THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

FORFARMERS, MILL GREEN

BURSTON

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) to accompany a planning application for the provision of solar photovoltaics (the 'Proposed Development') on land to the east of the ForFarmers feed plant complex on Mill Road, Burston (the 'Site'). The Site, its boundary and location are shown on **Figure 1**.

1.2 This report includes a review of published landscape documentation relevant to the Site; a description of the baseline conditions on the Site and the surrounding area; a description of existing visual amenity and views towards the Site and a description of the Proposed Development including embedded mitigation measures. The LVA assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and landscape features, and effects on visual amenity.

1.3 The assessment is based on the General Layout Plan (Drawing Ref: 221208_BUR_PlanningDrawings.dwg) prepared by STEAG Solar Energy Solutions (UK) Ltd.

1.4 This report includes the following sections:

- Section 2.0 - Method, Scope, and Context;
- Section 3.0 - Legislation and Policy Context;
- Section 4.0 - Landscape Baseline;
- Section 5.0 - Visual Baseline;
- Section 6.0 - The Proposed Development;
- Section 7.0 - Assessment of Landscape Effects;
- Section 8.0 - Assessment of Visual Effects; and
- Section 9.0 - Conclusions.

1.5 This LVA is supported by a series of Figures (**Figures 1 to 6**) provided in **Appendix A** to this report. Figures show relevant landscape and environmental designations, topography, and published landscape character assessment data; and show viewpoint locations. Photographs from selected viewpoints are presented at **Figures 6.1 to 6.8**.

1.6 **Appendix B** provides the LVA method, discussed in **Section 2.0** below.

2.0 Method, Scope, and Context

Method

2.1 This LVA has assessed the potential effects on landscape and on views of the Proposed Development as shown on the General Layout Plan.

2.2 The method for this LVA (**Appendix B**), is based on guidance contained in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition', (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) (GLVIA3).

2.3 Duration and reversibility of landscape effects has been assessed with the following considerations:

- Short term: 0-5 years during the construction period and completion;
- Medium term: 5-15 years, which represents the establishment phase of planting proposed; and
- Long term: 15 years onwards for the life of the Proposed Development.

2.4 The LVA involved the following key stages:

- Desk-based assessment involving a review of relevant information, guidance and planning policy relating to the type of development proposed and to landscape and visual amenity;
- Site survey and assessment to augment the baseline assessment, assess the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development and undertake photography at selected viewpoint locations; and
- Assessment and reporting of effects using criteria for sensitivity of receptor, magnitude of effect and overall effect.

Scope and Context

2.5 The scope of this LVA has been informed by desk study and field assessment. Landform and screening by vegetation and built form at the Site and in the surrounding landscape has been considered.

2.6 The initial phase in the assessment involves defining the 'area of influence' of the Proposed Development or the study area boundaries. The study area for this LVA includes the Site and the surrounding landscape likely to be affected by the Proposed Development. It includes the area from where the Site is potentially visible and is also defined by characteristics of the development type and landscape type in which the development is located.

2.7 A study area of up to a maximum of 1km from the Site has been defined for this LVA which reflects the landscape setting of the Site, and the type and scale of development proposed. This study area provides sufficient context within which an assessment of the landscape and visual effects can be framed.

2.8 This appraisal:

- Identifies, describes and evaluates the current landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, along with any notable individual landscape

elements, to determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed;
- Identifies potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development) and evaluates their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed; and
- Identifies and describes any impacts of the development in so far as they affect the existing landscape and/or views and evaluates the magnitude of effect and the overall effect.

2.9 The assessment of landscape assists in understanding what key elements define landscape character and contribute to visual amenity so that:

- Elements which make an essential contribution to landscape character are maintained, enhanced, and managed;
- Changes can be accommodated within the existing landscape and visual context; and
- Improvements and enhancements can be made where uncharacteristic features detract from the character and visual amenity of the area.

2.10 The LVA is a standalone report that should be read alongside the planning application and associated technical documents.

Assumptions and Limitations

2.11 Viewpoint photography was undertaken in January 2023; this represents a 'worst case' scenario in terms of the extent of screening provided by existing vegetation. Seasonal differences have been taken into consideration in the description and assessment of visual effects.

2.12 This LVA is based on the General Layout Plan (Drawing Ref: 221208_BUR_PlanningDrawings.dwg) which sets out the key principles of the scheme including the location of access and development and areas of proposed planting.

2.13 In assessing both landscape and visual effects the influence of time, particularly the growth of new vegetation can be substantial. The post-completion effects have therefore been assessed at two stages (Year 1 and Year 15).

2.14 The time that new planting takes to establish is dependent on species, stock size, the nature of the growing conditions and other factors such as maintenance and vandalism. It is assumed that planting will be implemented in Year 1 with an average growth rate of 300-400mm/year.

Consultation

2.15 South Norfolk Council was approached in January 2023 in order to agree the scope of this appraisal, including the location of representative viewpoints, but at the time of writing in February 2023, no response had been received.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

3.1 This section provides a summary of relevant national and local planning policy including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and evidence base documents relevant to the Site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) sets out the Government's planning policies for England, how these are expected to be applied at a local level in development plans and how developers should address them. The Framework places great emphasis on plans and developments contributing to sustainable development.

3.3 The sub-topics beneath the goal of Delivering Sustainable Development that are most relevant to townscape, landscape and views within the assessment study area are:

- Section 12: Achieving well-designed places;
- Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change; and
- Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

NPPF Section 12: Achieving well-designed places

3.4 Section 12 recognises the importance of good design as *'the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'.*

3.5 Paragraph 126 states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

3.6 Under paragraph 130, planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

NPPF Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

3.7 The NPPF indicates (inter alia) that planning should *'support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate'* and '*support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure'* (para. 152).

3.8 Paragraph 155 states that to help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should *'provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts)*.'

3.9 Paragraph 157 states that *'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to*:

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

3.10 Paragraph 158 highlights that *'When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:*

> *a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
> *b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.'*

NPPF Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

3.11 Paragraph 174 of Section 15 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan). Paragraph 175 indicates that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national, and locally designated sites and allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the Framework.

3.12 Paragraph 176 of the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage are important considerations in all these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads.

3.13 Paragraph 185 of Section 15 states that planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity.

National Planning Practice Guidance

3.14 The NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) available online. Those elements of PPG addressing matters in the scope of this landscape and visual appraisal and relevant to the Proposed Development are detailed below, and the guidance has been considered when designing and assessing the Proposed Development.

Design

3.15 PPG emphasises the importance of good quality design as an integral part of sustainable development. PPG on design advises on the key points to consider on design, which include:

- Ensure development can deliver a wide range of planning objectives;
- Enhance the quality of buildings and spaces, by considering, amongst other things, form, and function; efficiency and effectiveness and their impact on well-being; and
- Address the need for different uses sympathetically.

Natural Environment

3.16 PPG reinforces the NPPF's commitment to recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding local distinctiveness and the use of Natural England's guidance on landscape character assessment.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

3.17 The PPG for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy is intended to help developers and councils understand the specific planning issues associated with renewable and low carbon energy projects and the Governments stated policy in this regard.

3.18 Paragraph 13 deals with the planning considerations in relation to large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic developments. Particular areas of consideration include the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare, the impact of security measures such as lights and fencing, and the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through planting.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

3.19 The Adopted South Norfolk Local Plan is made up of various documents including the:

- Joint Core Strategy;
- Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document; and
- Development Management Policies Document.

<u>The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk</u>

3.20 The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (JCS) was adopted on 24 March 2011 and amended in January 2014. The JCS sets out the overarching strategy for growth across the three districts to 2026, identifying key locations for housing and employment growth and sets out policies to ensure that future sustainable development.

3.21 JCS policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters are outlined below.

Policy 1: Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

3.22 Policy 1 highlights that the environmental assets of the area will be protected, maintained, restored and enhanced and the benefits for residents and visitors improved.

3.23 In terms of environmental assets in areas not protected through international or national designations, Policy 1 identifies that development will:

- *'minimise fragmentation of habitats and seek to conserve and enhance existing environmental assets of acknowledged regional or local importance. Where harm is unavoidable, it will provide for appropriate mitigation or replacement with the objective of achieving a long-term maintenance or enhancement of the local biodiversity baseline;*
- *contribute to providing a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including provision of areas of open space, wildlife resources and links between them, both off site and as an integral part of the development; and*
- *help to make provision for the long-term maintenance of the green infrastructure network'*.

Policy 2: Promoting good design

3.24 Policy 2 states that all development will be designed to the highest possible standards and will respect local distinctiveness which will create a strong sense of place. In line with this, it highlights that developments should respect:

- *'the landscape setting of settlements including the urban/rural transition and the treatment of 'gateways';* and
- *the landscape character and historic environment, taking account of conservation area appraisals and including the wider countryside and the Broads area townscape, including the city and the varied character of our market towns and villages'.*

Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document

3.25 The Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document was adopted in October 2015 and is guided by the JCS. The document designates areas of land to deliver housing, employment, recreation, open spaces and community uses.

3.26 Burston is classified as an 'Other Village' in Policy 16 of the JCS and comprises the village and outlying hamlets of Mill Green and Shimpling.

3.27 The development boundary of Burston has been drawn around much of the built form in the village allowing for limited infill development.

3.28 None of the policies within the Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document are of direct relevance to this appraisal.

Development Management Policies Document (DMPD)

3.29 The DMPD was adopted in October 2015 and is used to assess planning applications and guide development proposals to ensure high quality sustainable developments across South Norfolk.

3.30 DMPD policies of relevance to landscape and visual matters are outlined below.

Policy DM 1.4 Environmental quality and local distinctiveness

3.31 Policy DM 1.4 highlights that the Council will work with developers to ensure high quality and positive environmental improvement from all development. It requires that developments should take all reasonable opportunities to:

- *'Make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;*
- *Work with the characteristics of the location to ensure that the necessary mitigation measures are not disproportionate to the benefits of the scale of development proposed'.*

Policy DM 3.8 Development Principles applying to all development

3.32 Policy DM 3.8 states that planning permission will be granted for development which has been designed to respect local landscape. The scale, height, massing, form and appearance of development should enable successful integration with its surroundings and landscaping of the development should be designed to retain important existing natural features, reflect the surrounding characteristics of the area and contribute to the relative objectives of the local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Policy DM 4.1 Renewable Energy

3.33 Policy DM 4.1 states that the effect of renewable energy development proposals will be considered on:

- *'The effect on the character and appearance of the landscape;*
- *Designated and undesignated heritage assets;*
- *The amenities and living conditions of nearby residents by way of noise, outlook, and overbearing effect or unacceptable risk to health or amenity by way of other pollutants such as dust and odour'.*

3.34 Policy DM 4.1 further states that *'permission will be granted where there are no significant adverse effects or where any adverse effects are outweighed by the benefits'*.

Policy DM 4.5 Landscape Character and River Valleys

3.35 Policy DM 4.5 establishes that *'all development should respect, conserve and where possible, enhance the landscape character of its immediate and wider environment. Development proposals that would cause significant adverse impact on the distinctive landscape characteristics of an area will be refused*'.

3.36 It further states that development proposals should demonstrate how they have taken into account the following elements from the 2001 South Norfolk Landscape Assessment:

- The key characteristics, assets, sensitivities and vulnerabilities;
- The landscape strategy; and
- Development considerations.

3.37 The policy identifies that *'particular regard will be had to protecting the distinctive characteristics, special qualities and geographical extents of the identified Rural River Valleys and Valley Urban Fringe landscape character types'*.

Policy DM 4.8 Protection of Trees and Hedgerows

3.38 Policy DM 4.8 establishes that the Council will ensure the following in relation to trees and hedgerows:

- *'promote the retention and conservation of significant trees, woodlands and traditional orchards and will serve Tree Preservation Orders where necessary;*
- *presume in favour of the retention of 'important' hedgerows as defined by the Hedgerows Regulations 1997; and*
- *safeguard and promote the appropriate management of protected and other significant trees and hedgerows, unless the need for, and benefits of, a development clearly outweigh their loss'.*

Policy DM 4.9 Incorporating landscape into design

3.39 Policy DM 4.9 highlights the different ways landscape can be incorporated into design, including the following:

'Where appropriate, detailed development proposals must demonstrate a high quality of landscape design, implementation and management as an integral part of the new development.

The provision for new planted features (such as tree belts, hedgerows, wild flowers and specimen trees) is expected to form part of development proposals from their outset and should provide an appropriate landscape setting for the scheme…

Landscape schemes will be required to respect the character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and should ensure that any land remodelling respects the local topographic character in terms of height, slope, angle and character. Landscape schemes should be clearly and properly specified'.

Emerging Local Plan

3.40 Broadland District Council, South Norfolk Council, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council are working together to prepare a new Local Plan, the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). The GNLP aims to ensure the housing and job needs of the area covered to 2026 in the JCS, are covered until 2038 in the GNLP. It will include strategic policies to guide future development and plans to protect the environment. It is anticipated that the GNLP will be adopted in early 2024.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

South Norfolk Place-Making Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

3.41 The South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD promotes and secures high quality design in new development within South Norfolk through setting out a number of design principles based on recognised best practice and explaining the key requirements that will be taken into consideration when assessing proposals for new development.

3.42 The SPD highlights the importance of understanding and responding to character or local distinctiveness in the delivery of successful developments. The SPD provides information on the vernacular architecture of South Norfolk, landscape character, local landscape types, character of key areas for growth and character of market towns. This is considered further in **Section 4.0**.

4.0 Landscape Baseline

4.1 This chapter considers the relevant designations present in the study area, summarises characteristics of the landscape described in published landscape character assessments and provides a description of the Site within this context. The relevant information is presented on **Figure 3** - Landscape and Environmental Designations, **Figure 4** shows published Landscape Character Areas.

Landscape and Environmental Designations

4.2 In accordance with GLVIA3, relevant designations are considered as part of determining the value of the landscape potentially affected by the Proposed Development. The LVA does not consider effects on each asset's conservation interest or its appreciation and understanding.

4.3 The Site is not in any national or local landscape designations. The study area incorporates statutory and non-statutory designations in relation to heritage which are described further below.

Listed Buildings

4.4 There are several Listed Buildings scattered throughout the study area. The closest are Grade II Listed 'Culpher Farmhouse' approximately 240m to the north of the Site, and Grade II Listed 'The Cottage and Higdons Cottage' approximately 270m to the north-west of the Site. There is limited intervisibility between the Site and these heritage assets due to intervening vegetation and built form.

Conservation Areas

4.5 Burston Conservation Area is approximately 370m to the south of the Site. The historic core is centred around the Church of St Mary, the village green and Burston Strike School. There is limited intervisibility between the Site and the Conservation Area due to intervening vegetation and built form.

Review of Published Landscape Character Assessments

4.6 This section summarises key characteristics of the landscape described in published landscape character assessments followed by an analysis of the local landscape based on fieldwork undertaken in January 2023 by a Chartered Landscape Architect. The location of the Site in relation to published landscape character areas is shown on **Figure 4**.

National Landscape Character

4.7 Natural England has prepared National Character Area (NCA) profiles for the 159 NCAs defined across England. The NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics.

4.8 The Site and study area is within NCA 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands. The NCA occupies a large area of central East Anglia covering the area between Norwich in the north to River Gipping in the south. The landscape is characterised by a high and predominantly clay plateau which is incised by numerous small-scale wooded river valleys with complex slopes that in places are much unexpected for East Anglia. Rivers are characteristic of the landscape but are mostly small and slow flowing and their valleys contain an important mosaic of small-scale pasture, wet heath, reedbeds and woodland.

4.9 In terms of views, these are relatively open and large areas of woodland are scarce. Views are sometimes confined by hedges, hedgerow trees and scattered smaller woodlands. There are some confined landscapes with intimate views in the valleys.

4.10 The landscape is ancient and long-settled with a rural and farming character. It is characterised by irregular field patterns, medieval churches, historic timber-framed barns and houses with colour-washed walls and thatched or tiled roofs. There is a mixed settlement pattern across the NCA, with nucleated villages in the west and along river valleys, intermixed with dispersed hamlets and moated farmsteads. Large and often interconnected village greens or commons are a feature of the LCA.

4.11 Key characteristics of NCA 83 of relevance to the study area include:

- *'Views are frequently open, only sometimes confined by hedges and trees, with some woodland present. The small valleys support quite confined landscapes with intimate views.*
- *Scattered areas of ancient woodland, game copses, shelterbelts, valley floor plantation and carr woodland as well as hedgerow trees provide a treed landscape character, despite much boundary loss.*
- *A mix of remnant medieval ancient countryside, some of it with a decidedly coaxial character, although irregular field patterns and large modern amalgamated open fields dominate.*
- *Sinuous field boundaries are formed by deep ditches, some with hedgerows and hedgerow trees.*
- *Extensive areas of arable land dominated by cereals with break-cropping of sugar beet and oilseed rape, and some pastures along valley floors. Intensive pig and poultry production is common.*
- *A dispersed settlement pattern of small nucleated market towns with architectural variety and colour, loosely clustered villages and scattered hamlets. Settlement is often focused around large medieval greens. Many of the market towns have modern extensions'.*

4.12 Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) of relevance to this LVA include:

- *'SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the rural character of the landscape and the contrast between the arable plateau and pastoral river valleys by maintaining agricultural productivity and encouraging sustainable land management practices that protect and enhance the landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity assets while benefiting water quality and water availability, as well as the rural sense of place and tranquillity;*

- *SEO 4: Protect and enhance the area's ancient semi-natural woodlands, copses, river valley plantations and ancient boundaries including hedgerows and hedgerow trees, through the management of existing and the creation of new woods and hedgerows to benefit biodiversity, landscape character and habitat connectivity, and for the benefits to soil erosion reduction, water infiltration and quality, timber provision and carbon storage.'*

4.13 Natural England's NCA descriptions provide a very broad assessment, covering a large area. They do not provide details directly relevant to the Site or its immediate surroundings, other than to establish the underlying characteristics of the wider landscape. A more detailed and Site relevant landscape character assessment is provided later in this section.

South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment

4.14 The South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment was undertaken by Land Use Consultants (LUC) in 2001 and identified seven different Landscape Character Types (LCTs) across South Norfolk.

4.15 The Site is in LCT B: Tributary Farmland. This LCT is described as broad transitional landscape defined by plateau uplands and river valleys lying between 20m and 50m AOD and occupies a large extent of the landscape across the whole district.

4.16 Key characteristics of the LCT include:

- *'Shelving and gently undulating landform created by small tributary valleys, with tributary rivers cutting through the glacial till to create a landscape of restrained variety.*
- *Transitional landscape occupying the mid ground between the upland plateaux and the main river valley landscapes providing opportunities for long and framed views.*
- *Tamed and peaceful farmland with scattered small farm woodlands creating a quiet rural landscape.*
- *Dispersed but evenly distributed settlement pattern of small, nucleated villages and small farmsteads, occasionally with large agricultural sheds.*
- *An intricate network of narrow, winding rural lanes often bounded by banks or ditches with a sense of impenetrability.*
- *Tributaries elusive - evident but usually hidden within the landscape by topography or trees.*
- *Remnant parkland, which sometimes related to former deer parks, plus area of common land.*
- *Mixed architectural character comprising modern bungalow development and traditional vernacular architecture with gable ends (predominantly stepped) and other vernacular influences such as brick and flint and isolated churches.*
- *High proportion of important ecological assemblages protected as SSSIs including woodland, and wetland habitats.'*

4.17 The landscape appears flat to gently sloping and is characterised by its numerous tributary streams and small upper reaches of rivers, but due to their small size the water is often not visible in the landscape. The predominant land use is arable farming which is common for Norfolk, and this arable landscape is broken up by deciduous woodland blocks, particularly along the tributary corridors. Hedgerows are sparse but are occasionally varied and overgrown including hawthorn, hazel, field maple, blackthorn and dog rose, and there are some remnant hedgerow trees, woodland belts and tree-cover around settlements.

4.18 Outside of the Norwich Policy Area, the LCT is further split into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The Site is in LCA B4: Waveney Tributary Farmland which covers an extensive area in the southern part of the District.

4.19 Key characteristics of the LCA include:

- *'Transitional landscape occupying the mid ground between the upland plateau (Great Moulton Plateau Farmland) and the main river valley (Waveney Valley).*
- *Undulating landform to the south of the area where it is dissected by tributaries. Land is higher and flatter towards the north of the character area adjoining the Great Moulton Plateau Farmland.*
- *A large-scale open landscape on the higher ground with some distant views. Pockets of enclosure and intimacy associated with the tributaries.*
- *Narrow streams, drainage channels (within grass verges) ponds and moats are characteristic. Ditches occur along road sides and in places divide fields.*
- *Predominantly arable farmland with a varied field pattern. Fields are small to the south of the character area, larger on the higher plateau areas.*
- *Mature hedgerow trees are very distinctive especially large mature oaks.*
- *Hawthorn/ blackthorn hedges divide fields.*
- *Scattered blocks of woodland with some larger blocks having SSSI designations.*
- *Pockets of parkland and remnant parkland occur.*
- *Diversity of ecological assemblages including grassland, wet habitats, woodland, some of which are SSSI.*
- *Round tower and isolated churches are distinctive landmarks. Moats and earthworks are a feature.*
- *Settlement occurs throughout the character area. Villages are frequently linear along roads with some villages set around greens.*
- *Large farm units and processing units are present plus pylons which cut through this area.*
- *The A140 and the Norwich-Diss railway line cut across the character area north south. Otherwise winding rural roads, and sunken lanes dissect the rural area.*
- *A peaceful and rural landscape.'*

4.20 The landscape is predominantly arable farmland with small and medium fields. The narrow tributary valleys are an important local feature of the landscape that provide some enclosure and contrast with the larger scale open landscape on the higher ground. Other features of the landscape include hedgerow trees (particularly large mature oaks) and the numerous streams, ditches, drainage channels, moats and ponds throughout the LCA. Small pockets of woodland are present in the landscape but are more common in the area south of Burston and Dickleburgh.

4.21 Settlement is concentrated in the central area of the LCA with linear villages along roads or at crossroads or set around village greens (for example Burston) while others lack a distinct centre or core. To the east and west of the LCA settlement is less concentrated.

4.22 In the wider landscape, large farm buildings are visually dominant, lines of pylons cross the LCA, and churches are a feature of the area with their towers being significant in rural views. Apart from the A140 which runs north to south bypassing Dickleburgh, the LCA has quiet winding rural roads and sunken lanes.

4.23 The hedgerow network and mature hedgerow trees are noted as being locally important.

4.24 The overall landscape strategy for the LCA is to '*conserve the rural, peaceful quality of the Waveney Tributary Farmland with its strong farmland character, threaded by small tributary watercourses, and mix of more intimate, wooded, enclosed valleys contrasting with more open landscapes*'. The stock of existing hedgerow trees should be maintained with opportunities to replace existing stock. Opportunities should also be sought to reinstate hedgerows where they have been lost.

South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD

4.25 The South Norfolk Place-Making Guide SPD provides the key design principles for each of the identified LCTs and LCAs. The key design principles for LCA B4: Waveney Tributary Farmland include:

- *'Ensure that distinctive small-scale historic field patterns around villages are conserved.*
- *Ensure that new development responds to and reinforces the local vernacular features which contribute to the rural character of the area.'*

Review of Published Conservation Area Appraisals

Burston Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines

4.26 The Burston Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines was published in July 2021.

4.27 The document describes the characteristics of the Conservation Area (CA), including:

- Key buildings within the area include the Church of St Mary, the Crown public house and the Burston Strike School;
- The Strike School is grade II* and of national historic importance to the labour movement;

- The centre of the village retains its rural character with landscaping and open spaces including the churchyard and the village green, trees and hedgerows; and
- Dwellings are predominantly detached with a varied grain typical of a smaller rural village.

4.28 The CA was designated in 1994 and is concentrated upon the two greens of Church Green and Crown Green (although the latter is now a car park for The Crown Public House). The CA includes the Church and the Strike School between these greens and includes development west along Diss Road as far as Valley Farmhouse and north along Mill Road as far as Crown Farm.

4.29 The village has an informal rural character due to a lack of consistency in curtilage size, building orientation, building lines or setbacks. In terms of natural character, it is stated that *'the central areas and approaches to the centre feel quite self-contained without views into surrounding open countryside'*.

4.30 The management guideline in relation to fencing and walls is that *'boundary treatments require careful consideration to ensure the rural character of the village is preserved'*. The existing hedgerows which link to the village green contribute to the village's rural character and boundary treatment such as close boarded fencing would be harmful to the CA's character.

Site and Environs Landscape Character

4.31 A site survey was undertaken to assess the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings and to consider the extent to which this is consistent with the findings of the desktop assessment. The site survey was undertaken on 18th January 2023 on a day with good visibility.

Context

4.32 The Site comprises approximately 8.2ha of grassland to the east of ForFarmers in Burston. The proposed solar farm development area extends to approximately 1.87ha with the remainder of the land comprising grassland within ForFarmers' ownership.

Inset 1: Looking north across the proposed solar development area

Inset 2: Looking west across the proposed solar development area

Topography and Landform

4.33 The Site is broadly flat at approximately 42m AOD. The wider landscape is very gently undulating.

Rivers and Drainage

4.34 There is a ditch along part of the western site boundary, adjacent to ForFarmers, which was wet at the time of survey. There are no other waterbodies or watercourses within the Site.

Land Use, Land Cover and Vegetation

4.35 The Site compromises areas of managed grassland, small blocks of woodland, tree belts and hedgerows.

4.36 The proposed solar farm development area is bound by the east by woodland and hedgerows, to the south by hedgerows, to the west by tree belts, woodland and the ForFarmers complex. To the north the boundary of the solar farm development area is demarcated by the route of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13.

4.37 It is understood that the Site has been used as a cricket ground although that use ceased a long time ago. The pavilion on the western site boundary is a single storey wooden building in a poor state of repair and is no longer in use.

4.38 The surrounding landscape is characterised by flat, agricultural farmland often bound by hedgerows and small blocks of woodland.

Landscape Value

4.39 The method of assessment described in **Appendix B** explains the factors used to inform judgements about landscape value which are derived from GLVIA3 and the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (LI-TGN 02/21). The assessment below considers the value of the Site and the role of the Site within the wider landscape. Assessments of value in relation to other identified landscape receptors are described in **Section 7.0**.

Natural Heritage

4.40 Whilst the Site forms part of the ForFarmers' Nature Reserve, the Site is not subject to any ecological designations and is an area of permissive access land which is managed to promote biodiversity.

Cultural Heritage

4.41 The Site does not have historic landmark features, designed elements, is not part of a historic park or garden and does not demonstrate a particular example of time depth.

4.42 There are no archaeological or cultural heritage interests at the Site and there are no Listed Buildings or scheduled monuments in the wider area that contribute to the landscape character of the Site.

Landscape Condition

4.43 The Site is not in any international, national, or local landscape designations. The Site represents a typical example of managed grassland.

4.44 The Site is devoid of any notable landscape features and is relatively well contained within the wider landscape by existing vegetation along the Site boundaries and built form in its immediate surroundings.

4.45 The condition of the landscape appears to be good, and this is confirmed in the published landscape character assessment.

Associations

4.46 The landscape of the Site has no known associations with renowned artists or writers.

Distinctiveness

4.47 The Site does not show rare, unusual, or distinctive features that differentiate it from other areas of land within the agricultural landscape.

Recreational Value

4.48 The Site is publicly accessible with permission of ForFarmers and there are a number of informal footpaths along the boundaries of ForFarmers Nature Reserve.

4.49 PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 runs through the Site to the immediate north of the proposed solar development area.

Perceptual (Scenic) Quality

4.50 Existing vegetation along the site boundaries creates a sense of enclosure which is not generally appreciable from locations outside of the Site's boundaries. The Site is a pleasant, but unremarkable area generally seen in isolation and visually separate from the wider landscape.

4.51 In the wider area, the Site forms part of a semi-rural landscape, which as a whole has some scenic qualities. The Site is not a distinctive feature in any view.

Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) Value

4.52 The Site is a managed agricultural landscape and cannot be perceived as being wild.

4.53 The ForFarmers complex to the west of the Site is clearly visible from within the Site and detracts from any sense of tranquillity.

Function

4.54 The Site comprises agricultural land and does not perform a clearly identifiable and valuable function.

Conclusions

4.55 With consideration of the factors described above, the Site and landscape within the immediate study area generally is of community value. This is not a 'valued' landscape with regard to paragraph 174 a) of the NPPF.

5.0 Visual Baseline

5.1 The visual influence of the Site has been determined through a combination of topographic analysis and field evaluation of features affecting visibility, such as built form and trees, hedgerows and woodland that filter and screen views of the development. This analysis work determined the potential visibility of the Site and identified visual receptors.

5.2 The field survey considered receptors from where views of the Site are considered likely and what the existing views comprise. The selection of viewpoints is not intended to cover every possible view of the Site, but rather they are representative of a range of receptor types at varying distances and orientations. No access has been sought to private properties or land and where assessments are reported they have been made from the nearest publicly accessible viewpoint.

5.3 Viewpoint photographs were taken in January 2023 when deciduous vegetation was not in leaf. This represents a worst-case scenario in terms of the extent of screening provided by existing vegetation.

Visual Receptors

5.4 Visual receptors i.e. those individuals who would see the Site and may experience a change in their view as a result of the Proposed Development have been identified as follows:

5.5 Users of Public Rights of Way:

- Burston and Shimpling FP13;
- Burston and Shimpling FP11; and
- Burston and Shimpling FP10.

5.6 Motorists, walkers, and cyclists along the following roads:

- Mill Road.

5.7 Residents living in properties along the following roads:

- Bridge Road; and
- Mill Road.

5.8 Other receptors:

- Visitors to ForFarmers; and
- Visitors to ForFarmers Nature Reserve, including users of permissive paths.

LVA Viewpoints

5.9 Viewpoint photography assists understanding of the baseline landscape and visual environment at the Site and in its context and is used to inform the assessment of effects on the visual receptors listed above.

5.10 LVA viewpoints are listed in **Table 2** below, and viewpoint locations are shown on **Figure 5**. **Figures 6.1 to 6.8** provide viewpoint photography showing the existing view in the direction of the Site from viewpoints 1 to 7 below.

Table 2: LVA Viewpoints

Viewpoint Reference and Location		Approximate Easting/Northing	Direction of View and Approximate Distance to Site
1	Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13	613711, 283863	Looking south, 0m
2	Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13	613644, 283865	Looking south-east, m55
3	Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP11	613817, 283759	Looking west, 95m
4	Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP10	613928, 283800	Looking west, 205m
5	ForFarmers Nature Reserve	613718, 284106	Looking south, 0m
6	Mill Road	613482, 283751	Looking east, 100m
7	Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13	614092, 283824	Looking west, 360m

Baseline Views

5.11 The following paragraphs describe existing views towards the Site, experienced by the visual receptors listed above, and with reference to relevant viewpoint photography shown at **Figures 6.1 to 6.8**.

Views from PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 (Viewpoints 1, 2 and 7)

5.12 Views across the Site from PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 vary depending on distance and levels of intervening vegetation.

5.13 From Viewpoint 1 to the immediate north of the proposed solar development area, there are clear views across the full extent of the development area due to a lack of intervening vegetation.

5.14 From Viewpoint 2, slightly further west, there are glimpsed views towards the ground plane of the proposed development area through gaps in the existing woodland. These views would be heavily filtered in summer when deciduous vegetation is in full leaf.

5.15 From Viewpoint 7 to the east, the Site is not discernible beyond intervening field boundary hedgerows.

Views from PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP11 and PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP10 (Viewpoints 3 and 4)

5.16 Views from these PRoWs to the east of the Site are broadly similar. There are some glimpsed views towards the ground plane of the proposed development area and the roof of the pavilion building through gaps in the existing hedgerow along the Site's eastern boundary. These views will be slightly more enclosed in summer when vegetation is in full leaf.

Views from ForFarmers Nature Reserve (Viewpoint 5)

5.17 There is permissive access to the ForFarmers Nature Reserve, although many of the informal footpaths are through areas of woodland.

5.18 From Viewpoint 5, where the footpath emerges into the main field, there are clear views towards the proposed development area, albeit at some distance.

Views from Mill Road (Viewpoint 6)

5.19 Views towards the Site from Mill Road are heavily screened and filtered by existing built form, including the ForFarmers complex, and vegetation.

5.20 From Viewpoint 6, opposite the site access to ForFarmers, there is a glimpsed view of the ground plane of the Site through gaps in existing vegetation. The majority of the Site is screened from view.

Views from residential properties along Bridge Road

5.21 Views towards the Site from residential properties along Bridge Road are generally well screened by existing vegetation within the ForFarmers Nature Reserve. There are two properties who would have filtered views towards the Site from both upper and lower storey windows in winter months, as indicated in Inset 3 below.

Inset 3: View towards existing properties along Bridge Road from PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13

Views from ForFarmers

5.22 From within the ForFarmers Complex views towards the Site are well screened by existing vegetation. There are some glimpsed views across the Site from overflow parking and yard areas.

Views from ForFarmers Nature Reserve

5.23 There are clear views across the Site from the permissive land within ForFarmers Nature Reserve. Views across the Site will vary depending on users' location and some of the informal footpaths are within areas of woodland.

Inset 4: Glimpsed view towards the Site from footpath along the eastern edge of ForFarmers Nature Reserve

6.0 The Proposed Development and Embedded Mitigation

6.1 The Planning Layout submitted with the planning application shows the locations of the proposed solar panels and other ancillary infrastructure.

6.2 The freestanding solar panels are constructed from toughened glass set in an aluminium frame. The panels would be arranged in rows on an east to west alignment facing south to maximise their exposure to sunlight. The panels are mounted on frames with a front height of approximately 0.8m and a maximum back panel height of approximately 2.4m, resulting in a tilt angle of approximately 20 degrees. There will be separation between each row to ensure that the panels will not be overshadowed. The solar panel frames are fixed into position with piles driven into the ground. No concrete foundations are required and little excavation is necessary.

6.3 The solar panels will be sited within existing field boundaries with existing woodland and field boundary hedgerows retained. Rows of panels will be set back from the field boundaries to prevent adjoining vegetation overshadowing the panels. Fencing will be erected around the site boundary to restrict access to the Site. The fence would comprise 2m high deer-proof or similar fencing to minimise visual impact.

6.4 The Low Voltage Photovoltaic Distribution Board (LV PDB) Container would measure approximately 2.9m (h) x 2.44m (w) x 6.0m (l) and would be finished in a dark green, recessive finish.

6.5 Underground cables would be required throughout the site to connect the panels, inverters, and the LV PDB Container.

6.6 The proposed solar development area would be accessed from the ForFarmers site, via an access gate to the north of the existing pavilion building with maintenance tracks running through the site which will be laid in crushed stone or hardcore.

6.7 The existing grassland would be retained beneath the panels and managed.

Embedded Mitigation

6.8 Mitigation planting and recommended management guidelines for the existing vegetation within the site as shown on the General Layout Plan includes:

- All woodland and field boundary hedgerows around the periphery of the site will be retained, and where necessary infilled with native species to enhance the local landscape character.
- Trees within the site along field boundaries will be monitored and pruned accordingly to prevent overshadowing on the panels.
- New native hedgerow planting is proposed along the northern edge of the proposed solar development area to provide screening in views from PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13.
- The proposed solar development is set back from existing mature trees and hedgerows to respect Root Protection Zones.
- Wildflower grass seeding is being introduced to the north of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 to improve biodiversity across the site.

6.9 The assessment of effects described in Sections 7.0 and 8.0 of this LVA considers the embedded mitigation described above.

7.0 Assessment of Landscape Effects

7.1 The assessment of landscape effects considers the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of the potential effect to come to an overall judgement as set out below.

7.2 The assessment of landscape effects during construction and after implementation (Year 1 and Year 15) for each of the identified landscape receptors is summarised below.

Landscape Sensitivity

7.3 Landscape sensitivity combines judgements of the landscape's susceptibility to change of the type of development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as defined in the landscape baseline.

Landscape Value

7.4 As reported in Paragraph 4.56 the Site and its immediate surroundings is of community value.

7.5 The landscape character areas and types identified through reviewing the national and district level assessments are of community value.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

7.6 The susceptibility of a landscape to change is dependent on the characteristics of the receiving landscape and the nature of the proposed development.

7.7 Overall, the Site and surrounding landscape has a medium susceptibility to change as a result of the Proposed Development because:

- Some screening is provided by existing vegetation; and
- There are some opportunities for mitigation.

Landscape Sensitivity

7.8 Landscape sensitivity sequentially combines judgements of the landscape's susceptibility to change to the type of development proposed, and the value attached to the landscape.

7.9 The Site and surrounding landscape are of community value with a medium susceptibility to change and the overall sensitivity of the Site and its immediate surroundings to the proposed development is low.

7.10 The landscape character areas identified at the national and district level are of community value with medium susceptibility. The overall sensitivity to change is low.

Assessment of Landscape Effects during Construction

7.11 It is anticipated that construction would last approximately 4 months. Construction of the Proposed Development would involve the use of plant and machinery within the site boundary. During construction, there would be an increased level of activity within the Site which would have a short-term effect on landscape character at the Site and within its immediate surroundings.

7.12 The following activities during construction will give rise to effects on landscape:

- Establishing laydown areas for materials and components;
- Movement of construction vehicles and plant;
- Construction of access tracks;
- Installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels;
- Installation of the low voltage (LV) photovoltaic distribution board (PVDB) container and other ancillary structures;
- Implementation of landscaping proposals; and
- Installation of deer proof fencing.

7.13 The existing greenfield land would be replaced with a temporary construction site resulting in the solar farm development. There would be a localised extent of change to land use within the site boundary which partially alters the character or nature of the wider landscape.

7.14 All existing vegetation will be retained and protected during construction and as a consequence will remain unaffected by the proposed development. The proposed solar panels will be offset from the existing vegetation to prevent overshadowing on the panels and to protect existing trees' Root Protection Areas.

7.15 The supports for the solar panels will be driven directly into the ground and will not require foundations.

7.16 During construction, there would be a moderate negative magnitude of effect on the site and in its immediate surroundings for the short-term. Given the moderate magnitude of effect predicted, and the medium sensitivity of the landscape, the overall effect of construction activity on the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings would be moderate adverse, reducing with distance.

7.17 Construction activity would introduce some localised disturbance to the national, and county landscape character areas but would not result in the alteration or removal of any landscape elements or features of particular importance to landscape character. There would be no additional temporary effects to landscape character beyond those considered within the assessment of operational stage effects below.

Assessment of Landscape Effects during Operation

7.18 The operational effects of the development occur when all construction activities have ceased, and the development is in use. The assessment takes account of embedded mitigation i.e. mitigation designed into the Proposed Development.

7.19 The Proposed Development would be physically and visually contained by the existing mature hedgerows and woodland that delineate the Site's eastern, southern and western boundaries and nearby field boundaries, which limit intervisibility with the surrounding landscape in all directions.

7.20 The limited intervisibility with the surrounding landscape helps retain the underlying agricultural character of the wider landscape. The sense of openness would decrease locally, but this would be limited to the Site itself, with the existing landscape framework already providing a strong sense of enclosure.

7.21 The Site is predominantly flat. The Proposed Development has a low profile and the pattern of rows of solar panels would follow the changes in the contours thus reflecting the topography of the Site.

In terms of the perceptual qualities of the local landscape, these would remain largely unchanged. Panels will not break the skyline or visually compete with any of the existing landscape features within or around the Site. The solar panels will require limited maintenance and access for personnel to operate and will not be an active or 'busy' land use.

7.22 Land cover across the site would change from grassland to a solar farm including solar panel arrays, container, inverter cabins and access tracks. The proposed development would result in a noticeable change to land use in views from the Site's immediate surroundings.

7.23 The design ensures the trees and hedgerows to the periphery of the Site are retained to aid screening from adjacent land. The retained boundary vegetation will provide a mature landscape setting to the new development and will be supplemented by areas of new hedgerow planting. All existing individual trees, tree groups and hedgerows are to be retained and regularly managed to prevent overshadowing to the solar panels.

7.24 Overall, the proposed development will result in a moderate negative magnitude of effect on the Site and its immediate surroundings. The overall effect on the Site at Year 1 will be moderate adverse. New hedgerow planting is proposed along the northern boundary of the proposed solar development area, with existing hedgerows to be infilled along the eastern and southern boundary. This planting will help to screen and soften views towards the proposed development from the wider landscape and would introduce new landscape structure. The magnitude of effect will remain moderate negative with an overall moderate adverse effect at Year 1, decreasing to low negative with an overall minor adverse effect at Year 15 as proposed planting matures.

7.25 The Site is in NCA 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands. The proposed development would occupy agricultural land that occurs throughout the NCA and contributes to the character of the NCA as a whole. The proposed development would not result in the alteration or removal of any landscape elements or features of particular importance to landscape character. Given these factors the magnitude of effect on NCA 83 will be low in a limited geographical area. Overall effects are judged to be minor adverse in a limited geographical area at both Year 1 and Year 15.

7.26 The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements to LCA B4: Waveney Tributary Farmland, which is characterised by arable farmland with small and medium fields. The hedgerow network and mature hedgerow trees are noted as being locally important. The Proposed Development will be perceived as an incongruous element but the key characteristics of the LCA will be unaffected. This will cause a discernible change to landscape character in the long term. This will result in a low negative magnitude of effect at Year 1. The proposed enhancements to the hedgerows within the Site, whilst improving their quality and condition, will not be sufficient to reduce the magnitude of effect in the long-term at Year 15. The overall effect will be minor adverse.

7.27 None of the PRoWs abutting or leading through the Site would have to be permanently closed or diverted. The Proposed Development therefore would not have any direct long term effects upon these assets. The Public Footpath within the Site would be retained and enclosed by new hedgerow planting.

Assessment of Landscape Effects during Decommissioning

7.28 The solar farm would be operational for approximately 25 years following the date of energisation. The proposed development is reversible; at the end of its operational life it will be dismantled and removed, and the Site reinstated to previous conditions.

7.29 Effects during the de-commissioning period will be similar to the construction period, and will include:

- A de-commissioning compound will be set up;
- Dismantling and removal of all installed infrastructure;
- All disturbed and excavated areas will be reinstated following completion of de-commissioning activities. Any concrete foundations (if used) and underground cabling will be broken up or left in situ and covered to reinstate ground cover;
- Any disruption to the fields because of de-commissioning activities will be re-seeded with a suitable grassland mix where necessary; and
- The Site will be reinstated to previous use

Table 1: Landscape Receptor Overall Effect

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
The Site and its immediate surroundings	Low	Construction	Moderate negative	**Moderate adverse**
		Year 1	Moderate negative	**Moderate adverse**
		Year 15	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
NCA 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands.	Low	Construction	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
		Year 1	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
		Year 15	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
LCA B4: Waveney Tributary Farmland	Low	Construction	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
		Year 1	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
		Year 15	Low negative	**Minor adverse**

8.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

8.1 The following paragraphs assess the sensitivity of the views potentially affected, the magnitude of the predicted effect, and the overall effect on each view assessed, which would result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.

8.2 The assessment of visual effects during construction and after implementation (Year 1 and Year 15) for each of the identified visual receptors is summarised in **Table 6**.

Sensitivity of Visual receptors

8.3 The sensitivity of visual receptors depends on the susceptibility of the visual receptor to changes in views as a result of the development and the value of the view (as set out in the method in **Appendix B**).

Susceptibility to Change

8.4 Walkers and cyclists using the local PRoWs and other recreational routes are judged to be of high susceptibility to change as their attention is likely to be focussed on views of the landscape. Residents also have a high susceptibility to change as they are static receptors.

8.5 Road users within the study area have limited views over wider landscape and the routes are not promoted in any way for their scenic value. Road users have a low susceptibility to change.

8.6 Visitors to ForFarmers have a low susceptibility to change as their focus is not on the landscape.

Value of View

8.7 Views from local roads, PRoWs, residential properties, and local businesses will be valued by residents and workers at a community level.

Receptor Sensitivity

8.8 In accordance with Method **Table 8 at Appendix B**, the sensitivity of each identified visual receptor is set out in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Viewpoint(s)	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13	1, 2, 7	Community	High	Medium
Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP11	3	Community	High	Medium
Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP10	4	Community	High	Medium
Users of Mill Road	6	Community	Low	Low
Residents of properties along Bridge Road	-	Community	High	Medium
Residents of properties along Mill Road	-	Community	High	Medium
Visitors to ForFarmers	-	Community	Low	Low
Visitors to ForFarmers Nature Reserve, including users of permissive paths	5	Community	High	Medium

Visual Effects during Construction

8.9 During construction visual impacts will arise from activity on the Site; the establishment of site compounds and parking; the storage of materials; trenching for cabling; and the erection of the solar panels and other ancillary infrastructure. The effects of construction works will be short term and temporary. All construction works will be carried out in accordance with good practice to avoid, reduce or limit the extent of adverse visual effects as far as possible.

8.10 The greatest levels of change during construction will be experienced by those receptors on PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 to the north of the proposed solar development area. This is due to the proximity to the Site and the extent of construction works that will be visible to receptors.

8.11 The movement of construction vehicles, personnel and materials would be the only additional construction phase effect on visual amenity of note. Persons using PRoWs close to the Site and users of ForFarmers Nature Reserve will generally be the only visual receptors where there would be any notable view of these construction elements.

8.12 For all other visual receptors the construction stage effects would be the same as at reported during operation.

8.13 The construction stage would be of relatively short duration and any potential effects would be similar or lower to those identified during the long term operation of the Proposed Development. Therefore, this assessment focuses on the longer term operational stage of the proposals.

Visual Effects during Operation

8.14 The spatial layout of the solar array has been designed to retain existing features on Site such as hedgerows and woodland which are part of the character and context of the surrounding countryside. New hedgerow planting is proposed along the northern boundary of the solar development area.

8.15 Following the completion of the proposed development the greatest levels of effects will still be experienced by those receptors closest to the Site. Such effects have been mitigated by the design of the proposed development in conjunction with supplementary planting, which over time will become established and help to filter and soften views.

Users of Public Rights of Way

8.16 At Year 1 post-completion there will be clear views across the proposed development from PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 to the immediate north of the Site (Viewpoint 1). The proposed 2.4m high panel arrays and the LV PVDB container will be seen beyond the perimeter fence along the development area's northern boundary. As the proposed hedgerow matures, this will screen and soften views of the proposed development. Further east and west the proposed development will be partially or fully screened by existing vegetation. The magnitude of effect will be medium negative at Year 1 with an overall moderate adverse effect. As a result of the proposed hedgerow planting the magnitude of effect will be low negative at Year 15 with an overall minor adverse effect.

8.17 From PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP11 and PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP10 (Viewpoints 3 and 4) there will be glimpsed views towards the proposed development at Year 1, beyond the existing hedgerow to be retained. The magnitude of effect at Year 1 will be low negative with an overall minor adverse effect. Views will include the solar panels and perimeter fencing. Existing hedgerows are proposed to be bolstered, which will increase the extent of screening in the long-term. By Year 15 the proposed development will be barely discernible, and the overall effect will be negligible.

Road Users

8.18 The proposed development will be barely discernible from Mill Road beyond existing vegetation and built form. The magnitude of effect will be negligible with an overall negligible effect.

Residential Properties

8.19 Residents of properties along Mill Road and Bridge Road will have filtered views of the proposed development in winter months, partially screened by existing garden vegetation. Views from properties along Mill Road are generally limited to the paddock areas to the rear of the properties. The magnitude of effect will be low negative with an overall minor adverse effect at Year 1, decreasing to negligible by year 15 as proposed planting matures.

Other Receptors

8.20 The proposed development will be barely discernible from ForFarmers beyond intervening vegetation to be retained. The magnitude of effect and overall effect will be negligible at both Year 1 and Year 15.

8.21 Views towards the proposed development from the permissive land within ForFarmers Nature Reserve will vary depending on location and levels of intervening vegetation. From most locations within the main field the proposed 2.4m high panel arrays and perimeter fence will be visible in the short to medium term. As the proposed hedgerow along the northern development edge matures, this will screen and soften views of the proposed development. From informal footpaths through the woodland areas there will be glimpsed views towards the proposed development, which will be increasingly filtered over time by the proposed hedgerow. The magnitude of effect will be medium negative at Year 1 with an overall moderate adverse effect. As a result of the proposed hedgerow planting the magnitude of effect will be low negative at Year 15 with an overall minor adverse effect.

Visual Effects during Decommissioning

8.22 The proposed development is reversible, at the end of its operational life it will be dismantled and removed, and the site reinstated to previous conditions.

8.23 Effects during the de-commissioning period will be similar to the construction period, and will include:

- A de-commissioning compound will be set up;
- Dismantling and removal of all installed infrastructure;
- All disturbed and excavated areas will be reinstated following completion of de-commissioning activities. Any concrete foundations (if used) and underground cabling will be broken up or left in situ and covered to make up levels;
- Any disruption to the field as a result of de-commissioning activities will be re-seeded with a suitable grassland mix (where necessary); and
- The Site will be reinstated to previous use.

Table 6: Visual Receptor Overall Effect

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13	1, 2, 7	Medium	Construction	Medium negative	**Moderate adverse**
			Year 1	Medium negative	**Moderate adverse**
			Year 15	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP11	3	Medium	Construction	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 1	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 15	Negligible	**Negligible**
Users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP10	4	Medium	Construction	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 1	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 15	Negligible	**Negligible**
Users of Mill Road	6	Low	Construction	Negligible	**Negligible**
			Year 1	Negligible	**Negligible**
			Year 15	Negligible	**Negligible**
Residents of properties along Bridge Road	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 1	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 15	Negligible	**Negligible**

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Residents of properties along Mill Road	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 1	Low negative	**Minor adverse**
			Year 15	Negligible	**Negligible**
Visitors to ForFarmers	-	Low	Construction	Negligible	**Negligible**
			Year 1	Negligible	**Negligible**
			Year 15	Negligible	**Negligible**
Visitors to ForFarmers Nature Reserve, including users of permissive paths	5	Medium	Construction	Medium negative	**Moderate adverse**
			Year 1	Medium negative	**Moderate adverse**
			Year 15	Low negative	**Minor adverse**

9.0 Conclusions

General

9.1 This report presents the assessment of the anticipated effects on landscape character and views of the Proposed Development of land to the east of ForFarmers, Burston, to accommodate solar PV panels.

9.2 The proposals involve the construction of a solar farm, access track, container, and other ancillary infrastructure, enclosed by stock proof fencing and additional landscaping. The most evident element of the proposals would be the solar panels and perimeter fencing. The solar farm would be on grassland that is not subject to any landscape designations.

9.3 The assessment considers the effects of the completed scheme on landscape character and visual amenity from the surrounding properties, roads, and the Public Rights of Way network; from construction to completion. The effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual amenity have been assessed in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual and Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3).

9.4 The nature and magnitude of landscape and visual effects will change during the various stages of the Proposed Development and have been assessed during the construction and operational phase. To take into account the establishment of the Proposed Development (in particular proposed vegetation), the operational phase has been assessed in the short to medium term (from Year 1 to Year 15) and long-term (Year 15 and beyond). The assessment of effects is based on the submitted planning application drawings.

Landscape Baseline and Landscape Effects

9.5 The assessment of landscape effects has been carried out using the established hierarchy of published Landscape Character Assessments from national to district level. In conjunction with field work sensitive landscape receptors within the study area have been identified.

9.6 At the district level the Site is in LCA B4: Waveney Tributary Farmland. The landscape is predominantly arable farmland with small and medium fields. The narrow tributary valleys are an important local feature of the landscape that provide some enclosure and contrast with the larger scale open landscape on the higher ground. Other features of the landscape include hedgerow trees (particularly large mature oaks) and the numerous streams, ditches, drainage channels, moats, and ponds throughout the LCA. Small pockets of woodland are present in the landscape but are more common in the area south of Burston and Dickleburgh.

9.7 The study has assessed the potential effects on landscape character and concluded that there would be some localised moderate adverse effects at the site level in the short and medium term. The long-term effect would be minor adverse.

9.8 Existing hedgerows and woodland to the boundaries of the Site and the existing grassland would be retained. An additional hedgerow would be planted along the northern boundary of the proposed development area and other gaps in existing hedgerows would be infilled.

Visual Baseline and Visual Effects

9.9 A series of representative views surrounding the Site have been identified through desktop and field studies. Seven representative viewpoints have been assessed from publicly accessible locations including roads and from PRoW.

9.10 The Site is flat and enclosed by existing vegetation which means that views towards the Site are limited to the near to middle distance. The identified and assessed visual receptors represent close to very close receptors, often located within the Site or near its perimeter.

9.11 The greatest level of visual effects will be experienced by the closest receptors: primarily users of PRoW Burston and Shimpling FP13 and visitors to the ForFarmers Nature Reserve. During construction and completion of the Proposed Development, the overall effect on these receptors will be up to moderate adverse. Such effects will be partially mitigated by new hedgerow planting.

Conclusion

9.12 This LVA has found that the effects of the Proposed Development will be restricted to a localised geographical area and would not result in substantial harm to landscape character beyond the Site boundary, nor would there be substantial detrimental effects to visual amenity across a wide area.

References

Data Sources

- Ordnance Survey maps (1:25,000 Explorer Series);
- Historic Ordnance Survey maps;
- Aerial images; and
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC Map) (https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx).

Legislation and Policy

- The National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021;
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk;
- Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document;
- Development Management Policies Document (DMPD); and
- South Norfolk Place-Making Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

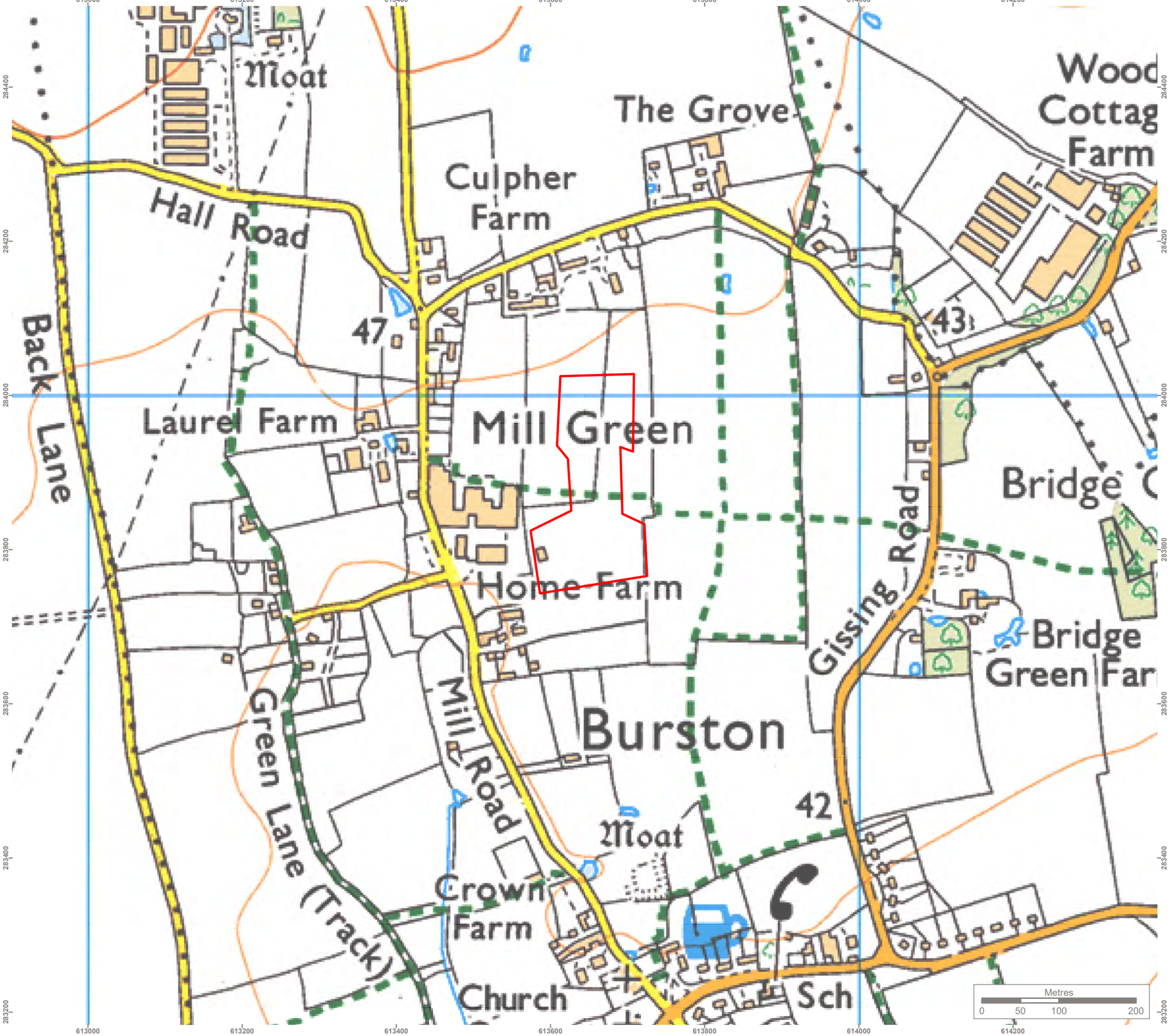
Landscape Character Documents

- National Character Area Profile 83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands; and
- South Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, 2001.

Best Practice and Guidance

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition 2013);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England 2014;
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19. Landscape Institute, September 2019;
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations. Technical Guidance Note 02/21. Landscape Institute, May 2021; and
- BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations (BSi, April 2012).

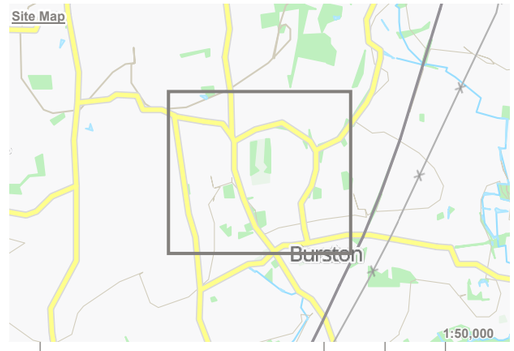
APPENDIX A: LVA Figures



KEY

Site boundary

Site Map



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

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Project
ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green

Title
Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Drawing Number
G9776.001

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CB	LF	1:5,000 @ A3	23/01/2023

KEY

Site boundary

Site Map

Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

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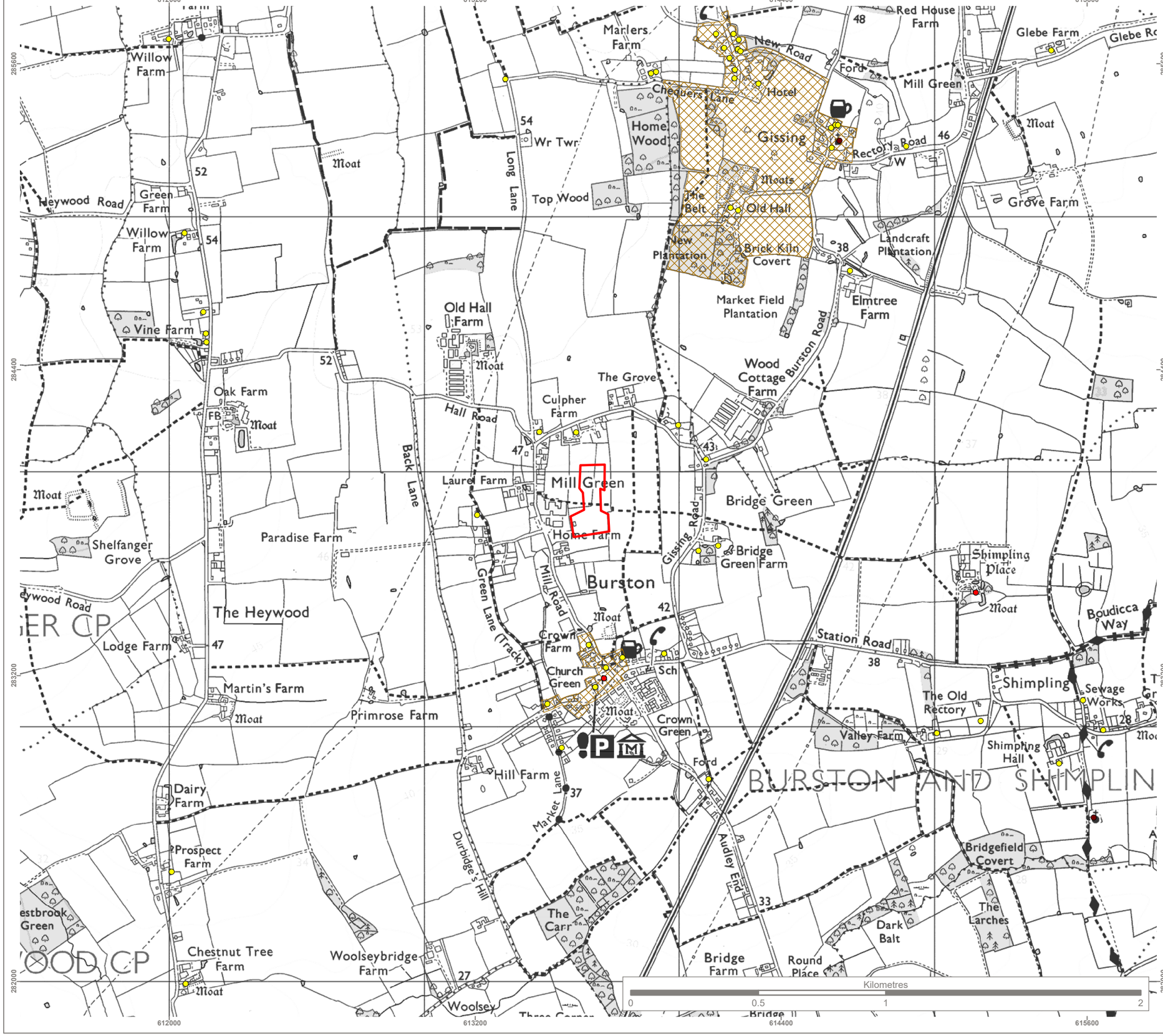
Project
ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green

Title
Figure 2 - Site Location Plan
Aerial

Drawing Number
G9776.002

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CB	LF	1:2,500 @ A3	23/01/2023



KEY

Site boundary

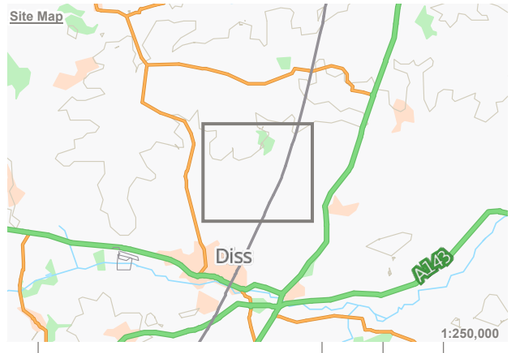
Heritage Designations

- Grade I listed building
- Grade II* listed building
- Grade II listed building
- Conservation Area

Note

This map contains data from the following sources:
- Natural England © Natural England copyright [2023]
- Historic England © Historic England copyright [2023]

Site Map



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Project
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Title
Figure 3 - Environmental Designations

Drawing Number
G9776.003

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
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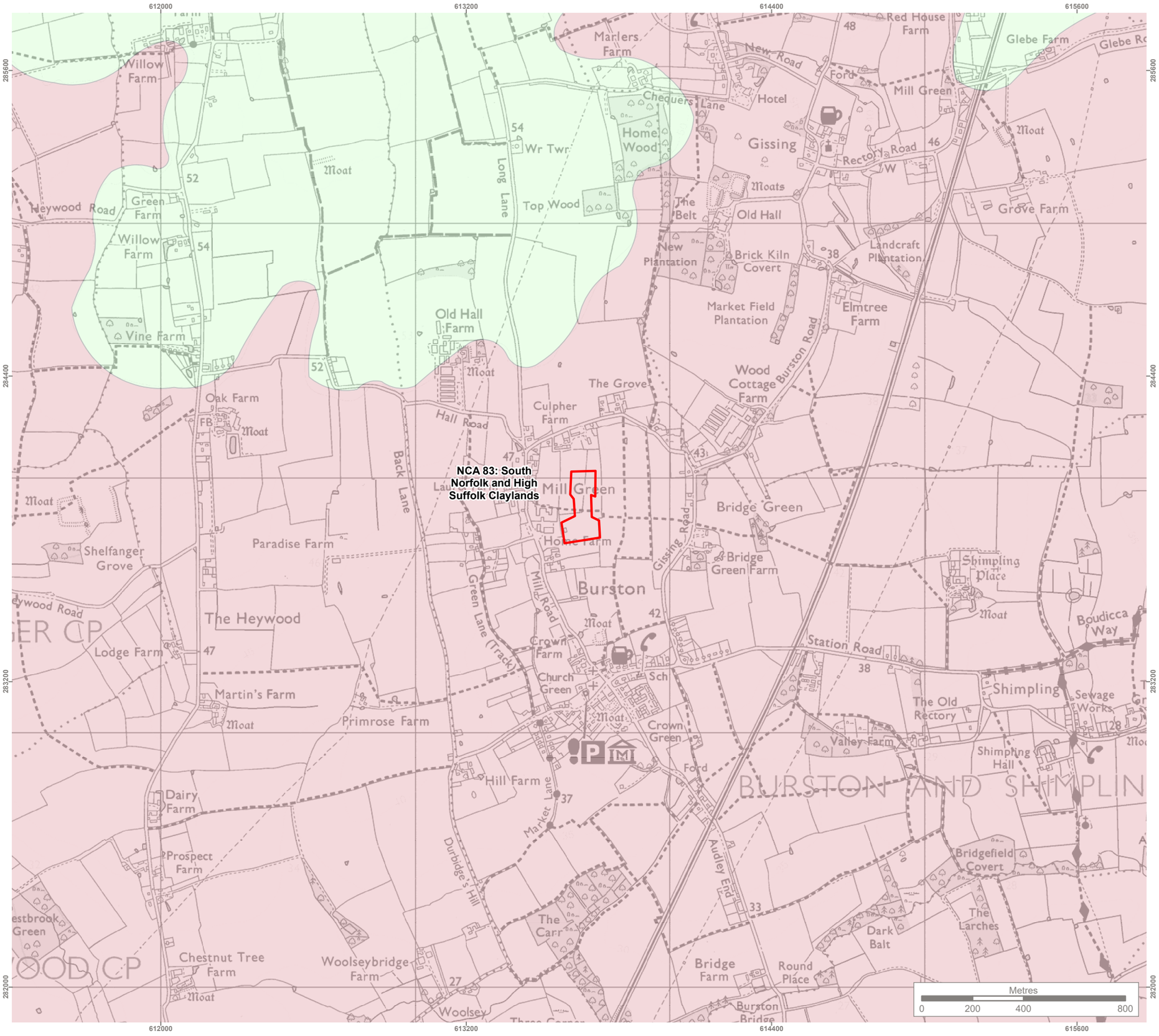

KEY

Site boundary

National Character Area boundary

South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment

E2 - Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

B4 - Waveney Tributary Farmland

Note:
This map contains data from the following sources:
- Natural England © Natural England Copyright [2023]
- Landscape Character Areas and River Valleys, 2012
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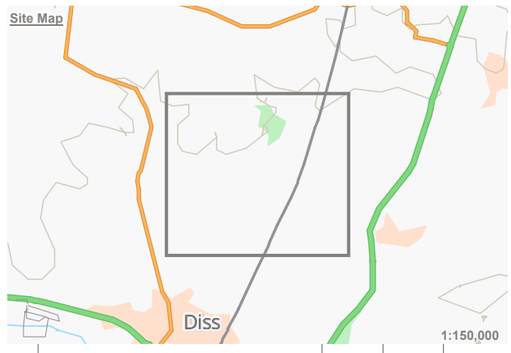
Site Map



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Title
Figure 4 - Landscape Character Area

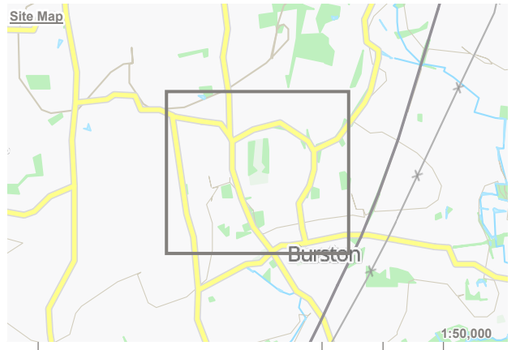
Drawing Number
G9776.004

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CB	LF	1:15,000 @ A3	06/02/2023

KEY

- Site boundary
- Viewpoint location
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Site Map



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Project
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Title
Figure 5 - Viewpoint Location Plan

Drawing Number
G9776.005

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CB	LF	1:5,000 @ A3	06/02/2023

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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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Project : ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green LVA
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Figure Number: 6.2 - Viewpoint 1b
Drawing Number: IN9776.001 - Sheet 2 of 8

Visualisation Type : Type 1
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FoV and Display Size: FoV: 90° x 27° (Baseline) 96%
Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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Project : ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green LVA
Title: Photosheets - Type 1
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Drawing Number: IN9776.001 - Sheet 3 of 8

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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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Project : ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green LVA
Title: Photosheets - Type 1
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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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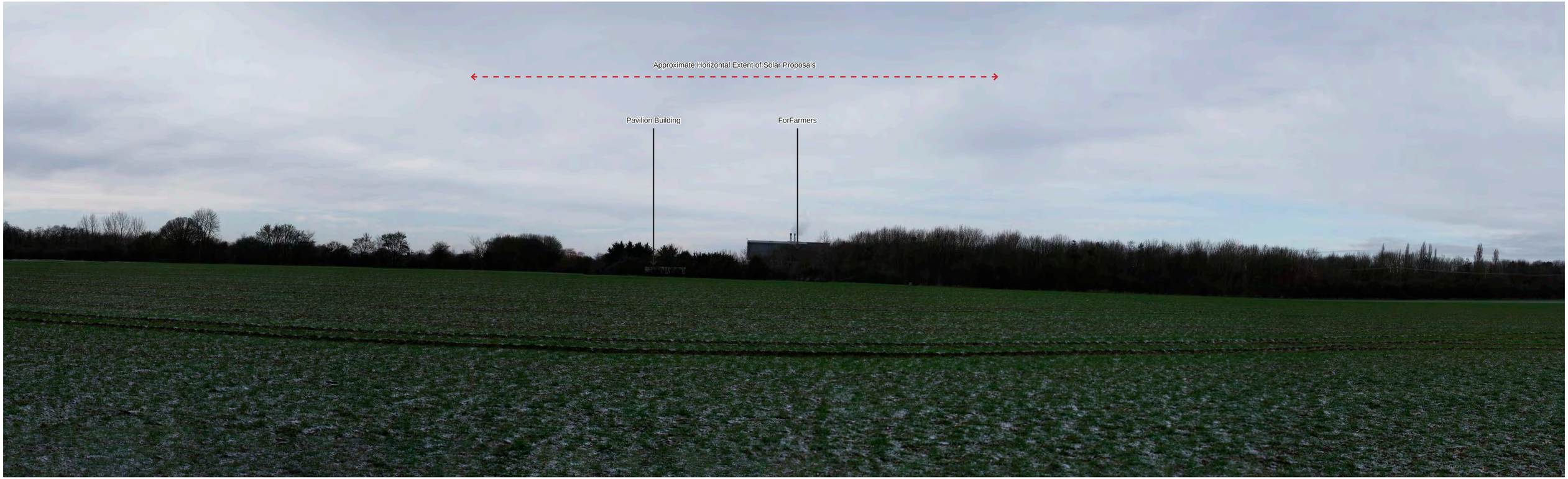

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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

Camera Location Map

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Project : ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green LVA
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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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Project : ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green LVA
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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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Project : ForFarmers Solar, Mill Green LVA
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Drawing Number: IN9776.001 - Sheet 8 of 8

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Viewing Distance and Projection: Comfortable arms length. Cylindrical

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APPENDIX B: LVA Method

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) Method

1.1 This method statement is a description of the method used by The Environment Partnership (TEP) Limited to assess the effect of proposed development on landscape character and on views.

1.2 In the following paragraphs, landscape is referred to and the acronym LVA (Landscape and Visual Appraisal) is used, but it also can encompass townscape aspects of assessment where relevant.

1.3 This method is used for development for which Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required and is used to provide an appraisal of effects on landscape and views arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development.

1.4 The method is based on the assessment stages and guidance contained in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment - Third Edition', Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013 (GLVIA3).

1.5 There are five stages to the method of assessment of landscape and visual effects described in GLVIA3, Chapters 5 and 6. These are:

- Scope;
- Establishing the landscape and visual baseline;
- Predicting and describing landscape and visual effects;
- Assessing the significance of landscape and visual effects; and
- Judging the overall significance of landscape and visual effects.

Scope of the LVA

1.6 In accordance with paragraph 5.2 of GLVIA3 *"Scoping should…identify the area of landscape that needs to be covered in assessing landscape effects. This should be agreed with the competent authority, but it should also be recognised that it may change as the work progresses, for example as a result of fieldwork, or changes to the proposal. The study area should include the site itself and the full extent of the wider landscape around it which the proposed development may influence in a significant manner. This will usually be based on the extent of Landscape Character Areas likely to be significantly affected either directly or indirectly. However, it may also be based on the extent of the area from which the development is potentially visible, defined as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility, or a combination of the two."*

1.7 The scope of the appraisal is discussed within the Method section of the LVA.

Landscape Appraisal

Establishing the Landscape Baseline

1.8 The appraisal will consider planning policy and guidance relevant to the site, the surrounding area, the proposed development, and landscape (and views). It also will consider landscape, heritage and nature conservation designations, and published character assessments relevant to the area in which the development is proposed.

1.9 Site assessment of landscape character and of the proposed development will involve a visit to the area by car and on foot. In accordance with GLVIA3 Paragraph 5.15 fieldwork will check the applicability of published character assessments within the study area, identifying variations in character at a more detailed scale. The landscape within the study area will be experienced, and landscape characteristics and features recorded from publicly accessible locations only.

Landscape Value

1.10 The value of the landscape potentially affected by the proposed development will be evaluated as part of establishing the landscape baseline.

1.11 Highly valued landscapes typically are identified by international level designations such as World Heritage Sites, and are landscapes closely associated with an artist or writer of international renown; and include national level designations such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Landscapes of local value may be identified by designations in the local planning process such as Areas of Great Landscape Value and Special Landscape Areas, although planning authorities may adopt a 'criteria-based' approach to landscape protection and enhancement.

1.12 Undesignated landscapes and features are also valued.

1.13 Paragraph 5.19 of GLVIA3 identifies that following a review of existing landscape designations *"the value attached to undesignated landscapes also needs to be carefully considered and individual elements of the landscape – such as trees, buildings or hedgerows – may also have value."*

1.14 GLVIA3, Box 5.1 under paragraph 5.28, describes a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. These include landscape quality (condition); scenic quality; rarity; representativeness; conservation interests; recreation value; perceptual aspects, and associations.

1.15 Table 1 of the LI's Technical Guidance Note 02-21 (LI-TGN 02/21): 'Assessing landscape value outside national designations', also identifies a range of factors that can be considered when identifying landscape value, including;

- Natural heritage;
- Cultural heritage;
- Landscape condition;
- Associations;
- Distinctiveness;
- Recreational value;
- Perceptual Aspects (Scenic);
- Perceptual Aspects (Wildness and tranquillity); and
- Functional.

1.16 Guidance contained within LI-TGN 02/21 is stated as being the LI's current reflection on the subject of landscape value and is intended to be complementary to GLVIA3.

1.17 The above factors set out in GLVIA3 and LI-TGN 02/21 will be considered when determining landscape value. The review of published local landscape character assessments also will inform judgements on landscape value.

1.18 Paragraph 5.19 of GLVIA3 states that *"landscapes or their component parts may be valued at the community, local, national or international levels."* This word-scale has been used to define the level of landscape value in the baseline assessment although an intermediate scale between local and national has been identified.

1.19 This method recognises the importance of a hierarchy of landscape designations to landscape value but also recognises, in **Table 1** below, the factors identified by GLVIA3 in Box 5.1 and identified by LI-TGN 02/21.

1.20 **Table 1** below provides typical criteria used when making judgements on landscape value. Not all criterion need apply when giving a specific evaluation rating.

Table 1- Landscape Value Criteria

Landscape Value	Typical Example
International	Land within a World Heritage Site where the scenic qualities of the particular landscape in question contributes to the designation. A landscape closely associated with an artist or writer of international renown (for example, Monet's garden at Giverny).
National	Land within a National Park or AONB where the scenic qualities of the particular landscape in question are consistent with the designation. A landscape closely associated with an artist or writer of national renown (many such landscapes are also designated a National Park or AONB, for example Constable's connections with the Dedham Vale AONB or Wordsworth's connections with the Lake District National Park).
Regional	A landscape which has a scenic quality and rarity, or recreational or tourist offer, which results in its renown at a regional or county-level.
Local	A landscape which has scenic quality and rarity, or a recreational or tourist offer, which results in its renown at a borough or district-level. A landscape with a local plan designation which relates to landscape quality, or a local plan designation which relates to a conservation interest (historic or wildlife) where the landscape contributes to the designation.
Community	Landscapes which are valued by residents and workers within the community, but for which there is no particular indication of a higher value.

Landscape Sensitivity

1.21 The sensitivity of the landscape will be assessed with consideration to the landscape's susceptibility to change to the type of development proposed (i.e. the degree to which the landscape can accommodate the proposed change without suffering detrimental effects on its character), and the value attached to the landscape.

1.22 The landscape appraisal will consider the susceptibility of the landscape to change, which is dependent on the characteristics of the receiving landscape and the type and nature of the development proposed. The judgement on the susceptibility of a landscape to the change proposed is recorded as high, medium or low.

1.23 The susceptibility of the landscape to change from the proposed development will be evaluated using the typical criteria in **Table 2** below. Not all criterion need apply when giving a specific evaluation rating.

Table 2- Susceptibility to Change Criteria

Susceptibility to Change	Typical Criteria
High	• There is no existing built development present in the landscape; and/or • There is limited or no screening by trees, woodland, landform, and/or built form; and/or • The landscape cannot accommodate the proposed development without suffering substantial detrimental effects on its character.
Medium	• There is some built development present in the landscape; and/or • There is some screening by trees, woodland, landform, and/or built form; and/or • The landscape generally is able to accommodate the proposed development without suffering substantial detrimental effects on its character.
Low	• There is large-scale built development present in the landscape; and/or • There is screening by trees, woodland, landform, and/or built form; and/or • The landscape is able to accommodate the proposed development without suffering substantial detrimental effects on its character.

1.24 The assessment of landscape sensitivity will be assigned to the landscape potentially affected by the proposed development, with consideration to the typical criteria identified in **Table 3** below.

Table 3- Criteria used to Assess Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	The landscape has: • High susceptibility to change and is of international, national or regional value; or • Medium susceptibility to change and is of international or national value.
Medium	The landscape has: • High susceptibility to change and is of community or local value; or • Medium susceptibility to change and is of local or regional value; or • Low susceptibility to change and is of national or international value.
Low	The landscape has: • Medium susceptibility to change and is of community value; or • Low susceptibility to change and is of community, local or regional value.

Magnitude of Effect

1.25 An assessment will be made as to whether the proposed development would be in keeping with existing character or to what extent it would be discordant or out of keeping with landscape character.

1.26 The forecast magnitude of effect on landscape character will be assessed. This assumes that where there would be little change in landscape character a low magnitude of effect would be forecast; where a pronounced difference would arise, a high magnitude of effect would be forecast; and that a moderate effect would be greater than low but not as great as high. The typical criteria is established below.

1.27 **Table 4** below describes the criteria used to assess the magnitude of effect on landscape. The magnitude of effect can be adverse or beneficial.

Table 4 – Criteria used to Assess the Magnitude of Effect on Landscape Character

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Criteria
High	Major alteration to key features or characteristics in the existing landscape and/or the introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic. Typically this would be where there would be a great scale of change to the character of the landscape for the long or medium-term.
Moderate	Partial alteration to key features or characteristics of the existing landscape and/or the introduction of prominent elements. Typically this would be where there would be a: • notable scale of change to the character of the landscape for the medium and long- term; or a • great scale of change on the landscape for the short-term.
Low	Minor alteration to key features and characteristics of the existing landscape and/or the introduction of features which may already be present in the landscape. Typically this would be where there would be a: • notable or low scale of change to the character of the landscape for the short-term; or a • low scale of change on the landscape in the medium or long-term.
Negligible	A very minor alteration to key features or characteristics of the existing landscape. Typically this would be where the scale of change on landscape character would be barely perceptible in the short, medium or long-term.

Judging the Overall Effect on Landscape Receptors

1.28 GLVIA3 paragraph 5.53 advises that: *"to draw final conclusions about significance the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the landscape effects need to be combined, to allow a final judgement about whether each different effect is significant or not."*

1.29 Whilst the proposed development subject to this landscape appraisal is not EIA development, the separate magnitude and sensitivity judgements have been combined to reach an overall level of, or degree of effect. This accords with the guidance provided in the GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13. In this appraisal, the overall level or degree of effect is referred to as the 'overall effect'.

1.30 The assessment of the overall effect of the proposed development on the landscape is not an absolute scale. GLVIA3 paragraph 3.23 states that the assessment of significance *"is an evidence-based process combined with professional judgement", and that the basis of these judgements "is transparent and understandable, so that the underlying assumptions and reasoning can be understood by others."*

1.31 Paragraph 5.56 of GLVIA3 advises that it is reasonable to say that the effects of the greatest significance are likely to be those which would result in *"major loss or irreversible negative (adverse) effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes."*

1.32 At the other end of the spectrum effects that could be determined as being less significant would relate to *"reversible negative (adverse) effects of short duration over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value."*

1.33 The overall effect on landscape character is determined through the sequential combination of judgements on the landscape sensitivity and magnitude of effect. The overall direction of effect on landscape character can be beneficial (enhance the landscape),adverse (at odds with or harmful to the landscape's key features or character) or neutral, and considers the typical criteria presented in **Table 5**.

1.34 The typical criteria do not represent every assessment scenario which may be encountered. There always will be an element of professional judgement needed, which must be applied on a case-by-case basis.

1.35 Generally, each of the typical criteria in the table below, would not on their own result in the level of overall effect judgement attributed to it. Rather the overall effect judgement is more likely to be based on a combination of factors, which influence the magnitude of effect and landscape sensitivity.

Table 5 – Criteria Used to Assess the Overall Effect on Landscape

Overall Effect	Typical Scenario
Major	An effect of major significance generally is recorded where a high magnitude of effect occurs to a high or medium sensitivity receptor.
Moderate	An effect of moderate significance generally is recorded where a moderate magnitude of effect occurs to a high or medium sensitivity receptor.
Minor	An effect of minor significance generally is recorded where a low magnitude of effect occurs to a high, medium or low sensitivity receptor.
Negligible	An effect of negligible significance generally is recorded where a negligible magnitude of effect occurs to a high, medium or low sensitivity receptor.

Visual Appraisal

1.36 The appraisal of how views may be affected is based on an initial desk study of Ordnance Survey mapping and aerial photography online to establish from where the proposed development may be visible. This is undertaken with reference to contours, spot heights and trees and built form identified on maps.

1.37 During site assessment, land with theoretical views of the proposed development is visited and visual receptors are identified where views of the proposed development are considered possible. The site visit will consider how views towards the site may change if the proposed development was constructed.

1.38 Where reference is made in the appraisal to likely effects on views from private property, this has been judged from the nearest publically available viewpoint/s.

Receptor Sensitivity

1.39 Visual receptors are people who potentially would have a view of the proposed development. The sensitivity of a visual receptor depends on the susceptibility of the visual receptor to change and the value of the view.

Susceptibility to Change

1.40 Paragraph 6.32 of GLVIA3 advises that the susceptibility of different visual receptors to potential changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- *"the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- *the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations."*

1.41 Paragraph 6.35 of GLVIA3 advises that *"each project needs to consider the nature of the groups of people who will be affected and the extent to which their attention is likely to be focused on views and visual amenity. Judgements about the susceptibility of visual receptors to change should be recorded on a scale (for example high, medium or low) but the basis for this must be clear, and linked back to evidence from the baseline study."*

1.42 Susceptibility to change generally will be assigned to visual receptors as shown in **Table 6** below.

Table 6 – Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change Criteria

Receptor	**Susceptibility to Change**
Residents of residential properties	High
Users of public rights of way (PRoW) and other recreation routes including long distance footpaths and national, regional and local cycle routes	High
Users of Public Open Space/visitor attractions where surroundings are important to the experience	High

Receptor	Susceptibility to Change
Users of Golf Courses	Medium
Rail Passengers	Medium
Motorists on scenic tourist routes	Medium
Motorists on roads other than on scenic tourist routes	Low
Users of Sports Pitches	Low
Workers in their workplace where setting is not important to quality of working life	Low

Value of the View

1.43 Judgements about the value attached to the views experienced is considered in the context of the value placed on a scene, alternatives available and the relative scenic quality of a view. Most views are appreciated by the person experiencing them as they are preferable to not having a view and they provide some interest.

1.44 The judgement of the value of a view is subjective and in accordance with paragraph 6.37 of GLVIA3 takes account of:

- *"recognition of the value attached to particular views, for example in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations; and*
- *indicators of the value attached to views by visitors, for example through reference to a view in a guidebook or on a tourist map, provision of facilities for their enjoyment (such as parking places, sign boards and interpretative material) and references to them in literature and art that indicates a highly valued view, which often can be experienced by many people."*

1.45 Views will be ascribed a value using the scale set and typical examples set out in **Table 7** below.

Table 7 - Value of Views Experienced by Visual Receptors

Value of View	Typical Example
International	• Public views experienced to and from a World Heritage Site, in recognition of the importance of a World Heritage Site at an International scale.

Value of View	Typical Example
National	• Public views experienced to and from a National Park, AONB or NSA, in recognition of the scenic quality of views and the contribution of views to the special qualities of a nationally designated landscape. • Public views from national footpaths and cycle routes, in recognition of their wider recreational use, national importance and the value likely to be attached to views by visitors.
Regional	• Public views from walks, cycle routes or public open spaces publicised at a county or regional level, in recognition of their wider recreational use and the importance of views to the enjoyment and appreciation of these recreational assets by visitors from the county or wider region.
Local	• Public views from walks, cycle routes, or public open spaces publicised at a local or borough level, in recognition of their recreational use and the importance of views to the enjoyment and appreciation of these recreational assets by visitors from the local area. • Public views from or within a local plan designation relating to landscape quality or a conservation interest (such as a Conservation Area or Local Nature Reserve).
Community	• Other public views and all private views.

Visual Receptor Sensitivity

1.46 Receptor sensitivity will be assigned to receptors in accordance with **Table 8** below.

Table 8- Criteria Used to Assess Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
High	The visual receptor or view has: • High susceptibility to change and is of international, national or regional value; or • Medium susceptibility to change and of international or national value.
Medium	The visual receptor or view has: • High susceptibility to change and is of local or community value; • Medium susceptibility to change and of regional or local value; or • Low susceptibility to change and of international or national value.

Receptor Sensitivity	Typical Criteria
Low	The visual receptor or view has: • Medium susceptibility to change and is of community value; or • Low susceptibility to change and of regional, local or community value.

Magnitude of Effect

1.47 A judgement on the likely magnitude of effect on views is assessed, based on the proportion of the view that would change and the extent to which there would be an appreciable difference to the existing view. As for landscape character, a scale of low, moderate and high is used to forecast anticipated effects.

1.48 **Table 9** describes the criteria used to assess the magnitude of effect on views. The direction of effect can be positive, negative or neutral.

Table 9 – Typical Criteria Used to Assess the Magnitude of Effects on Views

Magnitude of Effect	Typical Criteria
High	Major alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of elements considered totally uncharacteristic in the view. Typically this would be: • where a development would be seen in close proximity with a large proportion of the view affected with little or no filtering; or • where there would be a great scale of change from the present situation for the long or medium-term.
Moderate	Partial alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of prominent elements in the view. Typically this would be: • where a development would be seen in views for the long or medium-term where a moderate proportion of the view is affected; • where there may be some screening, which would minimise the scale of change from the present situation; or • where a development would be seen in close proximity with a large proportion of the view affected for the short-term.
Low	Low alteration to the existing view and/or the introduction of features, which may already be present in views. Typically this would be: • where a moderate or small proportion of the view would be affected for the short-term; • where only a small proportion of the view is affected in the medium-term or long-term; • where the development would be visible for the long-term in distant views; • where the medium-term or long-term effect is reduced due to a high degree of filtering and/or screening; or • where there is a low scale of change from the existing view.
Negligible	Very low alteration to the existing view. Typically this would be: • where, in the short, medium or long-term, a development would be barely perceptible within a long distance panoramic view; or • where a very small proportion of the view is affected. The scale of change from the existing view would be barely perceptible.

Judging the Overall Effect on Views

1.49 In accordance with paragraph 6.42 of GLVIA3 "*to draw final conclusions about significance the separate judgements about the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the visual effects need to be combined, to allow a final judgement about whether each different effect is significant or not". "Significance of visual effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its specific location."*

1.50 Whilst the proposed development subject to this visual appraisal is not EIA development, the separate magnitude and sensitivity judgements have been combined to reach an overall level of, or degree of effect. This accords with the guidance provided in the GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13. In this appraisal, the overall level or degree of effect is referred to as the 'overall effect'.

1.51 Large-scale changes which introduce new, discordant or intrusive elements into the view of a sensitive receptor are considered to be more likely to result in greater overall effects than small changes or changes involving features already present in the view or changes in the views of less sensitive receptors. Changes in views from recognised and important viewpoints, such as scheduled monuments or outdoor tourist attractions, or from important amenity routes, such as long-distance footpaths or national cycle routes, are likely to result in greater overall effects.

1.52 The overall effect on views is determined through the sequential combination of judgements on visual receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effect. The overall effect can be adverse, beneficial or neutral. A neutral effect is one in which there is no noticeable beneficial or adverse effect, or in which the effect is considered neither beneficial nor adverse overall, having made a 'net equation' judgment that takes into account both beneficial and adverse impacts.

1.53 The typical criteria shown in **Table 10** will be used to judge overall effect.

Table 10 – Criteria Used to Assess the Overall Effect on Views

Overall Effect	Typical Criteria
Major	An effect of major significance generally is recorded where a high magnitude of effect occurs to a high or medium sensitivity receptor.
Moderate	An effect of moderate significance generally is recorded where a moderate magnitude of effect occurs to a high or medium sensitivity receptor.
Minor	An effect of minor significance generally is recorded where a low magnitude of effect occurs to a high, medium or low sensitivity receptor.
Negligible	An effect of negligible significance generally is recorded where a negligible magnitude of effect occurs to a high, medium or low sensitivity receptor.

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