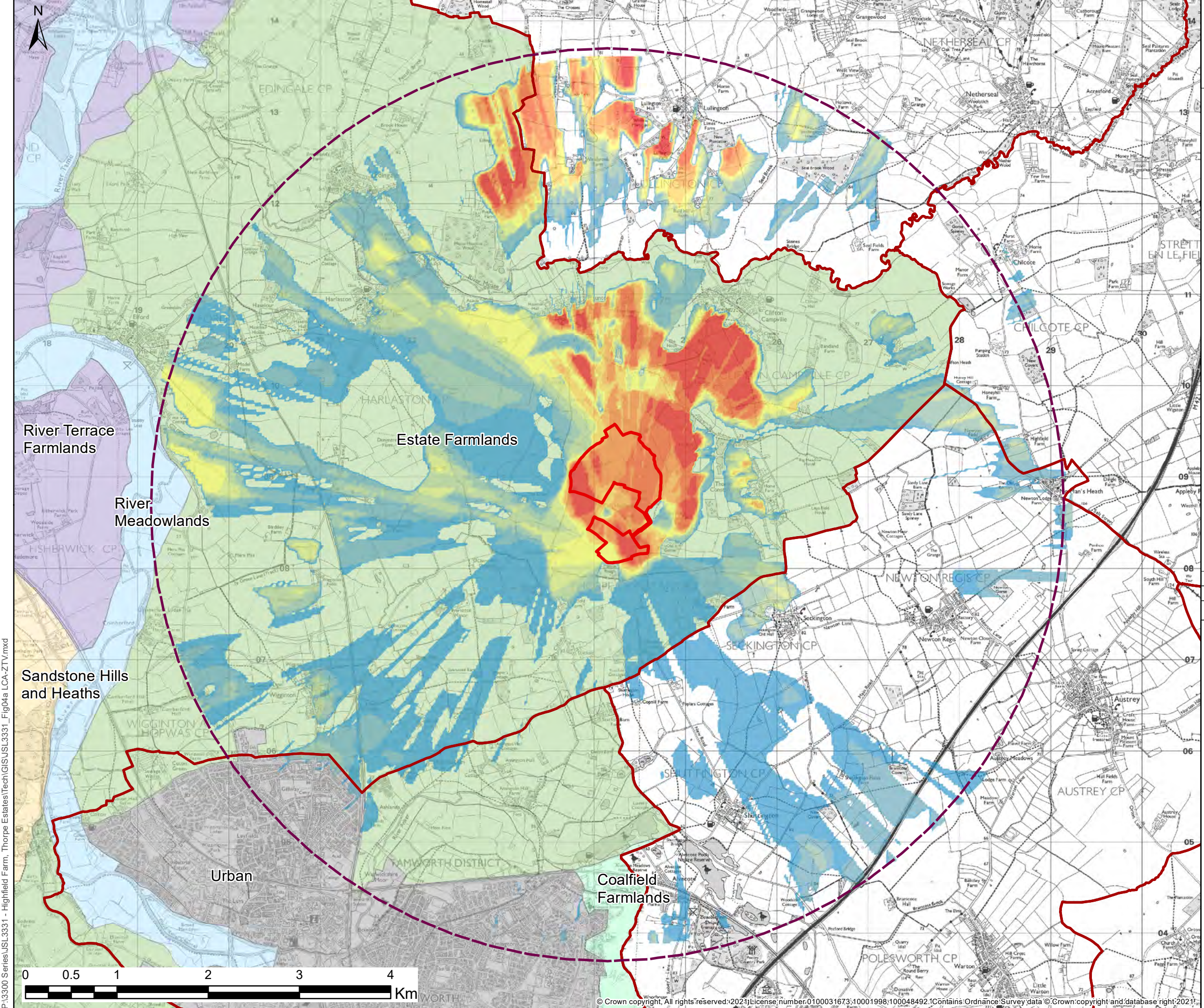
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Client **ELGIN ENERGY EsCO LTD**
 Project **Highfields Farm Solar Farm**
 Title **Landscape Types**

Status **Final** Drawn By **SH** PM/Checked By **PE**
 Project Number **JSL3331** Scale @ **A3 1:40,000** Date Created **OCT 2021**
 Figure Number **4** Rev **-**

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Legend

- Study Area (5km radius)
- Application Site Boundary
- District Boundary

SCC Draft Landscape Character 2018 for Lichfield and Tamworth

Draft Landscape Character Types

- Coalfield Farmlands
- Estate Farmlands
- River Meadowlands
- River Terrace Farmlands
- Sandstone Hills & Heaths
- Urban

Application Site Boundary

Indicative extent of surrounding landscape from which views to the proposed solar panels may be available

- Low Visibility (1 origin point)
- High Visibility (Up to 11 origin points)

Rev	Description	By	CB	Date

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Client **ELGIN ENERGY EsCO LTD**

Project **Highfields Farm Solar Farm**
 Landscape Types and
 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

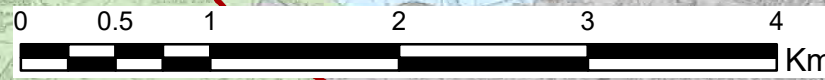
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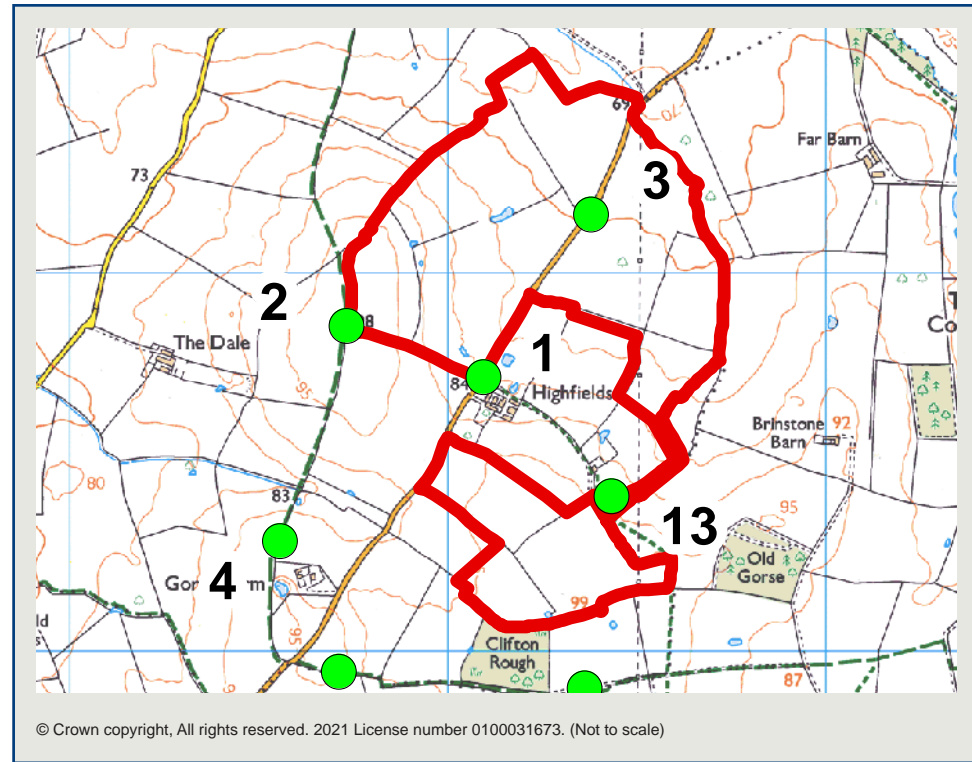
Project Number **JSL3331** Scale @ A3 **1:40,000** Date Created **OCT 2021**

Figure Number **4a** Rev **-**

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Representative Viewpoint 1 (Summer): PRow at Highfields Farm / Clifton Lane looking west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.338)

Highfields Farm Solar Farm
JSL3331

Date of photograph: 20/10/2020
OS Grid Ref: 424092, 308724

Horizontal field of view: 53.5°
To be viewed at comfortable arms length

Distance to site: 8m

Figure: 5a (iii)

Proposed Development extends the full width of the view



Representative Viewpoint 1 (Summer): PRoW at Highfields Farm / Clifton Lane looking west (Footpath Ref: Clifton Campville 0.338)

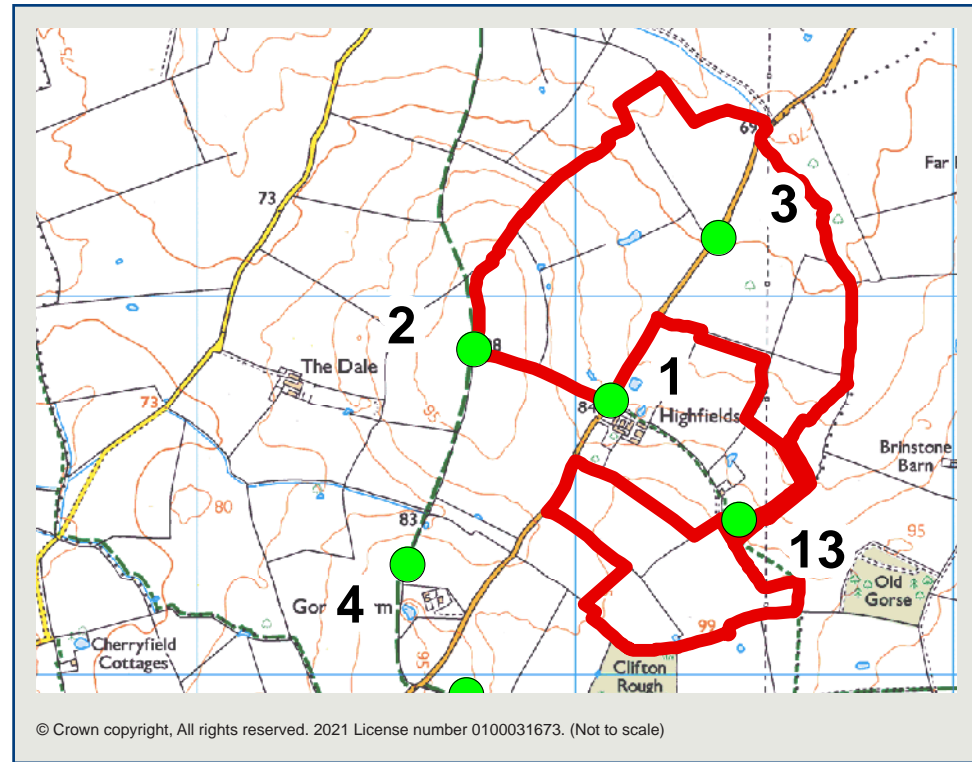
Highfields Farm Solar Farm
JSL3331

Date of photograph: 20/10/2020
OS Grid Ref: 424092, 308724

Horizontal field of view: 53.5°
To be viewed at comfortable arms length

Distance to site: 8m

Figure: 5a (iv)





	Representative Viewpoint 2 (Winter): PRow adjoining boundary of Application Site looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33)	Highfields Farm Solar Farm JSL3331	Date of photograph: 15/03/2021 OS Grid Ref: 423731, 308861	Horizontal field of view: 53.5° To be viewed at comfortable arms length	Distance to site: 3m Figure: 5b (ii)
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	Representative Viewpoint 2 (Summer): PRoW adjoining boundary of Application Site looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33)	Highfields Farm Solar Farm JSL3331	Date of photograph: 15/10/2020 OS Grid Ref: 423731, 308861	Horizontal field of view: 53.5° To be viewed at comfortable arms length	Distance to site: 3m Figure: 5b (iii)
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Proposed Development extends the full width of the view



Representative Viewpoint 2 (Summer): PRow adjoining boundary of Application Site looking east (Bridleway Ref: Clifton Campville 33)

Highfields Farm Solar Farm
JSL3331

Date of photograph: 15/10/2020
OS Grid Ref: 423731, 308861

Horizontal field of view: 53.5°
To be viewed at comfortable arms length

Distance to site: 3m

Figure: 5b (iv)

