



# Dean Moor Solar Farm

## Environmental Statement: Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual Impact

on behalf of **FVS Dean Moor Limited**

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**DEAN MOOR SOLAR FARM  
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT  
CHAPTER 7 – LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL  
PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE EN010155  
PREPARED ON BEHALF OF FVS DEAN MOOR LIMITED**

**The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations  
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## 7 Environmental Statement (ES) Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This Chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) – which comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA'), reports on the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the environment with respect to Landscape and Visual matters.
- 7.1.2 The Chapter assesses the beneficial and adverse effects and significance of effects arising from the Proposed Development on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right, and on people's views and visual amenity.
- 7.1.3 This Chapter has been undertaken and overseen by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute ('CMLI').
- 7.1.4 The following appendices support this Chapter **[REF: 6.3]**:
- Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology;
  - Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects;
  - Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects;
  - Appendix 7.4: Cumulative Assessment;
  - Appendix 7.5: View Location Photosheets;
  - Appendix 7.6: Visualisations;
  - Appendix 7.7: Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('OLEMP');
  - Appendix 7.8: Arboricultural Impact Assessment ('AIA');
  - Appendix 7.9: Glint and Glare Assessment; and
  - Appendix 7.10: Stakeholder Engagement.
- 7.1.5 The following figures support this Chapter. Full figures are provided separately **[REF: 6.2]** and extracts are embedded in the text, as appropriate:
- Figure 7.1: Landscape Designations Plan;
  - Figure 7.2a: Published Landscape Character (Cumbria County Council);

- Figure 7.2b: Published Landscape Character (Lake District National Park);
- Figure 7.3: Topography Plan;
- Figure 7.4a: Zone of Theoretical Visibility DTM;
- Figure 7.4b: Zone of Theoretical Visibility DTM with View Locations;
- Figure 7.5a: ZTV of Work No.1 – Solar PV Infrastructure with View Locations;
- Figure 7.5b: ZTV of Work No. 2 – Grid Connection Infrastructure with View Locations;
- Figure 7.5c: ZTV of Work No. 2a – POC Mast Siting Area with View Locations; and
- Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5: Landscape Strategy Plan.

## 7.2 Legislation and Planning Policy Context

### Legislation

7.2.1 This assessment has been undertaken considering current legislation, together with national, regional, and local plans and policies. Relevant legislation applicable to the Proposed Development include:

- National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949<sup>1</sup>;
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981<sup>2</sup>;
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997<sup>3</sup>;
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000<sup>4</sup>;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006<sup>5</sup>;
- European Landscape Convention 2006<sup>6</sup>; and
- Environment Act 2021<sup>7</sup>.

### Planning Policy

7.2.2 Figure 7.1: Landscape Designations Plan illustrates the landscape planning designations applicable to the Site and surrounding area.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Government (1949). National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

<sup>2</sup> UK Government (1981), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

<sup>3</sup> UK Government (1997), Hedgerows Regulations 1997.

<sup>4</sup> UK Government (2000), Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

<sup>5</sup> UK Government (2006), Natural environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

<sup>6</sup> The Council of Europe (2006), European Landscape Convention 2006.

<sup>7</sup> UK Government (2021), Environment Act 2021.

7.2.3 Landscape planning policies which are relevant to the Site and the Proposed Development are summarised below.

## National Policy

### Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy

7.2.4 The following paragraphs from NPS EN-1<sup>8</sup> Chapter 5.10 Landscape and Visual are considered of relevance to the Proposed Development:

- Paragraph 5.10.4: *'Landscape effects arise not only from the sensitivity of the landscape but also the nature and magnitude of change proposed by the development, whose specific siting and design make the assessment a case-by-case judgement.'*
- Paragraph 5.10.5: *'Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation.'*
- Paragraph 5.10.6: *'Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.'*
- Paragraph 5.10.7: *'National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [now referred to as National Landscapes] have been confirmed by the government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes. Projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints.'*
- Paragraph 5.10.8: *'The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas which may have impacts within them. In these locations, projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further the purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate, and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.'*
- Paragraph 5.10.16: *'The applicant should carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment and report it in the ES, including cumulative effects...Several guides have been produced to assist in addressing landscape issues.'*
- Paragraph 5.10.17: *'The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the proposed project. The applicant's assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these assessments in local development documents in England...'*

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<sup>8</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (2024), Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).

- Paragraph 5.10.19: *‘The applicant should consider landscape and visual matters in the early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established. This will allow the applicant to demonstrate in the ES how negative effects have been minimised and opportunities for positive benefits or enhancement have been recognised and incorporated into the design, delivery and operation of the scheme.’*
- Paragraph 5.10.20: *‘The assessment should include the effects on landscape components and character during construction and operation. For project which may affect a National Park, The Broads or an AONB the assessment should include effects on the natural beauty and special qualities of these areas.’*
- Paragraph 5.10.21: *‘The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impact on views and visual amenity.’*
- Paragraph 5.10.24: *‘Applicants should consider how landscapes can be enhanced using landscape management plans, as this will help to enhance environmental assets where they contribute to landscape and townscape quality.’*
- Paragraph 5.10.27: *‘Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure within its development site and wider setting. The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme, as will sympathetically landscaping and management of its immediate surroundings.’*

7.2.5 Chapter 5.11: Land Use, Including Open Space, Green Infrastructure, and Green Belt, at paragraph 5.11.27, states that:

*‘Existing trees and woodlands should be retained wherever possible. The applicant should assess the impacts on, and loss of, all trees and woodlands within the project boundary and develop mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and any risk of net deforestation as a result of the scheme. Mitigation may include, but is not limited to, the use of buffers to enhance resilience, improvements to connectivity, and improved woodland management.’*

### **NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)**

7.2.6 The following paragraphs from EN-3<sup>9</sup> Chapter are considered of relevance to the Proposed Development:

- Paragraph 5.10.27: 2.10.96: *‘Landscape and visual impacts should be considered carefully pre-application. Potential impacts on the statutory purposes of nationally designated landscapes should form part of the pre-application process.’*
- Paragraph 2.10.97: *‘Applicants should carry out a landscape and visual assessment and report it in the ES. Visualisations may be required to*

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<sup>9</sup> Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (2024), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).

*demonstrate the effects of a solar farm on the setting of heritage assets and any nearby residential areas or viewpoints.'*

- Paragraph 2.10.100 and 2.10.101: *'The applicant should consider as part of the design, layout, construction, and future maintenance plans how to protect and retain, wherever possible, the growth of vegetation on site boundaries, as well as the growth of existing hedges, established vegetation, including mature trees within boundaries. Applicants should also consider opportunities for individual trees within the boundaries to grow on maturity. The impact of the proposed development on established trees and hedges should be informed by a tree survey and arboricultural/hedge assessment as appropriate.'*
- Paragraph 2.10.131: *'Applicants should consider the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges, trees and woodlands.'*
- Paragraph 2.10.132: *'Applicants should aim to minimise the use and height of security fencing. Where possible applicants should utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to assist in site security or screen security fencing.'*
- Paragraph 2.10.133: *'Applicants should minimise the use of security lighting. Any lighting should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises impact.'*

### **Allerdale Local Plan, July 2014**

7.2.7 On 1 April 2023, local government in Cumbria changed. Allerdale Borough Council ('ABC'), along with Cumbria County Council, was replaced by Cumberland Council, as a Unitary Authority. Local planning policies from the previous ABC and are set out in Part 1 of the ABC Local Plan<sup>10</sup> (Strategic and Development Management Policies). Relevant landscape planning policies are summarised below.

- Policy S19 – Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Technologies: *'Renewable energy proposals are expected to provide supporting evidence including landscape, visual and environmental assessments and to demonstrate that any negative impacts have been made acceptable. Where mitigation is required to make impacts, acceptable these will, where necessary, be secured through Planning Obligations. Developers will be expected to work with local communities from an early stage and deliver benefits to the local area where the proposal is located.'*
- Policy S24 – Green Infrastructure: *'The Council will promote the creation, enhancement, maintenance, and protection of a range of green infrastructure assets that contribute to a diverse network of natural and man-made green and blue spaces, links, habitats and landscapes, which is accessible to all. The Council will work with partners and developers to:*

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<sup>10</sup> Allerdale Borough Council (2014), Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1)



- Seek to ensure green infrastructure is woven into new development wherever possible.
  - Protect, manage, enhance, and create key natural and semi-natural habitats and wildlife corridors, including watercourses, wetlands, woodlands (including ancient woodland and trees) and parklands.
  - Seek the protection and rehabilitation of landscapes and habitats damaged or lost by development or land management practices.
  - Explore the potential of existing and new green infrastructure assets to provide opportunities for renewable energy schemes.’
- Policy SP33 - Landscape: *‘The landscape character and local distinctiveness of the Plan Area shall be protected, conserved and, wherever possible, enhanced. Cumbria Landscape Character Assessment Toolkit (or successor documents) will be used to inform the detailed assessment of individual proposals. Proposals for development should be compatible with the distinctive characteristics and features of Cumbria’s landscape types and sub-types. Proposals will be assessed in relation to:*
    - *Locally distinctive natural or built features.*
    - *Visual intrusion or impact.*
    - *Scale in relation to the landscape and features.*
    - *Historic patterns and attributes.*
    - *Biodiversity features, ecological networks, and semi-natural habitats; and*
    - *Openness, remoteness, and tranquillity.’*
  - Policy S35 - Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity: *‘The Council will seek positive improvements to the quality of the natural environment through sustainable development resulting in net gains for biodiversity across the Plan Area.’*
  - Policy DM17 – Trees, Hedgerow and Woodland: *‘Wherever possible, existing trees, hedgerows and woodland that are considered important to the local community, contribute positively to character of the area and/or are of nature conservation value will be protected. Proposals that involve felling, removal or are considered likely to cause demonstrable harm to existing trees, hedgerows and woodland will normally be resisted, unless acceptable mitigation or compensation measures can be secured.’*

## Lake District National Park Local Plan

7.2.8 Within the Lake District National Park (‘LDNP’) Local Plan<sup>11</sup>, Policy 20: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy states that:

*‘When assessing proposals for decentralised or renewable energy schemes, we will take into account the cumulative impacts both within the Lake District and that which is visible beyond its boundary.’*

<sup>11</sup> Lake District National Park Authority (2021), Lake District National Park Local Plan 2020-2045.

## Guidance and Standards

### The Landscape Institute

- 7.2.9 This Chapter is based on professional experience and the LI / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ('IEMA') *'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2013) (GLVIA3). Technical Guidance Note (LITGN-2024-01); Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment<sup>12</sup> was published in August 2024. The TGN provided a compilation of clarifications on GLVIA3 which included:
- *'Statements of clarification from 2013-2015, previously held on the Landscape Institute website.'*
  - *'Answers provided by LI's GLVIA Panel to questions raised during the Landscape Institute's December 2020 webinar 'GLVIA Misconceptions and Best Practice'.'*
  - *'Answers provided by the LI's GLVIA Panel to questions raised by Members via responses to the 2021 survey about GLVIA3 and sent to the Landscape Institute Technical email address.'*
- 7.2.10 The methodology for this Chapter accords with relevant aspects of the LI's TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals<sup>13</sup> (this TGN is under review by the LI at the time of writing).
- 7.2.11 Cognisance of TGN 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations<sup>14</sup>, and TGN 04/2020 Infrastructure<sup>15</sup> has also been taken.

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<sup>12</sup> Landscape Institute (2024). LITGN-2024-01 Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

<sup>13</sup> Landscape Institute (2019). Technical Guidance Note TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals.

<sup>14</sup> Landscape Institute (2021). Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations.

<sup>15</sup> Landscape Institute (2020). Technical Guidance Note 04/2020 Infrastructure.

## Lake District National Park Partnership's Management Plan 2020 - 2025

- 7.2.12 The LDNP Partnership's Management Plan<sup>16</sup> seeks to set out the key challenges which face the LDNP and how the various organisations will work together to address them.
- 7.2.13 Various strategies have been laid out, and these include:
- *'Protect and conserve the extraordinary beauty and harmony of the Lake District landscape and attributes of Outstanding Universal Value and Special Qualities:*
    - *By using and promoting the Lake District Landscape Character Assessment... to inform land management and development management decisions to achieve a consistent, evidence-based approach.*
  - *Recognise the importance of nuclear and low carbon energy industries in West Cumbria and other major economic investments in Cumbria. Where they do not prejudice the Lake District, its setting, Special Qualities, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, or visitor economy we will assist with the development of proposals for associated infrastructure.'*

## 7.3 Assessment Methodology

- 7.3.1 The methodology used for undertaking the Landscape and Visual assessment is set out in detail at Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology. It is based on GLVIA3 and various technical guidance notes and statements of clarification, combined with professional experience and judgement.
- 7.3.2 The assessment of landscape and visual effects aims to be as objective as possible, however, as explained in paragraph 2.23, Page 21 of GLVIA3:
- 'Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction... much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.'*

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<sup>16</sup> Lake District National Park Partnership (2021). Lake District National Park Partnership's Management Plan 2020-2025.

- 7.3.3 In accordance with GLVIA3, this Chapter considers the effects on landscape (including landscape character) and people's views / visual amenity as separate assessment components. The assessment has been undertaken with an emphasis on the identification of likely significant landscape and visual effects which arise because of the Proposed Development, using an approach which is in proportion to the project and nature of likely effects.
- 7.3.4 The Chapter is based on the Proposed Development as described in Chapter 3 – Site and Proposed Development Description **[REF: 6.1]**, and as illustrated on Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan **[REF: 6.2]**, which is aligned to the Works Plans **[REF: 2.3]** being secured through the DCO.
- 7.3.5 The Chapter considers effects of the Proposed Development on:
- Landscape character;
  - Landscape elements (the 'fabric' or features, which contribute to character); and
  - Views available to people and their visual amenity, from publicly accessible viewpoints.
- 7.3.6 The assessment of effects makes comparison with the baseline year 2023/2024, during which time the Site surveys were carried out (See Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology, Section 3.1 Baseline Data Collection and Review for further information on-Site surveys).

### **Study Area**

- 7.3.7 The spatial scope of this Chapter was determined through desktop study combined with a visit to the Site and surrounding area to determine the Site's existing visual envelope and the extent to which the Proposed Development is likely to be visible from within the surrounding area. The PEIR initially considered a 7.5km search area (referred to as the 'wider search area'), which was based on professional experience of other developments of similar nature. This has been carried through to the ES figures for completeness, and to illustrate the iterative assessment process.

- 7.3.8 A preliminary computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility plan ('ZTV') was prepared which established the worst-case scenario theoretical extent to which the Proposed Development is likely to be most visible from within the surrounding area. The nature of the landform, intervening vegetation, and built form means that actual views of the Proposed Development are likely to be less than indicated on the preliminary ZTV. Further details on the methodology are available from Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology.
- 7.3.9 Professional experience of other assessments and site appraisals for this type of development has shown that effects on landscape and visual receptors would typically not be significant beyond 2.5km from a site. However, given the sensitivity of the LDNP / The English Lake District World Heritage Site ('WHS'), its landscape and visual amenity has also been considered within this assessment. The detailed Study Area therefore comprises 2.5km from the Site boundary for all landscape and visual receptors aside from those within or associated with the LDNP / WHS which lies approximately 3.2km east. The 2.5km Study Area is illustrated on all baseline figures (Figures 7.1 – 7.3).
- 7.3.10 The spatial scope, together with a review of potential visual receptors, guided the selection of representative view locations that are included within the visual impact assessment for this Chapter.

### **Baseline Data Collection, Survey and Photographic Record**

- 7.3.11 A baseline data review and desktop study established the baseline landscape and landscape character information, including topography, landscape planning context and published sources of landscape character. Sources of information included:
- Ordnance Survey ('OS') Open Data for mapping<sup>17</sup>;
  - OS 1:25,000 plans showing networks of Public Rights of Way<sup>18</sup>;

<sup>17</sup> Ordnance Survey, OS Open Data Downloads. Available at: <https://osdatahub.os.uk/downloads/open> Accessed January 2024

<sup>18</sup> Microsoft Bing, Bing Maps. Bing Maps - Directions, trip planning, traffic cameras & more Accessed January 2024

- Google Earth Pro for aerial photography<sup>19</sup>;
- MAGIC geographic environmental information by Defra for designations<sup>20</sup>;
- Natural England for National Character Area profiles<sup>21</sup>;
- Local Authority landscape character assessments;
- National Cycle Network ('NCN') maps<sup>22</sup>; and
- Local Authority local plans.

7.3.12 Following the baseline data collection and desktop study, a landscape and visual survey of the Site and surrounding area was undertaken (see Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology) during winter and late summer (March and October 2023) by a CMLI. The purpose of the survey was to inform the assessment of predicted landscape and visual effects, and to identify and confirm key views. The survey also enabled confirmation of the selected representative view locations as a basis on which to undertake the visual impact assessment. An additional Site survey was undertaken during October 2024 to capture photography which has informed the assessment of cumulative effects (see section 7.8: Cumulative Effects) in relation to Lostrigg Solar which is proposed to be located directly north/northwest of the Proposed Development.

7.3.13 During summer months visual effects of the Proposed Development will be reduced because of intervening trees being in full leaf. A winter visual survey therefore demonstrates the 'worst case' visual effects.

### Assessment

7.3.14 The methodology utilised for the assessment, including methods for determining receptors' value, sensitivity, magnitude of change and levels of significance of effects, is set out in detail in Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology.

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<sup>19</sup> Google, Google Earth Pro. Downloadable at: Earth Versions – Google Earth

<sup>20</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, MAGIC. Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> Accessed January 2024

<sup>21</sup> Natural England, National Character Area profiles. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-character-area-profiles-information-for-local-decision-making> Accessed January 2024

<sup>22</sup> Sustrans, National Cycle Network. Available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network/> Accessed January 2024

## **Assessment Stages**

- 7.3.15 A three-stage assessment process is adopted for this Chapter, in accordance with GLVIA3. First, the sensitivity of receptors is assessed (combining judgement on value and susceptibility). Second the magnitude of impact likely to result from the Proposed Development is determined (combining judgement on size/scale, geographical extent, duration, and reversibility). Lastly, the level of significance of the identified landscape or visual effect on the receptor is assessed (combining judgements of sensitivity and magnitude). The type of effect is also determined.

## **Types of Effects**

- 7.3.16 The principal sources of change to landscape receptors and people's views and visual amenity arise from increased or a change in activity, the introduction of new built form and/or structures, and changes to existing landscape elements either through removal or introduction of new features.
- 7.3.17 Changes will be direct, or indirect. Direct effects are those which result directly from the Proposed Development; whereas indirect, or secondary, effects may arise as a consequential change resulting from the Proposed Development, for example: changes to off-site and downstream vegetation, because of alterations to a drainage regime.
- 7.3.18 Changes may also be beneficial or adverse. Beneficial effects have a positive influence on the receptor (enhancement); alternatively, adverse effects have a negative influence on the receptor (degradation).
- 7.3.19 It is possible that the type of effect may be judged to be neutral. Where a neutral type of effect is judged to occur for landscape receptors there would be a change to the landscape features and/or characteristics, but the change would be entirely consistent or in keeping with the existing landscape character or landscape features, such that the existing character or features are maintained, and the change would not cause deterioration or enhancement of the character or features. Where a neutral type of effect is judged to occur for visual receptors there would be a



change to the composition of the view, but that change would be consistent or entirely in keeping with the existing elements of the baseline view, maintain the composition and quality of the existing baseline view, and would not enhance or deteriorate the baseline view.

### **Methodology for the Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects**

- 7.3.20 The assessment of landscape effects considers how the Proposed Development would affect the landscape features or components of the Site (the 'landscape fabric', for example: landform; trees, woodland, and hedgerows; open spaces, amenity spaces, public realm, watercourses or waterbodies), and the key landscape characteristics which contribute to its distinctive character (the 'landscape character'). Additionally, the assessment considers landscape effects upon the green infrastructure network function of the Site, including connectivity provided by Long Distance Walking Routes, PRoW, and the NCN.
- 7.3.21 The assessment of visual effects considers how the Proposed Development will affect the views available to people and their visual amenity. Visual receptors always comprise people; and include users of PRoWs, and recreational routes, public open spaces, public realm, or other outdoor recreational facilities, and travellers in vehicles who may be visiting, living or working within the Study Area, and their views at particular places.
- 7.3.22 A methodical consideration of each effect upon each identified landscape and visual receptor is undertaken, to determine the significance of effects, in terms of:
- Value and susceptibility to change (sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor); and
  - Size / scale, geographical influence, duration and reversibility (magnitude of the landscape or visual impact).



## Methodology for the Assessment of Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects

7.3.23 Definition of cumulative landscape and visual effects was first set out in the 2002 edition of the GLVIA<sup>23</sup>, and since then has been further refined as a result of windfarm development by guidance produced by NatureScot (previously Scottish Natural Heritage), and is used for other forms of development, and not only in Scotland. The current definitions, as set out in 'Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments'<sup>24</sup>, are referred to in paragraph 7.3 of GLVIA3 and for the purpose of the Chapter are interpreted and defined as follows:

- Cumulative effects - *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together'*.
- Cumulative landscape effects - effects that *'can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it'*.
- Cumulative visual effects - effects caused by combined visibility which, *'occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint'* and/or sequential effects which, *'occur when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see different developments'*.

7.3.24 In accordance with the emphasis in the EIA Regulations, the cumulative landscape and visual effects focus on cumulative effects which are likely to be significant, rather than providing a comprehensive listing of every conceivable cumulative landscape and visual effect that might occur. The approach must be reasonable and proportionate to the Proposed Development.

## Assessment of Level of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

7.3.25 The level of significance of landscape and visual effects is a matter of professional judgement, which is informed by the combination of the receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effects. Substantial and Major levels of significance of effect are considered to be 'significant'. Minor and

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<sup>23</sup> Landscape Institute (2002), Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

<sup>24</sup> Scottish Natural Heritage (NatureScot) (2012), Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments.

Negligible levels of significance of effect are identified as ‘not significant’.

Moderate levels of significance can be either ‘significant’ or ‘not significant’, with professional judgement used to determine the outcome, with a full explanation provided within the individual receptor assessment.

- 7.3.26 The judgements of significance are not judgements of acceptability, because they do not consider the policy context, which is a matter for decision-makers.

## Consultation

### Scoping Report

- 7.3.27 A request for a Scoping Opinion was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate which included the proposed scope, approach and methodology for the Chapter. The Planning Inspectorate’s Scoping Opinion was adopted on 14 September 2023. Scoping comments relevant to the Chapter and the assessor’s responses to those comments, are set out below in Table 7.1. Comments were also received from stakeholders, including the Council and representatives of the LDNPA. Relevant comments from these stakeholders are also addressed herein.

**Table 7.1: Planning Inspectorate EIA Scoping Opinion Comments**

Para.	Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant’s Response
Para. 7.9.1 and Table 7.3	The English Lake District WHS and LDNP Lake District Character Areas LDNP Special Qualities	The Inspectorate did not agree that these matters could be scoped out due to insufficient detail on siting of various features. The ES should therefore include an assessment of these features.	This Chapter has set out the baseline for the WHS / LDNP, its special qualities, and relevant character areas as receptors.  An assessment was undertaken at the PEIR stage which identified receptors that are not predicted to experience significant effects. These receptors have been subsequently discounted from this Chapter as part of that process.
Para. 7.9.1 and Table 7.3	Listed buildings (setting of)	<i>‘The ES should include an assessment of these given there is insufficient evidence to scope them out.’</i>	Listed buildings (setting of) are considered in ES Chapter 6 - Cultural Heritage and excluded from this Chapter to avoid duplication.

Para.	Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
Para. 7.9.1 and Table 7.3	Scheduled Monuments (setting of)	The Inspectorate did not agree to scope out the setting of scheduled monuments as impacts as a result of the Proposed Development are unclear.	Scheduled Monuments (setting of) are considered in ES Chapter 6 - Cultural Heritage and excluded from this Chapter to avoid duplication.
Para. 7.9.2 and Table 7.3	National Character Area ('NCA')	The Inspectorate agreed this matter could be scoped out given the limited footprint of the Site within the wider character area.	Consideration of the NCA is set out in the baseline section of this Chapter but no further assessment has been undertaken.
Para. 7.9.2 and Table 7.3	Recreational routes / PRow – landscape effects	The Inspectorate did not agree these matters could be scoped out, unless it is agreed with the relevant consultation bodies, as it was not understood how the Proposed Development would affect the views of potential users.	Recreational receptors (PRow and NCN) as visual receptors have been considered in the ES. View locations to represent these receptors have been agreed with stakeholders.
Para. 7.9.2 and Table 7.3	Open Access Land – landscape effects	The Inspectorate did not agree these matters could be scoped out as it was unclear what visual impact the Proposed Development would have on recreational users of Open Access Land, including High Park south of the Site and areas within the LDNP.	Recreational receptors (Open Access Land) as visual receptors have been considered in the ES. View locations to represent these receptors have been agreed with stakeholders.
Para. 7.9.3 and Table 7.3	Other views and visual amenity beyond the 2.5km Study Area	The Inspectorate did not agree these matters could be scoped out given the insufficient evidence to show significant effects would not occur.	View locations have been agreed with statutory bodies. These are focussed on locations within the Study Area; however, a number of sensitive receptors from locations beyond the Study Area have also been identified and assessed within this Chapter
Para. 7.9.4 and Table 7.3	Lighting	The Inspectorate considers that the ES should assess lighting effects on landscape and visual receptors, as well as ecological receptors such as bats, or demonstrate that no likely effects will occur. The ES should include a detailed description of lighting design and the measures taken to avoid or minimise lighting impacts on ecological receptors.	The Site is not located within a protected dark sky reserve and visual receptors are isolated to a few residential properties and local PRowS. The existing agricultural land use includes occasional night-time activities with task lighting.  Night-time activities for the Proposed Development will be limited and no permanent lighting is anticipated. This is discussed in ES Chapters 3 and 5 and control measures are detailed in the Outline Construction and

Para.	Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
			<p>Environmental Management Plan ('OCEMP') (Appendix 5.1) for the construction phase and the Outline Operational Management Plan ('OOMP') (Appendix 3.1) for the operational phase.</p> <p>Significant effects on the existing character of the night-sky and on visual receptors are not anticipated and therefore these are not considered further in this Chapter.</p> <p>The Council agreed to the effects of lighting being scoped out of the ES in their Scoping consultation response (Paragraph 18.18 Lighting within Topics to be scoped out, ES Appendix 2.2) [REF: 6.3].</p>
Para. 7.3.8, 7.8.3, Figure 7.1, Appx. 7.1 and Table 7.2	View locations	<i>'The selection and location of view locations should be agreed with the relevant consultation bodies to ensure they are comprehensive. Attention was drawn to the [LDNP] response regarding the need for additional viewpoints within the National Park.'</i>	The Applicant has agreed view locations with statutory bodies.
Para. 7.2.1, Appx. 7.1, Figure 7.1 and 7.2	ZTV	<i>'The ZTV and its analysis should be justified within the ES and consulted upon with the relevant stakeholders. The Final ZTV, and subsequently the LVIA, should ensure a worst-case scenario is assessed based on the maximum parameters of the Proposed Development.'</i>	The assessment has considered maximum parameters and the worst-case scenario with reference to the Proposed Development.
Section 7.2	Study Area	<i>'The ES should justify the extent of the Study Area/s with reference to recognised professional guidance and the extent of the likely impacts, informed by fieldwork and relevant models or approaches such as the ZTV. The Applicant should agree the Study Areas with relevant consultation bodies where possible.'</i>	The Applicant achieved agreement regarding the Study Area with consultees, and further detail on its definition and justification has been set out in this Chapter at section 7.3.
Para. 7.3.1	Landscape setting	<i>'Landscape setting of heritage assets are not considered to be significant beyond 1km from the</i>	The setting of heritage assets is considered in the ES Chapter 6 - Cultural Heritage and is excluded

Para.	Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
		<i>site. This assumption should be justified in the ES based on evidence and agreement with relevant consultation bodies.'</i>	from this Chapter to avoid duplication.
Section 7.5	Mitigation	<i>'Where the avoidance of a likely significant effect is reliant on mitigation measures, these should be described within the ES along with the proposed methods by which they will be secured through the DCO, assisted by a plan or figures where appropriate.'</i>	Mitigation measures are identified in the ES, on Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5 Landscape Strategy Plan and OLEMP.
Section 7.6 and Appx. 7.1	LVIA Chapter - Assumptions	<i>'The ES should clearly set out the heights and dimensions of all infrastructure on which the LVIA assessment is based.'</i>	Table 3.2 within Chapter 3 – Site and Proposed Development Description, provides details of the infrastructure and its sizes on which the Landscape and Visual assessment has been based.
Appx. 7.1	LVIA Chapter – Assessment of significance	<i>'The ES should fully justify how significance of effects has been established. Where professional judgement is used ...this should be made clear.'</i>	This Chapter includes a detailed appx (Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology) which provides a clear and transparent process which adheres with the methodology for the determination of significant effects.
Section 7.5	Embedded mitigation – landscaping and planting	<i>'The ES should cover the establishment period of any landscaping scheme and any long-term management needs. Any assumptions made with regards to the height that proposed mitigation planting would have reached by the assessment years should be clearly presented and justified for the purposes of generating photomontages and reaching the assessment conclusions.'</i>	An OLEMP has been prepared and is provided at Appendix 7.7.  The OLEMP identifies the management and monitoring requirements for landscape and ecological features during their establishment and beyond.  In addition, detail has been provided as to the assumed height of vegetation on which this ES assessment relies.
Section 7.8 and Figure 7.1	Visual receptors	<i>'The ES should demonstrate how relevant consultation bodies have influenced the choice of receptors, and the level of sensitivity assigned to those receptors.'</i>	This Chapter includes appendices (Appendix 7.1) which provide a clear and transparent process which adheres with the methodology for the determination of significant effects.
n/a	Visualisations	<i>'Photomontages should present the likely visual impact at the selected view locations, as agreed with relevant</i>	Visualisations, their locations, content, and the methodology for their production and assessment has been informed by consultation

Para.	Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
		<i>consultation bodies, with evidence of this provided in the DCO application. The photomontages should show all components of the Proposed Development, ...and demonstrate the Proposed Development before and after mitigation.</i>  <i>This is in order to enable the decision maker to understand the implications of the worst-case scenario and the effectiveness of proposed mitigation'</i>	responses and, where relevant, agreed with stakeholders. Photomontages are provided in Appendix 7.6: Visualisations.

## Section 42 Consultation

7.3.28 Comments were received from stakeholders (statutory and non-statutory) following publication of the PEIR documents. These are listed below along with how these have been considered within this Chapter.

7.3.29 This section of the Chapter provides an overview of statutory responses received following issue of the PEIR. Table 7.2 below illustrates these responses, and the subsequent responses of the Applicant.

**Table 7.2: Statutory Responses to PEIR**

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
<b>Lake District National Park Authority</b>		
Landscape – views out of the LDNP	<i>'We appreciate and welcome the effort made in not proposing panels on the higher land to the west of the site, having regard to the potential for viewers to perceive this as interfering with the transition from the coastal plain to the fells in the east.'</i>	Noted.
Landscape – views out of the LDNP	<i>'The land provides some distant views of the Lake District Fells. However, the network of small lanes is more suited to local traffic. Those approaching the Lake District for recreation or visiting the area with the specific intention of enjoying the National Park landscape are more likely to use other routes. We consider therefore that any effect of the</i>	Noted.



Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
	<i>development on views into the Lake District would not be significant'.</i>	
Landscape – views out of the LDNP	<i>'There are only limited views available of the development from locations within the National Park Boundary. The ZTVI mapping that has been provided appears to show a greater area within the National Park than we have observed from our ground truthing, as being affected.'</i>	ZTVs are a tool within the visual assessment process and provide an indication of visibility only. Ground truthing is always recommended to attain a true sense of visibility from certain locations.
Landscape – views out of the LDNP	<i>'The availability of views is strongly affected by the local topography. The highest portion of the land lies to the south side where the ridge of High Park-Branthwaite Edge obscures views from the south of the development site which lies to the north. The ridge is less effective in screening views from the fell tops identified below due to the ability of the viewer to see over the ridge. Our perception however is that views from valley level within the National Park (Mosser, Loweswater, Lamplugh, Cogra Moss) would be unaffected by the development, due to a combination of intervening screening, glimpsed views of parts of the development site and distance.'</i>	Noted.
Landscape – views out of the LDNP	<p><i>'The particular views we have identified as being affected are:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Fellbarrow (represented by viewpoint 14): The fell is included in the Wainwright Western Fells book (included in the 214 'Wainwright' summits). Fellbarrow stands between 8 and 9km west from the site.... Due to the position of Branthwaite Edge, the main portion of the site (Area C) would be less prominent from this location, the areas A and B would be more visible.</i></li> <li><i>2. Blake Fell and Burnbank Fell (represented by viewpoints 13, 13a and 13b): Blake Fell and Burnbank Fell are also included in Wainwrights Western Fells book, Blake Fell being 'the highest of the Loweswater uplands', and as such is a popular climb. .... These fells stand 7-8km south west of the site. Parts of the site are visible from the</i></li> </ol>	<p>View Locations (VL) 13 and 14 were agreed via email with the LDNPA 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 (see Appendix 7.10), while 13a and 13b were taken during the Site visit to comprehensively understand the experience of PRow users.</p> <p>It should be noted that comments received subsequent to the PEIR responses – namely within the independent LVIA submitted by Galpin Landscape Architecture in June 2025 on behalf of Cumberland Council – identified that VL14 was taken at Darling Fell rather than Fellbarrow. The independent LVIA however stated that <i>"While the view would be at a different angle from the peak of Fellbarrow, the view provided is at a similar elevation and is considered to be representative of views from the range of fells north</i></p>

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
	<i>summit and the upper western flanks including the subsidiary summit of Knock Murton. From the summits views are available over the intervening ridge to a substantial portion of the site.'</i>	<i>of Loweswater (including Fellbarrow and Loweswater Fell)."</i> This has also been discussed with the Lake District National Park Authority and is agreeable as a representation of views from the Fellbarrow range.  Accordingly, this Chapter has been revised as VL14 being representative of views from Darling Fell.
Landscape – views out of the LDNP	<i>'In the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, the affected land lies within Area of Distinctive character 8: Loweswater.'</i>	The Area of Distinctive Character 8: Loweswater has been assessed within the Schedule of Landscape Effects at Appendix 7.2 of this Chapter.
Landscape – view from the fells	<i>'Having regard to the distance of the views available towards the site from the fells, we consider that the detail of the development including individual structures would not be particularly apparent. The principal change would be that of a change of colour: from green fields to blocks of grey panels, and a sense of developed versus undeveloped character to the land. We consider that the assessment of this effect has to have regard to the overall size of the site and development. At 279ha, the site is an equivalent size to the town of Keswick.</i>  <i>6.10 At present, the 'evidences of urban development and industry' in this part of the West Cumberland plain are mostly focussed to the west, on the coast and around Workington. Lillyhall Industrial Estate extends this sense of developed character south and eastwards, and the proposed site would be almost contiguous with Lillyhall. We consider that the effect would be to stretch the sense of developed land into the rural area and towards the National Park. This sense would be more apparent from Blake and Burnbank Fells (as the view is more in a line: site, Lillyhall, Workington) than from Fellbarrow (where the effect would be seen from the side).</i>  <i>6.11 The sensitivity of recreational users of the areas where views are available will be very high. The effect on</i>	The Schedule of Visual Effects in Appendix 7.3 provides an assessment of scale and geographical extent of the Proposed Development in addition to the overall significance of effect predicted from the identified view locations within the LDNP (VLs 12, 13, 13a, 13b, and 14).



Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
	<i>visual amenity would be negative but we note that the change is not intended to be permanent (40 year lifespan and reversible). We consider that the magnitude of the effect from the identified views from the fells would be 'minor' having regard to the size of the development and the guidelines for managing landscape change.'</i>	
Landscape – World Heritage Site	<p><i>'As the guidance on 'setting' is more developed in relation to heritage assets than landscape designations, we would like to cover the effect on the ...WHS... in this section.</i></p> <p><i>6.13 Since the development is located well outside the WHS, the development would only affect those attributes of outstanding universal value that are capable of crossing the boundaries....</i></p> <p><i>6.14 As we have found a minor adverse visual effect over a 40 year period, we consider that this translates into less than substantial harm to the WHS attribute of extraordinary beauty and harmony.</i></p> <p><i>6.15 When assessing the impact of development on a... [WHS], UNESCO provides guidance on this .... Therefore whilst we recognise minor adverse effect over the lifetime of the development, it is not permanent and can be removed and the land continue in agricultural use and restore the green appearance of this landscape.'</i></p>	The WHS was assessed both in landscape and visual terms within the PEIR and given that a 'no change' level of effect was returned, effects on the WHS have subsequently not been considered within the ES. Visual effects from the WHS have however been considered within the ES assessment of VLs 13, 13a, 13b and 14.
Landscape - mitigation	<i>'6.16 Mitigation of the effect would depend on the success or otherwise of any planting to break up the massing of the panels. Planting within the site would be the best way to achieve this effect, but we appreciate that any planting that would be taller than the panels would have the effect of reducing their effectiveness through shading. It is still considered that even low level planting might have an ameliorating effect.'</i>	<p>The Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5) has been developed to provide green infrastructure benefits in addition to breaking up the perceived massing of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The majority of planting within the Site will be low-level hedgerow planting (approx. 1.5 - 2m height) with occasional hedgerow trees in targeted sections.</p>
Landscape - mitigation	<i>'6.17 The battery storage facility (BESS) is shown as a collection of white cabins. Using a darker colour for these would be more visually recessive in the landscape.'</i>	BESS has been removed from the Proposed Development.

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
<b>Northumberland County Council – Planning Officer</b>		
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'Given the distance from Northumberland and intervening landscape features we offer no comment to this consultation. If there is something specific you would like us to comment on please let us know.'</i>	Noted.
<b>Cumberland Council</b>		
Landscape & Visual	<i>'A ...LVIA... is included within the PEIR. This has been informed by Site visits and photography from representative viewpoints agreed with the Council and the [LDNP].'</i>	This remains the case for the ES assessment (see Table 7.1 of this Chapter).
Landscape & Visual Likely Significant Effects	<i>'The assessment of landscape and visual considers effects of the Proposed Development on:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Landscape character within which the Site is located;</i></li> <li><i>Landscape elements (the 'fabric' or features, which contribute to character); and</i></li> <li><i>Views available to people and their visual amenity, from publicly accessible viewpoints.'</i></li> </ul>	This remains the case for the ES assessment. These conclusions are detailed within Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects and Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects.
Landscape & Visual Likely Significant Effects	<i>'During the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development, Significant Moderate Adverse direct effects on the landscape character of the Site were assessed due to the change from open farmland to a solar farm development. '</i>	This remains the case for the ES assessment. These conclusions are detailed within Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects.
Landscape & Visual Likely Significant Effects	<i>'You advise there would be Moderate Adverse, indirect effects to LCT 9a: Open Moorlands during the construction phase, although by the decommissioning phase, the vegetation planting would be effective in reducing this effect to not significant. The remaining landscape receptors, including the WHS and the Special Qualities of the LDNP would not experience significant effects.'</i>	Where previous receptors assessed within the PEIR were noted as experiencing 'No change', these receptors were removed from the ES assessment.
Landscape & Visual Likely Significant Effects	<i>'Significant adverse visual effects during construction would be focussed on locations in close proximity to the Site. Visually, effects during the decommissioning period would also be similar to those experienced during</i>	This remains the case for the ES assessment. These conclusions are detailed within Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects.

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
	<i>construction, however the majority will be reduced in severity as a result of screening from new and enhanced planting of vegetation.'</i>	
Landscape & Visual Likely Significant Effects	<i>'During the operational and maintenance phase, there would be a direct Moderate Adverse effect to the landscape character. Properties near the Site represented by View Location ('VL') 6/6a (Dean Cross) and VL7 (Rigg House) would experience a Major Adverse (significant) visual effect, and a Moderate Adverse (significant) visual effect is anticipated to VL9 (Wythemoor House).'</i>	This remains the case for the ES assessment. These conclusions are detailed within Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects and Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects.
Landscape & Visual Likely Significant Effects	<i>'Your assessment on the Landscape and Visual Likely Significant Effects are accepted following the review of Viewpoints provided.'</i>	Noted.
Landscape & Visual Mitigation Measures	<i>'Embedded mitigation measures include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Retention of existing Site boundary vegetation ...</i></li> <li><i>• Use of existing field entrances during delivery/ construction ...</i></li> <li><i>• Careful siting of infrastructure to minimise visual intrusion, ...</i></li> <li><i>• Suitable buffers between the solar farm and ancient woodland and watercourses;</i></li> <li><i>• The maximum height of the Proposed Development would be 4.5m within considered areas to minimise visual effects;</i></li> <li><i>• Provision of sheep grazing where possible ...</i></li> <li><i>• Reinforcement of existing field boundaries;</i></li> <li><i>• New native structural landscape planting to provide visual screening, development..., and linking existing habitats / landscape features where possible to provide enhanced green infrastructure and biodiversity opportunities.'</i></li> </ul>	<p>These embedded mitigation measures have been retained and are set out in more detail in Section 7.6 and the Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5).</p> <p>With respect to these measures, it remains the case that the majority of the Proposed Development features will be limited to a maximum height of less than 4.5m (with the majority of the developable areas being covered by solar arrays with a max height of 3.3m, interspersed with ancillary buildings at a max height of 3.6m.</p> <p>However, the Grid Connection Infrastructure - Work No. 2 will have a height of 6.5m for the DNO substation building, a max height of up to 9m for some elements of the external electrical equipment, and 15m for the communication mast, with Work No. 2a - POC Masts adjoining the existing pylon on-Site being taller at up to 30m.</p>
Landscape & Visual Mitigation Measures	<i>'Potential enhancement measures to the embedded mitigation are acceptable, to include additional scrub</i>	These enhancement measures are reflected within Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5 Landscape Strategy Plan,

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
	<i>and woodland planting on the steeper, southern section of Thief Gill; and scrub and marginal planting including wildflower areas along watercourses to enhance habitat connection and provide Biodiversity Net Gain.'</i>	within Appendix 7.7 - OLEMP, Chapter 8 - Biodiversity and Appendix 8.8 - Biodiversity Net Gain ('BNG') Report.
Landscape & Visual Mitigation Measures	<i>'The updated Concept Layout includes additional buffers, areas for landscape screening and siting of panels to account for natural screening through topography. It is noted that mitigation would reduce the potential visual impact on neighbouring residents.'</i>	The Landscape Strategy Plan has been developed to reduce visual impacts from nearby residential receptors, road users and recreational users of local PRow where practicable.
Landscape & Visual Residual Effects	<i>'During construction, the proposed planting would not be established, and the CEMP is not anticipated to result in changes to the likely significant effects. Therefore, the significant Moderate Adverse effects are predicted to the landscape character of the Site and the LCT 9a: Open Moorlands, would remain.'</i>	Assessment has been undertaken with regards to Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan and is set out in sections 7.5 and 7.7 of this Chapter.
Landscape & Visual Residual Effects	<i>'It is noted there would be Major to Substantial Adverse effects (significant) effects to visual receptors located nearby to the construction, including VL6/6a (Dean Cross), VL7 (Rigg House), VL9 (Wythemoor House), VL3c (Dean Cross Road) and VL10 (PRow 230010), however by operation Year 15, once the landscape planting has matured, there would be a Negligible to Moderate Beneficial long-term effect for landscape features.'</i>	Assessment has been undertaken with regards to Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan and is set out in sections 7.5 and 7.7 of this Chapter. The assessment of visual effects over time has also been informed through the use of visualisations which are presented within Appendix 7.6: Visualisations.
Landscape & Visual Residual Effects	<i>'During the operational and maintenance phase, a significant Major Adverse effect is assessed for the visual receptors at VL7 (Rigg House) and a significant Moderate Adverse effect for the visual receptor VL6/6a (Dean Cross).'</i>	Assessment has been undertaken with regards to Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan and is set out in sections 7.5 and 7.7 of this Chapter.
Landscape & Visual Residual Effects	<i>'Residual effects during the decommissioning phase would be similar to those experienced during the construction phase, with Moderate Adverse effects anticipated to the landscape character. Visually, significant Moderate-Major Adverse effects would remain for the closest receptors.'</i>	Assessment has been undertaken with regards to Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan and is set out in sections 7.5 and 7.7 of this Chapter.

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
<b>Natural England</b>		
Chapter 8: Biodiversity (LEMP)	<i>'The LEMP should help establish clear objectives and responsibilities for management, maintenance and monitoring of the habitats created.'</i>	The OLEMP (Appendix 7.7) provides objectives and responsibilities for management, maintenance and monitoring of the habitats created.
<b>Dean &amp; Distington Parish Councils</b>		
Landscape and Visual Impact	<i>'The proposed development at Dean Moor will, however, be visually dramatic and have a transformational impact on the landscape between the villages of Branthwaite and Gilgarran.'</i>	Noted.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<p><i>'Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit Landscape Character Type (LCT) states:</i></p> <p><i>'Key characteristics of the Ridges sub-type include the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Distinct ridges;</i></li> <li><i>• Extensive areas of heathland moorland;</i></li> <li><i>• Improved pasture with distinctive stone walls; and</i></li> <li><i>• Woodland and small belts of trees form prominent features.'</i></li> </ul>	The Proposed Development has sought to retain or enhance the key characteristics of the Ridges Landscape Character Type ('LCT') by securing no development on the areas of heathland moorland within the southern part of the Site, suggesting the potential to rebuild / repair existing stone walls on the Site boundaries, and providing areas of woodland and linear belts of hedgerow trees, as illustrated on the Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5 Landscape Strategy Plan.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<p><i>'Guidelines within the character assessment discuss the development, with suggestions including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Minimise the impact of development by careful siting and design and seek environmental gains such as heather and moorland restoration.'</i></li> </ul>	Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5 Landscape Strategy Plan illustrates how the Proposed Development has sought to minimise the impact by breaking up the perceived massing of panels and aims to achieve areas of rough acid moorland through a relaxed grazing regime, outlined within the OLEMP.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'The majority of land within the Site which is covered by the LCT focuses on the escarpment and plateau to the south of the Site.'</i>	The plateau will be kept free of development, and a relaxed grazing regime will be introduced to achieve areas of rough acid moorland.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'The land on areas A, B and C (ref page 11 of consultation booklet) is all described as acidic grassland and as such would be an ideal candidate for heather moorland restoration. This would increase the insect populations.'</i>	Areas identified within Work No. 6 will be kept free of development, and a relaxed grazing regime will be introduced to achieve areas of rough acid moorland.



Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'In terms of the site's visual impact, we would welcome more detail on how it will be minimised for properties adjacent to or within close proximity of the site e.g. Fulton's Garage at Dean Cross. We also note that nowhere within the documentation is a visual representation given of the BESS to demonstrate its visual impact, which we believe is potentially significant.'</i>	The measures taken to minimise visual impacts on residents is illustrated on Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5 Landscape Strategy Plan, within the Chapter and illustrated within Appendix 7.6: Visualisations.  The BESS has been removed from the Proposed Development.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'Additionally, the proximity of the ...LDNP... has not triggered looking at a slightly wider view within the...ZTV.... The view from higher peaks that are only circa 10 km away, such as Melbreak and Blake Fell, should also be considered. Also, we note that winter and summer view simulations have not been provided.'</i>	View locations from within the LDNP were agreed with LDNP authority and include View Locations from Blake Fell (VLs 13, 13a and 13b). Winter (Year 1) and Summer (Year 15) (see Appendix 7.10).  Visualisations are provided within Appendix 7.6: Visualisations from Blake Fell.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'We are also confused by the various references to "fences" within the documentation, whether it be for security, safety or to exclude wildlife such as deer. We require clarification on the location, design, and height of any proposed fencing/hedging on the site, as well proposals for landscaping.'</i>	Landscaping proposals are provided within the Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5).  Fencing types proposed include perimeter fencing which is deer fencing (Work No. 3), and security fencing which is metal fencing but would only be used internally within the Site around the external electrical equipment of the Grid Connection Infrastructure (Work No. 2).  Information regarding fencing requirements is outlined within Chapter 3 - Site and Proposed Development Description and illustrated on Figure 3.15: Indicative Site Perimeter Fencing.
Landscape & Visual Impact	<i>'Finally on the issue of potential light pollution from the site, we note proposals within the documentation for lighting across the site but again need to see more detail on type, position, elevation etc., and would welcome further consultation.'</i>	Indicative lighting proposals are discussed within Chapter 3 - Site and Proposed Development Description which describes lighting within the Site as <i>"not being permanently lit during the operational phase, with lighting limited to motion activated, cowled, downlighting, affixed above or aside doors of buildings within the Site."</i>

Topic	Summary of Consultation Response	Applicant's Response
		The Council agreed to the effects of lighting being scoped out of the ES in their Scoping consultation response (see Appendix 2.2 EIA Scoping Opinion).

### Limitations and Assumptions

- 7.3.30 In accordance with the EU Directive 2014/52/EU and GLVIA3, this Chapter identifies the likely significant landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development, rather than identifying every conceivable landscape and visual effect.
- 7.3.31 For the purpose this Chapter, the assessment assumes the maximum parameters for the Proposed Development as defined by Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan, which includes the maximum proposed height of the solar PV arrays at 3.3m, ancillary building for the generating equipment (PCS Units) at 3.6m, maximum height for associated buildings in Work No. 2 of 6.5m (DNO Substation Building), the communication mast at 15m, and a maximum height of 30m for the POC masts. A full list of parameters assessed is included in Chapter 3 – Site and Proposed Development Description and the Design Parameters Document ('DPD') [REF: 5.7].
- 7.3.32 The assessment of landscape and visual effects during the construction phase considers a worst-case scenario. This considers that construction activity is occurring at its peak operation for the duration of the identified short-term period. In accordance with the methodology, this short-term period is defined as being within a time period of 1-5 years, with assumed construction activity of the Proposed Development to occur over an 18-month period, as set out in ES Chapter 5 Construction and Decommissioning Methodology and Phasing. Notwithstanding the broader definition of a short-term period (1-5 years) for the purposes of this assessment in line with the GLVIA3, the extension of the duration of this construction period beyond 18 months would not result in a change to the reported effects within this chapter.

- 7.3.33 Following assessment within the PEIR, a number of landscape and visual receptors which were predicted to experience a 'No change' scenario were discounted from assessment in the ES. These receptors are set out in Table 7.5 within section 7.5 of this Chapter.
- 7.3.34 The visual assessment and accompanying photographic record of the Site have been influenced by weather conditions, time of day and seasonal factors during site visits. Every effort has been made to ensure that the photographs and their locations are representative of the Site and its surroundings.
- 7.3.35 The assessment of likely significant visual effects arising from the Proposed Development has been made from publicly accessible locations, with no assessment of private views to be undertaken as agreed with the Council and representatives of the LDNPA.
- 7.3.36 Detailed annotations to define locations of the Proposed Development elements which accord with Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan have been shown on the Photosheets in Appendix 7.5: View Location Photosheets. Visualisations have also been prepared to support the ES (see Appendix 7.6: Visualisations), which have been based on the parameters provided by the Figure 3.4: Parameter Plan. The type of visualisation and locations were discussed and agreed with the Council and the LDNPA prior to being prepared.
- 7.3.37 This Chapter provides baseline information on cultural heritage designations and protected trees and vegetation (ancient woodland), as these receptors inform overall judgements on landscape value. As receptors in their own right, they have been assessed within Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage [REF: 6.1] and Chapter 8 – Biodiversity [REF: 6.1] respectively.
- 7.3.38 Published Landscape Character Assessments ('LCA') have been considered with respect to the LDNPA and the former Cumbria County Council. Areas of Distinctive Character, published by the LDNPA have been discussed in section 7.6 of this Chapter, and have been illustrated on



Figure 7.2b: Published Landscape Character (Lake District National Park), but given their larger scale and overlapping nature with regards to the published LCTs within the LDNP LCA, they have not been assessed.

- 7.3.39 Furthermore, the LCTs within the LDNP LCA have been divided into Landscape Character sub-types; however, these have not been mapped and therefore there is no definitive knowledge of where these areas lie, and ultimately how they might be affected by the Proposed Development. Therefore, the assessment here is based on the mapped LCTs only. The assessment of LDNP landscape character within this Chapter has been based on the available online mapping; Policies Map: Lake District National Park<sup>25</sup>.
- 7.3.40 Although there is some overlapping between the former Cumbria County Council ('CCC') and LDNP character assessments, they have been assessed individually for robustness and completeness. Where effects are recorded for the respective receptors, the same effect is effectively being recorded twice (double counting the effect), rather than the effect occurring in different character areas.
- 7.3.41 This Chapter recognises there is likely to be further opportunities for mitigation available following design refinement; for instance, areas between solar arrays, field margins etc. which may be identified for enhancement. However, this Chapter has taken a worst-case approach based on parameters within works areas for assessment / mitigation and therefore cannot provide commitment to further measures beyond this.
- 7.3.42 There are four residential properties within close proximity to the Site and the Applicant has sought to provide information on visual effects through the selection of representative view locations from publicly accessible locations, including those adjacent to these properties. With regard to the thresholds for Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) as outlined

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<sup>25</sup> Lake District National Park Authority (2023). Policies Map: Lake District National Park. Policies Map: Lake District National Park. Available at: <https://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicies/local-plan/policies-map> Accessed November 2023.

by the LI in their Residential Visual Amenity Assessment guidance (TGN 02/19)<sup>27</sup>, in all instances it is considered that the Proposed Development visible within views from the residential properties would not lead to an encroaching, overwhelming or unavoidable presence in views from the property and therefore it was concluded a RVAA was not required.

7.3.43 Whilst this Chapter has identified significant visual effects for a small number of residential receptors by way of representative view locations, it is considered that none of the identified properties would be affected to such an extent that it becomes a matter of ‘residential amenity’ or reaches the point where *‘the effect on the private interest is so great that it becomes a matter of public interest’* (RVAA, 2019). Furthermore, the Glint and Glare Assessment (Appendix 7.9) found no significant effects on specific residential receptors from broadly similar locations. Therefore, it was concluded that the threshold for RVAA has not been met.

7.3.44 A ZTV has not been prepared for the Cumulative Assessment (see Appendix 7.4: Cumulative Assessment) as there is not enough information available regarding Lostrigg Solar to ensure accuracy. The ZTV prepared as part of the Lostrigg Solar Scoping Report submitted to the Planning Inspectorate was however reviewed alongside the ZTV for the Proposed Development.

## 7.4 Baseline Conditions

### Site Description

7.4.1 The Site lies within an area characterised by undulating agricultural land punctuated with individual farmsteads, small settlements, blocks of woodland, wind farms and energy infrastructure. Land within the Site is typical of the surrounding area; undulating mainly pastoral land with woodland blocks, electricity pylons with overhead lines (‘OHL’), and development associated with the nearby Rigg House Farm.

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<sup>27</sup> Landscape Institute (2019). Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) Technical Guidance Note 02/19.

7.4.2 For ease of reference within this Chapter, the Site has been divided into four discrete areas, as shown on Figure 3.1 [REF: 6.2]:

- Area A – Land south of Branthwaite Road (approximately 40.2ha);
- Area B – Land south of Branthwaite Road and north of Gilgarran Road (approximately 19.9ha);
- Area C – Land south of Gilgarran Road and north of Dean Cross Road (approximately 203ha);
- Area D - Land connecting Areas A and B, including Potato Pot Wind Farm (the 'Wind Farm'), Gilgarran Road between Areas B and C, and Branthwaite Edge Road (approximately 13.4ha).

7.4.3 These discrete areas are illustrated on Figure 7.7a: Site Areas (within the OLEMP) and are described in more detail in the following paragraphs.

#### **Area A**

7.4.4 Land within Area A broadly comprises gently undulating pastoral farmland divided relatively evenly by timber post and wire fencing and informal hedgerow, at times in poor condition, with occasional hedgerow trees or mature shrubs.

7.4.5 An access track which leads to the Wind Farm runs around the eastern edge of Area A, with the most northerly turbine lying adjacent to its southern extents. Aside from these traits, Area A is generally lacking in character and ecological value.

#### **Area B**

7.4.6 Land within Area B is similar to that within Area A, being predominantly pastoral farmland, broadly equally divided by timber post and wire fencing supported by informal hedgerow with occasional hedgerow trees and mature shrubs.

7.4.7 An area of scrub grassland populated with young trees lies to the south-central area of Area B, providing some variance in landscape character. The southern boundary of Area B is defined by timber post and wire fencing with partially maintained hedgerow and occasional hedgerow trees, and Gilgarran Road.

## Area C

- 7.4.8 Area C comprises areas of pastoral farmland. However, the varying topography provides some variation in character. The elevated higher plateau area to the south of the vegetated escarpment which is a prominent feature in this part of Area C, is more open, and has a greater association with heathland moorland. To the north of the escarpment, the land falls gradually to the north.
- 7.4.9 Watercourses are a notable feature of Area C, with Thief Gill forming a deep crevice at the southern part of the Area within an elevated higher plateau area. A small, ephemeral pond lies within the southeast of the Area on the plateau, feeding into Thief Gill. Other watercourses within the Area eventually feed into Lostrigg Beck before reaching the River Marron, a tributary of the River Derwent.
- 7.4.10 Other features within Area C include blocks of coniferous woodland within the northern part; one serving as a shelterbelt for Rigg House farm buildings, and the other plantation woodland (which has recently been partly harvested) which is bisected by OHL. OHL towers are a feature of the Area, not only the pylons within the northern part but also within the southern part where timber poles traverse south to north before turning northwest.

## Area D

- 7.4.11 Area D is defined by the three wind turbines associated with the Wind Farm, its access tracks and hardstanding areas. Other landscape elements within Area D include areas of mixed scrub and neutral grassland, and most notably a pond which lies south of the central turbine.
- 7.4.12 Figure 7.7a within the OLEMP (Appendix 7.7) provides an illustrative overview of the Areas as described above.

## Landscape Designations

- 7.4.13 Landscapes may be valued at community, local, national, or international levels. Existing landscape designations are taken as the starting point for

the Chapter, and the value of undesignated landscapes is also considered.

- 7.4.14 Relevant designations for the Site and surrounding area are set out in Table 7.3: Relevant Landscape Designations below and are illustrated on Figure 7.1: Landscape Designations Plan. Further detail is provided in the following section.

**Table 7.3: Relevant Landscape Designations**

Typical Designation Type and Importance (Value)	Designations Applicable to the Site and within the Surrounding Area
<b>World Heritage Site ('WHS'):</b> International (Very High) Unique sites, features, or areas of international importance with identified outstanding landscape quality or attributes.	<b>The English Lake District</b> Designated as a WHS in 2017, The English Lake District lies beyond the Study Area located approximately 3.2km east of the Site.
<b>National Park, National Landscapes:</b> National (High) Sites, features, or areas of national landscape importance that have special qualities and intrinsic natural beauty, including their settings.	<b>Lake District National Park</b> The LDNP lies beyond the Study Area located around 3.2km east of the Site and covers an area of 2,362km <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings ('LB'), Scheduled Monuments ('SM'), Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest ('RP&amp;G'):</b> National (High) Sites, features, or areas of national cultural heritage importance with landscapes and/or settings of high quality.	The Site is not located within a Conservation Area, and it does not contain LB. The Site is not listed on the RP&G. The Site includes an SM which lies to the south-western fringes of Area C. Within the wider Study Area there are a number of LBs mainly within the surrounding villages such as Branthwaite, Dean, Ullock, Distington, Mockerin, and Pardshaw. The closest LB, Wythemoor Sough and Adjoining Barn and Stable Grade II LB, lies approximately 190m northwest of Area A. There are no Conservation Areas within a 1km radius of the Site or the wider Study Area, with the nearest being some 6km northwest in Workington.
<b>Special Landscape Areas ('SLA'), Areas of Great Landscape Value ('AGLV'), ancient woodland, Important Hedgerows, Long distance paths, NCN routes, Open Access Land</b> Regional or Local (High / Medium) Sites, features, or areas of regional importance with intact character.	The Site and Study Area does not lie within any SLA or AGLV. The Site lies adjacent to Struthers Wood ancient woodland, and 200m west of Branthwaite Edge Wood ancient woodland. There are no Important Hedgerows within the 2.5km Study Area. There are no long-distance paths within the Site or Study Area. No NCN routes are present in the

Typical Designation Type and Importance (Value)	Designations Applicable to the Site and within the Surrounding Area
	<p>Site; however, NCN 72 lies within the far western extents of the Study Area.</p> <p>High Park Open Access Land is located directly south of the Site beyond the minor road, and Land at Wythemoor Sough Open Access Land to the northwest of Area A, adjacent to the Site.</p>
<p><b>Areas of Local Landscape Importance, Designated Public Open Space, Tree Preservation Orders ('TPO'):</b></p> <p>District (Medium / Low)</p> <p>Sites, features, or areas of district importance.</p>	<p>The Site and Study Area does not lie within an Area of Local Landscape Importance.</p> <p>There are no TPOs in place within the Site or surrounding area.</p>
<p><b>No designation, local Public Right of Way (PRoW):</b></p> <p>Local (Medium / Low)</p> <p>General countryside area valued at the local level.</p>	<p>No PRoW within the Site.</p> <p>There is a limited network of PRoW within the countryside surrounding the Site.</p>

### Protected Landscapes: World Heritage Sites, National Parks

- 7.4.15 The Site does not lie within a protected landscape, however the LDNP, which is also designated as The English Lake District WHS, lies approximately 3.2km to the east. The mountainous character of the LDNP in combination with the lower lying land towards the western coastline provides for wide-ranging views both towards and from it.
- 7.4.16 The LDNP was designated as a WHS by the UNESCO in 2017, and encompasses approximately 2,300km<sup>2</sup> of self-contained mountainous area.
- 7.4.17 As a WHS, a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value ('OUV') was produced, which identified three criteria (of ten overall) with which the Lake District complied, namely:
- *'Criterion (ii): To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.*
  - *Criterion (v): To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change; and*

- *Criterion (vi): To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.'*

- 7.4.18 The English Lake District WHS exemplifies these criteria through its links to agro-pastoralism land use system, its natural beauty, and the arts, signifying its connection with human development and engagement, and landscape conservation and enhancement.
- 7.4.19 The LDNP designation is also aligned with identified Special Qualities, as described in the LDNP Partnership's Management Plan 2020 – 2025, and these are listed below:
- 1: A world class cultural landscape;
  - 2: Complex geology and geomorphology;
  - 3: Rich archaeology and historic landscape;
  - 4: Unique farming heritage and concentration of common land;
  - 5: The high fells;
  - 6: Wealth of habitats and wildlife;
  - 7: Mosaic of lakes, tarns, rivers and coast;
  - 8: Extensive semi natural woodlands;
  - 9: Distinctive buildings and settlement character;
  - 10: A source of artistic inspiration;
  - 11: A model for protecting cultural landscapes;
  - 12: A long tradition of tourism and outdoor activities; and
  - 13: Opportunities for quiet enjoyment.
- 7.4.20 These Special Qualities, in tandem with OUV, results in a landscape of high cultural and physical value.

### **Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments**

- 7.4.21 There is a Scheduled Monument which lies to the south-western boundary of Area C, partially within it. The 'Large irregular stone circle and a round cairn on Dean Moor' (hereafter referred to as the 'Stone Circle and Cairn') is situated close to the highest point of the moor at around 200m AOD, thus providing extensive views in all directions from the circle. Mapping



from the Historic England website<sup>28</sup> shows a two-metre boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the SMs support and preservation. The field boundary wall and post and wire fence which cross the SM are not included within the listing, but the ground beneath these features is. See Figure 7.1: Landscape Designations Plan. SMs are considered in ES Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage and excluded from this Chapter to avoid duplication.

- 7.4.22 Several Listed Buildings lie within the Study Area, mainly within the surrounding villages such as Branthwaite, Dean, Ullock, Distington, Mockerin, and Pardshaw. Wythemoor Sough and Adjoining Barn and Stable Grade II LB lies approximately 190m northwest of the Site, and comprises a farmhouse, stable and barn from circa mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 7.4.23 Potential effects on these heritage assets are considered in Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage and are therefore not considered further in this Chapter. Where appropriate, the presence of Listed Buildings and/or Scheduled Monuments within the surrounding area has been considered in the assessment of landscape value.

### **Protected Trees and Vegetation (ancient woodland)**

- 7.4.24 Area C of the Site is largely bound to the west by the ancient woodland of Struthers Wood which comprises a mix of ancient, replanted woodland and ancient and semi-natural woodland. The ancient and semi-natural woodland of Branthwaite Edge Wood lies approximately 200m east of the Site.
- 7.4.25 Potential effects on ancient woodland are considered in Chapter 8 - Biodiversity and are therefore not considered further in this Chapter. Where appropriate, the presence of ancient woodland within the

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<sup>28</sup> Historic England, List Entry 1014588. Large irregular stone circle and a round cairn on Dean Moor, Dean - 1014588 | Historic England. Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1014588?section=official-list-entry> Accessed January 2024



surrounding area has been considered in the assessment of landscape value.

### **National Cycle Network and Open Access Land**

- 7.4.26 Figure 7.1: Landscape Designations Plan shows PRoWs and Open Access Areas in the countryside surrounding the Site.

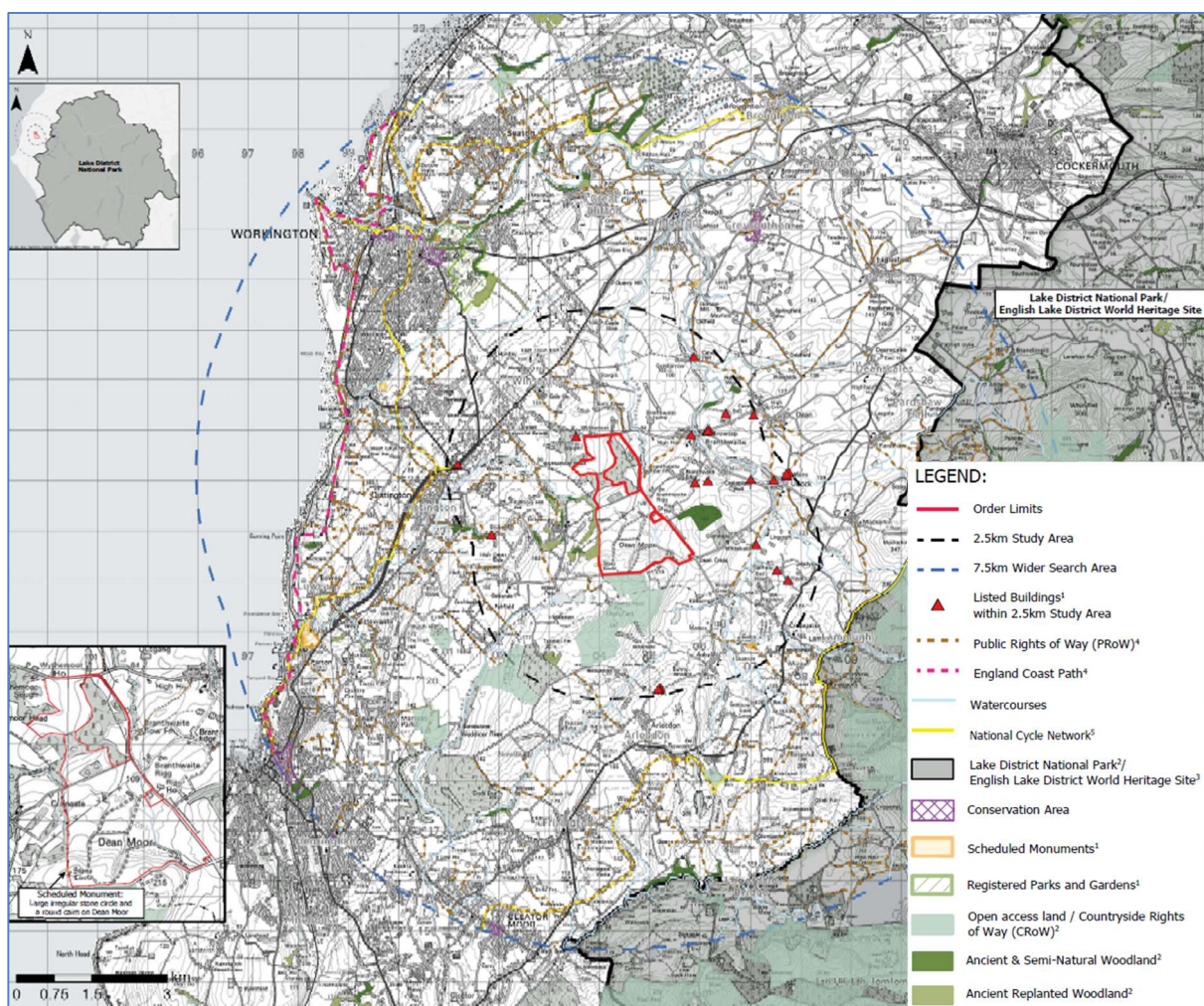
### **Public Rights of Way**

- 7.4.27 PRoWs within relative proximity of the Site include:
- Footpath ('FP') 225002 – is located on the eastern border of the Site running north of Rigg House Farm towards Branthwaite;
  - Bridleway ('BW') 404020 – is located approximately 0.8km from the western border of the Site, running north from Gilgarran to Lillyhall;
  - FP 225003 – is located to the northeast and runs from A595 to Branthwaite Road; and
  - Other PRoWs within the vicinity of the Site include FPs 404018 and 404015 to the southwest.
- 7.4.28 NCN Route 72 encroaches on the western extents of the Study Area for approximately 250m.

### **Designated Public Open Spaces**

- 7.4.29 Public open spaces within the vicinity of the Site are limited to golf courses at Workington and Distington. Dean Moor Motocross Park lies directly south of the Site.
- 7.4.30 Figure 7.1 below provides an illustration of designations associated with the Study Area.

**Figure 7.1: Landscape Designations Plan**



## Landscape Character

7.4.31 Relevant landscape character areas for the Site are shown on Figure 7.2a: Published Landscape Character (Cumbria County Council) and Figure 7.2b: Published Landscape Character (Lake District National Park), and include those published in:

- Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit<sup>29</sup>; and
- Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> Cumbria County Council (2011), Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit. Available at: <https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/538/755/2789/406869467.PDF> Accessed January 2024

<sup>30</sup> Lake District National Park (2021), Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines. Landscape Character Assessment: Lake District National Park.

## National Landscape Character

- 7.4.32 The Site and 2.5km Study Area lie within NCA 07: West Cumbria Coastal Plain. The NCA covers an expansive area of land between NCA 08: Cumbrian High Fells and the Irish Sea. Key characteristics of NCA 07: West Cumbria Coastal Plain include a combination of coastal habitats such as mudflats, shingle and pebble beaches and soft cliffs contrast with the inland habitats of open pastoral farmland and lowland river valleys.
- 7.4.33 NCAs are supported by Statements of Environmental Opportunities ('SEO'), with NCA 07 covered by the following:
- *'SEO 1: Conserve and enhance the unique open coast and estuarine landscapes with their distinct geology, improving and connecting habitats and their species, improving the coast's ability to adapt to and mitigate the impact of climate change';*
  - *'SEO 2: Manage and enhance the farmed environment to secure viable and sustainable farming whilst strengthening historic landscape character and improving habitat connectivity';*
  - *'SEO 3: Improve and enhance sustainable recreation to enable people to experience the peace and beauty of the area while managing visitor pressures';* and
  - *'SEO 4: Manage industrial and former industrial sites while minimising pollution and disturbance, improving ecological connectivity in the landscape'.*
- 7.4.34 The scale of the Proposed Development in relation to the scale of the NCA means that an assessment of the effects on this NCA is considered to be of limited relevance. The landscape character of the Site and its environs is considered to be more accurately described through the more detailed published landscape character assessments undertaken by the LDNP authority and CCC as presented below. The assessment of effects on landscape character is therefore based on these more detailed landscape character assessments, and the NCA is not considered further.

## Regional / County Landscape Character

- 7.4.35 The Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit provides a finer grain of landscape character assessment for the area, with land within the Site covered by Landscape Type 9: Intermediate Moorland and Plateau, split between distinct sub-types; 9a: Open Moorlands, and 9d: Ridges, and

Landscape Type 5: Lowland represented by sub-type 5a: Ridge and Valley. Key characteristics of the LCT sub-types relevant to the Site are listed below.

7.4.36 LCT sub-type 9a: Open Moorlands (this sub-type broadly covers the northern part of Area C):

- *'High mostly open landscapes.*
- *Undulating semi-improved and unimproved pasture.*
- *Open rough moorland.*
- *Areas of deciduous woodland.*
- *Areas of peat and raised mire.'*

7.4.37 Guidelines within the LCA discuss development, with suggestions including:

- *'Avoid siting development on prominent edges of the plateau taking advantage of the natural containment offered by intermediate ridges and horizons.*
- *Minimise the impact of development by careful siting and design and seek environmental gains such as heather moorland restoration; and*
- *Ensure new development respects the local landscape character and vernacular.'*

7.4.38 LCT sub-type 9d: Ridges (this sub-type broadly covers the southern part of Area C):

- *'Distinct ridges.*
- *Extensive areas of true heathland moorland.*
- *Woodland and small belts of trees form prominent features.'*

7.4.39 Guidelines within the character assessment discuss development, with suggestions including:

- *'Minimise the impact of development by careful siting and design and seek environmental gains such as heather and moorland restoration.'*

7.4.40 LCT sub-type 5a: Ridge and Valley (covering Areas A and B):

- *'A series of ridges and valleys that rises gently toward the limestone fringes of the Lakeland Fells.*
- *Well managed regular shaped medium to large pasture fields.*
- *Hedge bound pasture fields dominate, interspersed with native woodland, tree clumps, and plantations.*



- *Scattered farms and linear villages found along ridges; and*
- *Large scale structures generally scarce.'*

7.4.41 Guidelines for development within the LCA include:

- *'Wind turbines and other energy infrastructure should be carefully sited and designed to prevent this sub type becoming an energy landscape.'*

### **The Lake District National Park Landscape Character**

7.4.42 The LDNPA has undertaken its own Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines for the LDNP which lies approximately 3.2km east of the Site. The assessment recognises distinct LCTs and sub-types, however, as laid out in the Limitations and Assumptions of this Chapter (section 7.3), the sub-types have not been mapped, and accordingly only the discrete LCTs have been assessed.

7.4.43 With regards to landscape character types closest to, and therefore of relevance to the Proposed Development, LCT D: Lowland and LCT I: Upland Limestone Farmland lie at an approximate distance of 1.5km and 1km respectively and are described as forming the setting of the LDNP as they extend beyond the boundaries of the LDNP itself. Following consultation, additional landscape character areas are included in this assessment baseline for reasons outlined within Section 7.3, Consultation. These are as follows: LCT G: Rugged Angular Slate High Fell, LCT H: Upland Valley, and LCT J: High Fell Fringe.

7.4.44 The relevant definitive attributes of LCT D: Lowland are as follows:

- *'Gently rolling or undulating, low-lying topography, dissected by meandering river valleys.*
- *Pasture fields dominate land cover, with pockets of woodland, arable fields, scrub and more marginal land, dominated by hedgerow field boundaries; and*
- *Ecological character comprises a combination of semi-natural ancient woodland and wetland habitats, along river corridors and within botanically rich exposures of sand.'*

7.4.45 *'Sensitivities and Capacity for Change'* for this LCT are largely based on its natural and ecological sensitivity in relation to semi-natural woodland, wetland, and hedgerows. Visual sensitivity is judged to be moderate as woodland and hedgerows limit visibility in places, however there is strong

intervisibility with the adjacent High Fells. The Lowland LCT is considered within the LDNPA Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines to have limited to moderate capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics.

7.4.46 The relevant definitive attributes of LCT I: Upland Limestone Farmland are as follows:

- *'Topography is primarily gently rolling, forming a stark contrast with the ruggedness of the neighbouring volcanic rocks of Borrowdale and Skiddaw.'*
- *The openness of the landscape facilitates panoramic views in places.*
- *Strong intervisibility with landscape to the north of the National Park boundary and with the rising mass of Blencathra.*
- *Improved and semi-improved pastoral farmland (the fields lined with hedgerows) dominates this landscape in the north, with occasional clumps of trees and small woods adding variety; and*
- *Lacking in large expanses of ancient woodland and woodland plantations; ancient woodland, with occasional small copses (both deciduous and coniferous) more of a feature towards the east.'*

7.4.47 *'Sensitivities and Capacity for Change'* for this LCT are largely based around intervisibility because of its very open character, although areas where there is high visibility can be counter-balanced with areas of limited or no visibility, such as in higher locations where views are screened by elevated topography. The LCT also benefits from rare and fragile natural habitats and a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics within this LCT is considered by the LDNPA Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines to be very limited apart from change which reinforces positive attributes such as habitat enhancements including sensitively placed gill and other woodland.

7.4.48 The relevant definitive attributes of LCT G: Rugged Angular Slate High Fell are as follows:

- *'Elevated land within this type includes the summits of Skiddaw, Blencathra, Grisedale Pike, Causey Pike, Grassmoor and Black Combe; and*
- *Uplifting panoramic external views from the fell summits, including the Irish Sea, Isle of Man and Morecambe Bay from Black Combe, and the Solway Coast and North Pennines from the northern fells.'*



- 7.4.49 ‘Sensitivities and Capacity for Change’ for this LCT are largely based around intervisibility because of its very open character, although areas where there is high visibility can be counter-balanced with areas of limited or no visibility, such as in higher locations where views are screened by elevated topography. The LCT also benefits from rare and fragile natural habitats and a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity. Overall capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics within this LCT is considered by the LDNPA Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines to be very limited apart from change which reinforces positive attributes such as habitat enhancements including sensitively placed gill and other woodland.
- 7.4.50 The relevant definitive attributes of LCT H: Upland Valley are as follows:
- *‘Topography differs greatly, ranging from dramatic and steep valley sides with screes, sloping down towards a deep lake (in the case of Wasdale) to valleys with gently rolling sides with a slow-moving river on the broad valley floor.’*
- 7.4.51 ‘Sensitivities and Capacity for Change’ include the LCTs diverse patchwork of lakes, mires and rivers, floodplain and lakeshore habitats, woodland, designed landscapes, parkland, and bogs in addition to intervisibility with the surrounding landscape character. Character and visual sensitivity are considered to be high, and as a result the LCT is considered by the LDNPA Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines to have very limited capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics.
- 7.4.52 The LCT is further divided into four Landscape Character sub-types; namely Sub-Type H1: Valley with Lake, Sub-Type H2: Valley with River Floodplain, Sub-Type H3: Enclosed Valley Side, and Sub-Type H4: Open Valley Side. However, these have not been mapped and there is no definitive knowledge of where these areas lie, and ultimately how they might be affected by the Proposed Development. Therefore, any assessment is based on the mapped LCT H: Upland Valley.
- 7.4.53 The relevant definitive attributes of LCT J: High Fell Fringe are as follows:

- *'Topographically, landscapes within this type vary from 100m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to 300m AOD.*
- *A transitional landscape, between more open moorland or fell and lower, more enclosed landscapes.*
- *Small patches of woodland on steeper slopes and alongside streams and rivers, with numerous field boundary trees and clumps occurring around farms; and*
- *Scattered farms and hamlets, served by minor roads and specifically located at the base of slopes.'*

7.4.54 *'Sensitivities and Capacity for Change'* include moderate ecological sensitivity, with value attached to woodlands and wetland areas, and high visual sensitivity given the strong intervisibility with adjacent higher LCTs. Overall, the High Fell Fringe LCT was deemed by the LDNPA Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines to have limited to moderate capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics.

7.4.55 The landscape character assessment also provides information on the Areas of Distinctive Character ('ADC') illustrated on the online Policy Map, with the nearest of these to the Site being Area 8: Loweswater at approximately 2.3km east, at the eastern extents of the Study Area, and Area 6: Setmurthy Common & Embleton, which lies approximately 5.6km northeast of the Site. The 'distinctive characteristics' of Area 8: Loweswater, as described within the LDNPA LCA, and of relevance to this Chapter, are:

- *'Intricate patchwork of pasture fields following the river channel, divided by a combination of mature hedgerows containing mature trees, and traditional stone walls.*
- *Sinuous belts of soft woodland following the river corridor, interspersed with a network of minor roads which mainly follow, rather than cross the river corridor.*
- *Strong, yet distant sense of enclosure provided by High Fells to the west (Loweswater Fell) and east (Whiteside and Kirk Fell); and*
- *Predominantly a tranquil landscape due to the relative absence of major roads and their associated traffic noise.'*

7.4.56 The LDNPA LCA also details landscape sensitivities associated with the ADC, and these include:

- *'The western part of the area will be particularly sensitive to developments on the coast.*
- *Overall sense of tranquillity, which is vulnerable to potential increases in tourist-related activity and associated traffic; and*
- *Significant sensitivity to the cumulative impacts of vertical infrastructure.'*

7.4.57 The distinctive characteristics of Area 6: Setmurthy Common & Embleton of relevance are as follows:

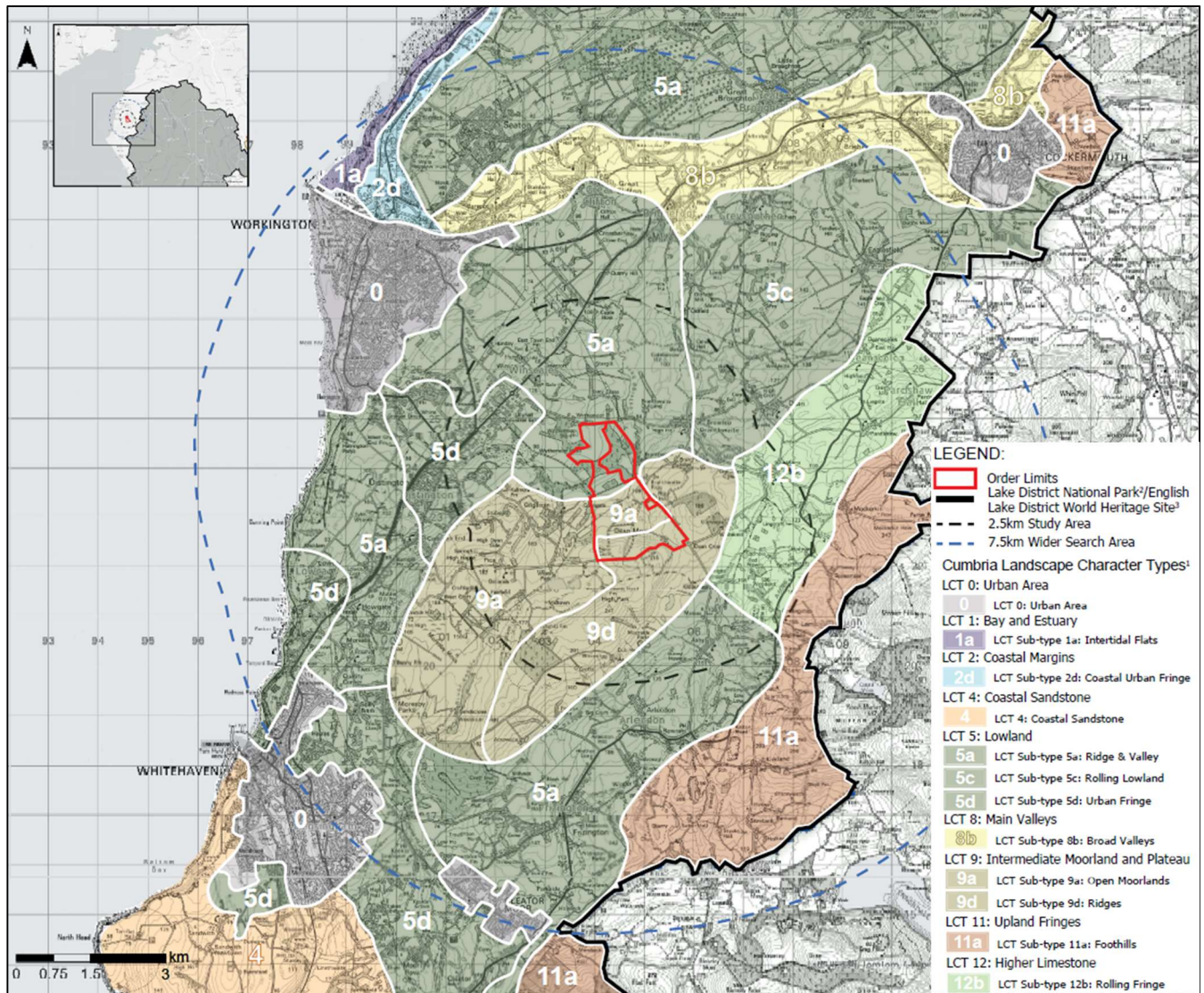
- *'Contained, broad, dome-shaped hill, accommodating Setmurthy Common (also known as Watch Hill), punctuated with angular plantation woodlands.*
- *The south and east of the area is flatter and more open and is dominated by views of Skiddaw.*
- *Framed views into and across the meandering Derwent Valley to the north and southwards towards the dramatic High Fell backdrop of Grizedale Pike and Whinlatter (which provides a distant sense of enclosure); and*
- *Predominantly a tranquil landscape away from the edge of Cockermouth and the A66 where the sense of tranquillity is disturbed by traffic noise along this busy road.'*

7.4.58 Landscape sensitivities associated with the ADC, include:

- *'Framed views northwards into Derwent Valley, which are sensitive to interruption by vertical or large-scale developments, significant sensitivity to the cumulative impacts of vertical infrastructure; and*
- *Open views and strong intervisibility with Skiddaw, Grizedale Pike and Whinlatter to the south and east. These are vulnerable to interruption by vertical or large-scale developments.'*

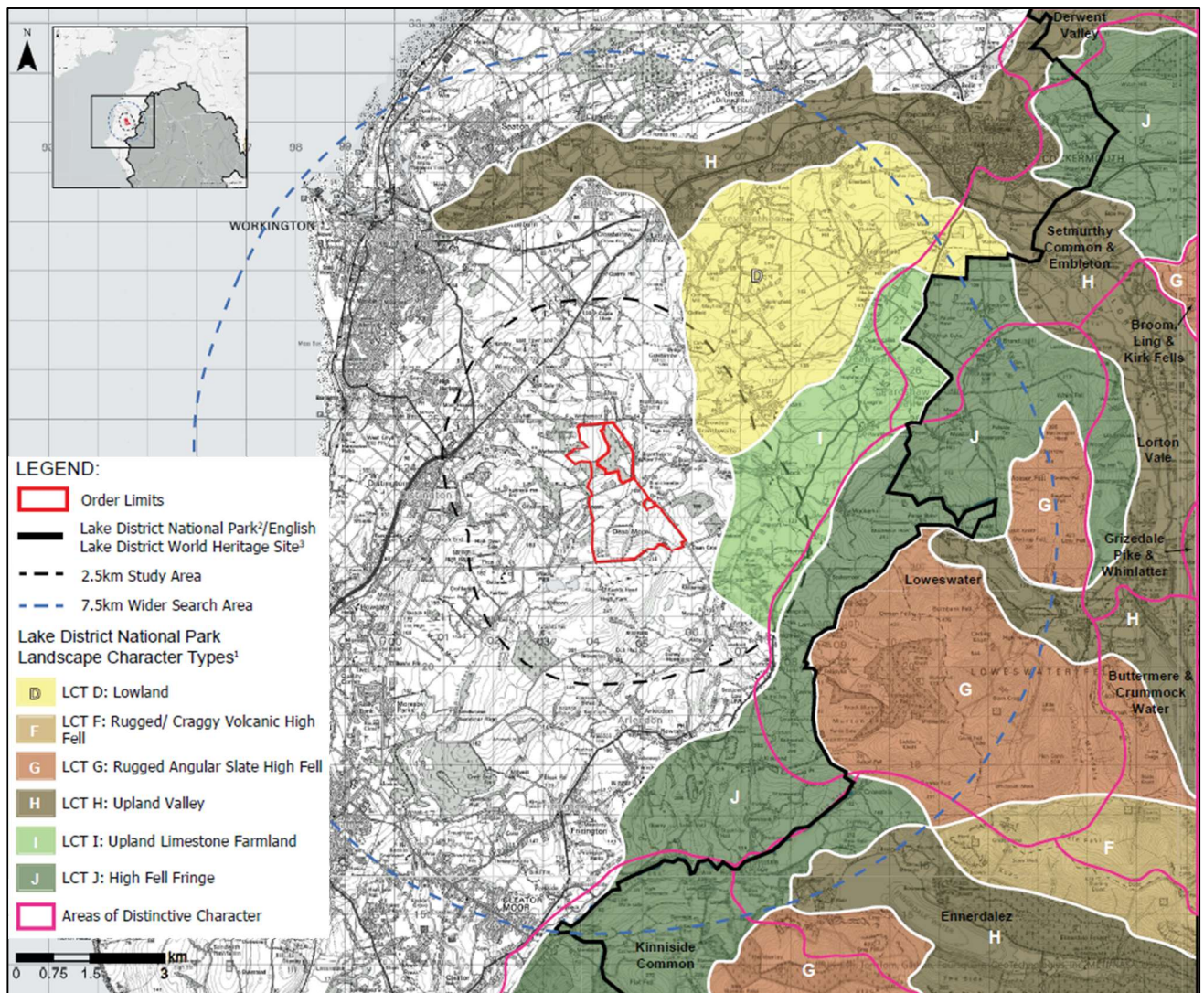
7.4.59 Figures 7.2a and 7.2b below provide an illustration of published landscape character as outlined in the paragraphs above.

Figure 7.2a: Published Landscape Character (Cumbria County Council)





**Figure 7.2b: Published Landscape Character (Lake District National Park)**



### Landscape Character of the Site

7.4.60 This Chapter sets out an appraisal of the Site's local landscape character, to consider landscape character at the more detailed site level. The findings of this assessment are summarised in the following paragraphs (see Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects for detailed assessment).

7.4.61 At the time of the landscape and visual survey, the Site character was defined by an undulating, predominantly rural, agricultural landscape, punctuated by villages and individual farmsteads. Most notably, the southern part of Area C is formed by a plateau which provides elevated

visibility of the wider landscape, before dropping in elevation by some 50m to meet the central area of Area C before falling more gently northwards to Gilgarran Road. The road network tends to be dominated by local routes, mainly single carriageway, with the most prominent route being the A595 which passes through Distington and Lillyhall to the west of the Site.

- 7.4.62 Given the scale of the Site, its undulating nature and relatively rural character there is a level of tranquillity at times within the Site boundaries. The lack of major transport infrastructure adds to this, with only occasional traffic visible along the adjoining roads. The blocks of ancient woodland, particularly to the west, also provide some enclosure. The northern part of the western boundary of Area C is defined by the ancient woodland of Struthers Wood, while the Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland of Jackie Planting lies approximately 200m east of Area C.
- 7.4.63 Where development does exist, for instance at the farmhouse, car garage, or motocross park, it does not alter the overall rural qualities and at times the enclosed characteristics of the Site. The OHL pylons and wind turbines associated with the Wind Farm however do impinge on the visual and tangible landscape qualities, with electrical infrastructure being particularly noticeable within the northern part of Area C.
- 7.4.64 Overall land within the Site and the immediate surrounding area is characteristically undulating and rural, contained in places by existing landform and vegetation, whilst remaining open in other areas, often providing long-distance views towards the ethereal landscape of the LDNP.

## **Landscape Features / Components of the Site**

### **Topography and Site Landform**

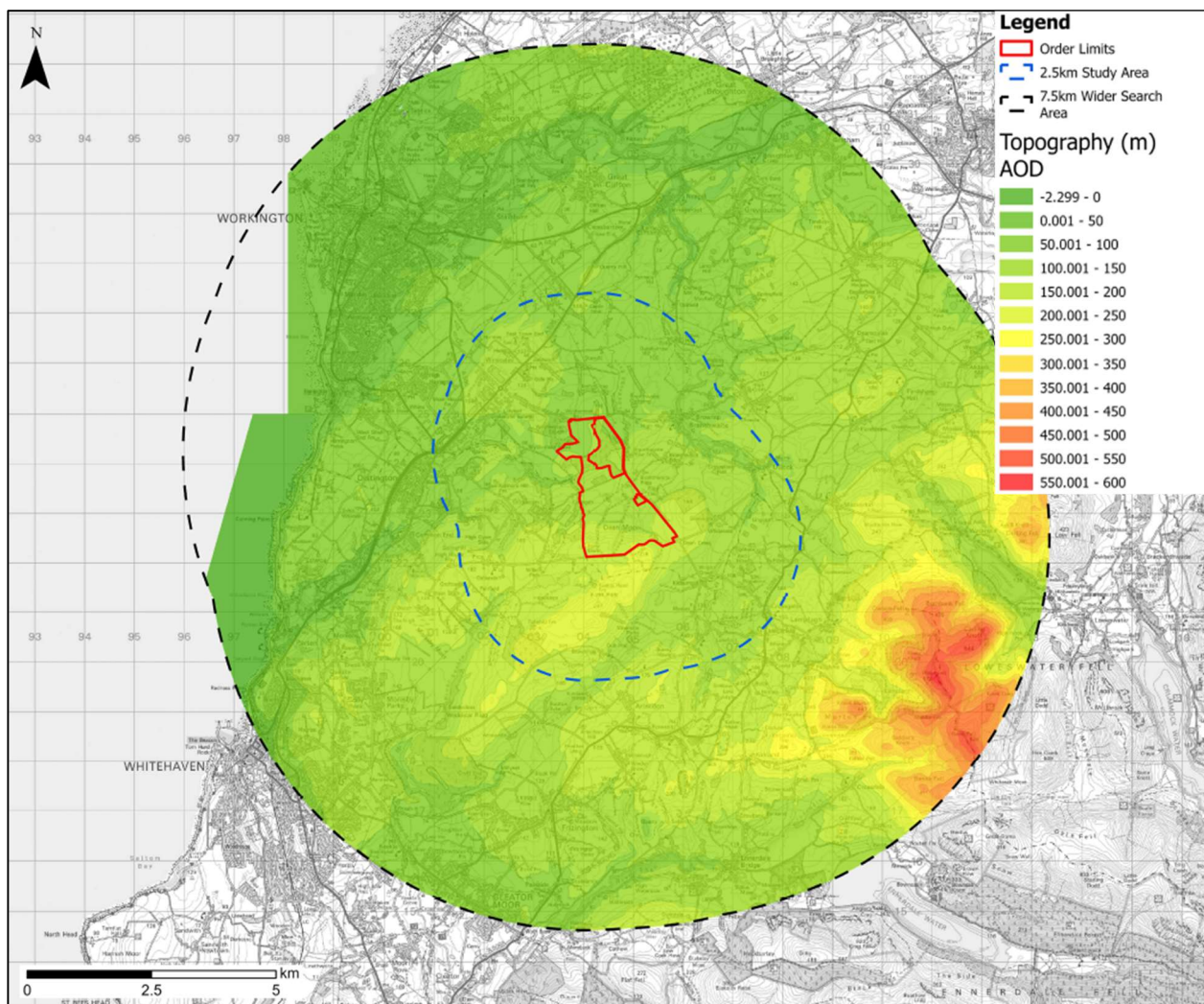
- 7.4.65 Figure 7.3: Topography Plan illustrates the topography of the Site and the wider area.
- 7.4.66 Land within the Site is typically undulating, with the more elevated southern part of the Area C at around 200m AOD forming a horizon



ridgeline for views from within the central area. Although the land is complex and undulating it falls gradually from the southern ridgeline towards the north and north-east, with the low point of around 99m AOD at the northern edge of the Area A along Branthwaite Road.

- 7.4.67 Topography across the wider Study Area tends to be undulating, with flatter land becoming more characteristic to the west. As land reaches the foothills of the LDNP it rises dramatically, providing a mountainous backdrop in views eastward. More prominent undulations in the landscape form shallow valleys, often with watercourses such as Dub Beck ~1.5km southeast of the Site.

**Figure 7.3: Topography Plan**



### **Existing Vegetation of the Site / Green Infrastructure Network**

- 7.4.68 There are some isolated deciduous trees within Area C which follow the minor watercourse which passes west of the farm buildings, and two coniferous woodland blocks. The larger of these, which was partially harvested in Autumn 2023, appears to be plantation woodland, with the smaller block serving as a shelter belt for the farm buildings to the east.
- 7.4.69 Elsewhere within the Site vegetation is predominantly grassland utilised as pasture with areas of scrub mainly on the higher ground to the south of Area C. Other vegetation is limited to gappy hedgerows which criss-cross the Site to form internal field boundaries.
- 7.4.70 The Site's boundaries are defined by gappy, unmanaged hedgerows with sections of dry-stone wall along the southern and eastern boundaries of Area C. Elsewhere, the Site's boundaries are largely open or loosely defined by scrub vegetation, although the northern boundary of Area A which follows Branthwaite Road is formed by a relatively strong informal hedgerow.
- 7.4.71 Overall, the green infrastructure in the vicinity of the Site appears somewhat fragmented, although there is evidence of strong woodland blocks, they are often disconnected, and hedgerows appear gappy and unmanaged with occasional hedgerow trees of varying quality, although these are often supported by timber post and wire fencing.

### **Other Landscape Features within the Site**

- 7.4.72 Access to the individual fields is currently obtained largely through formal tracks which emanate from the farm buildings along the Site's eastern boundary, with gated access to other less formal internal routes available from the surrounding road network.
- 7.4.73 The Site features several minor watercourses, including Thief Gill which courses south to north, eventually passing under the Branthwaite Edge Road which marks the Site's eastern boundary.

- 7.4.74 In addition, there are high-voltage ('HV') and low-voltage ('LV') OHL which pass through Area C. The LV lines run south to north before then cutting east to west, passing through the plantation woodland and under the HV lines. The HV lines run east to west through the northern part of Area C. The Wind Farm is present within Area D.

## People's Views and Visual Amenity

### Key Views

- 7.4.75 There are no published, strategic, or designated key views within the vicinity of the Site, and the Site does not fall within any designated key view cones. Views from the LDNP / WHS have however been considered within this Chapter as part of the view location assessment.

### Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

- 7.4.76 The worst-case ZTV plan (Figure 7.4: Zone of Theoretical Visibility DTM with View Locations), illustrates the theoretical extent to which the Proposed Development with a range of heights considered to represent proposed elements within the Site, i.e., the DNO substation, is likely to be visible from within the surrounding landscape. The Digital Terrain Model ('DTM') ZTV presents a worst-case scenario, or bare-earth scenario, since it only considers topography and excludes other existing features which may influence the extent of visibility (i.e., visual barriers), for example, large areas of woodland and settlements.
- 7.4.77 The remaining ZTV Figures (Figure 7.5 a-c) have been prepared to illustrate visibility of the various elements within the Proposed Development (Solar PV Infrastructure (Work No. 1), Grid Connection Infrastructure (Work No. 2), and POC masts (Work No. 2a)) individually. A ZTV for the communication mast has not been prepared given these are lower than the proposed POC masts and within the same geographical area, therefore their visibility is likely less, and the worst case has already been considered. Figures 7.5 a-c also illustrate gradients of visibility. These Figures have been prepared using Digital Surface Modelling ('DSM') data, which, unlike DTM data, includes features which may

influence visibility through screening, for instance woodland and hedgerows. It should be noted however that the ZTVs have limitations with regards to the screening abilities of features, and therefore serve as a guide only, with actual visibility on the ground potentially less than is illustrated on the various plans.

- 7.4.78 These ZTVs provide a thorough understanding of the theoretical visibility of the various elements of the Proposed Development considering the maximum parameters as shown on Figure 3.4 Parameter Plan
- 7.4.79 Potential visual receptors include those people who use the network of PRowWs, open spaces and outdoor recreational facilities, and the road network, who are visiting, living, or working within the Study Area, including Branthwaite, Gilgarran, Dean Moor Motocross Park, Pica, Distington, and the LDNP.
- 7.4.80 The visual impact assessment to assess impact on visual receptors and visual amenity has been undertaken considering a range of view locations. The selection of view locations for the visual impact assessment was made based upon the following types of publicly accessible viewpoints:
- Representative viewpoints (for example, representing views of users of a particular PRowW);
  - Specific viewpoints (for example, a key view from a specific visitor attraction or heritage asset);
  - Illustrative viewpoints (chosen to demonstrate a particular effect/specific issue); and
  - Important sequential views (for example, along key transport routes).
- 7.4.81 Potential visual receptors include:
- Walkers, cyclists, and equestrians using PRowW and Open Access Land;
  - People travelling on roads;
  - People living and working in local settlements; and
  - People using recreational facilities including the LDNP / WHS.

## View Locations for the Visual Impact Assessment

- 7.4.82 Landform within the Study Area comprises undulating slopes and valleys, relatively steep at times, with slopes rising on escarpments to ridgelines in the case of the southern part of Area C; featuring a landscape pattern of hedgerows of varying quality and mature trees, common land, farmland with isolated farm buildings; narrow unnamed roads and main roads crossing through upland areas. The Site is enclosed and in places hidden from sight due to the Study Area's landform and tree cover, but it is partially visible from higher ground within the LDNP, particularly to the southeast, with scattered visibility to the north and southwest (see Figure 7.4b: Zone of Theoretical Visibility DTM with View Locations).
- 7.4.83 There are limited views of the Site from the local PRoW, such that publicly accessible views from routes are typically in medium to long distance views. Local views (e.g., the local road network on the immediate approach to the Site) are available, but again these can be limited by intervening localised undulations in landform at times. Consequently, the Site has a limited visual envelope overall. The Site may be discernible in long distance views from the LDNP, and these views are represented by and assessed as VL12, VL13a / 13b / 13c and VL14 (see Appendix 7.5: View Location Photosheets).
- 7.4.84 Analysis of the landform and tree cover of the area surrounding the Site, the ZTV plans (Figure 7.5 a-c), and a review of the Proposed Development, indicates that significant visual effects are not expected to occur beyond 2.5km from the Site. View locations beyond this Study Area within the LDNP have been considered given its designated status and following consultation with relevant stakeholders. VL11 has also been included as a sensitive location on the edge of settlement along a PRoW with potential visibility.
- 7.4.85 Table 7.4: Selection of Visual Receptors and View Locations lists the selected representative view locations for the visual assessment, at which significant visual effects upon people's views and visual amenity are



anticipated and those which have been considered following consultation with the LDNPA and the Council. The locations are also illustrated on Figure 7.4: Zone of Theoretical Visibility DTM with View Locations. The view locations were visited during winter and summer 2023, and winter 2024 (March) as part of the landscape and visual survey work, to analyse the 2023/24 baseline views and to consider the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development.

7.4.86 Additional photography from existing view locations which informed the assessment of cumulative effects were visited in October 2024 and are discussed in section 7.8 of this Chapter. Several view locations have been removed from those identified within the PEIR as it is considered that no view of the Proposed Development would be experienced at those locations. Removed view locations are: VL1a, VL3a, VL3b, VL4, and VL5.

**Table 7.4: Selection of Visual Receptors and View Locations**

View Location Reference	Location	Distance from the Site	Reason for Inclusion and Type of Visual Receptor
VL1(b-c)	Local PRoW (260005) on edge of Lillyhall	790m (at nearest point)	Sequential views of recreational users on local BW 260005, including specific views from the isolated farmstead at Wythemoor Head (VL1c).
VL2a	Unclassified road south of Gilgarran	760m	Representative of road users travelling southeast towards Dean Cross Road near Gilgarran.
VL2b	Gilgarran Road, northeast of Gilgarran	140m	Representative of residential receptors at the Colingate property (Gilgarran).
VL2c	Gilgarran Road, northeast of Gilgarran	480m	Representative of residential receptors at Gilgarran.
VL3c	Dean Cross Road near isolated rural properties – Wilson Park / Studford	Adjacent to Area C southern boundary	Representative of road users along Dean Cross Road travelling east, looking north from the southern Area C boundary.
VL6a / 6b	Dean Cross	Adjacent to Area C southern / eastern boundary	Representative of users of the local highway and adjacent commercial premises, located near to Dean Moor motocross park.
VL7	Branthwaite Edge Road adjacent to	Adjacent to Area C	Representative of users of Branthwaite Edge Road, and Rigg House residential property.



View Location Reference	Location	Distance from the Site	Reason for Inclusion and Type of Visual Receptor
	isolated rural property – Rigg House	eastern boundary	
VL8 (a-b)	Local PRoW (260005) on edge of Branthwaite	700m (at nearest point)	Sequential views, representative of recreational users on local FP (260005) with specific views from the settlement edge at Branthwaite.
VL9	Branthwaite Road near isolated rural property – Wythemoor House	175m	Representative of users of Branthwaite Road, and Wythemoor House residential property.
VL10	Local PRoW (230010) at Caple How	2.4km	Representative of recreational users on local FP 230010.
VL15	View from residential properties at Pica	1.9km	Representative of residential receptors at Pica.
<b>Outside Study Area</b>			
VL11	Settlement of Dean and local PRoW (FP225006)	2.9km	Representative of residential receptors at Dean, and users of the local FP 225006.
VL12	Local PRoW (412025) near Cogra Moss / Felldyke within LDNP / WHS	3.9km	Representative of recreational users on the local FP 412025 and users of the LDNP including areas of Open Access Land.
VL13a / 13b / 13c)	View from Blake Fell within the LDNP / WHS	5.9km	Representative of recreational users of the LDNP including areas of Open Access Land.
VL14	View from Darling Fell within the LDNP / WHS	8km	Representative of recreational users of the LDNP including areas of Open Access Land.

7.4.87 No private (e.g., residential) views or visual receptors have been assessed in the Chapter, as it is not considered effects would surpass the threshold required for RVAA, as detailed within Technical Guidance Note 2/19<sup>31</sup>, prepared by the LI. However, where appropriate, visual receptors have been considered in the Chapter through selection of representative view locations at publicly accessible locations within or on the edge of main settlements, property groupings or other buildings or facilities likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development.

<sup>31</sup> Landscape Institute (2019), Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). Published 15 March 2019.

- 7.4.88 The baseline description for each visual receptor view location, including information about the type of view and relative number of people whose views are likely to be affected, is set out within Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects.

### **Value of Views**

- 7.4.89 The value attached to the views experienced by people has regard to several factors, including recognition through planning designations or heritage assets, and the popularity of the viewpoint. Table 1.6, Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology sets out the criteria for determining the value of people's views, from low to high.
- 7.4.90 As part of the baseline review, an assessment of value has been made for people's views and visual amenity which may be affected by the Proposed Development. These are set out in detail in Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects.

### **Sensitivity of Landscape and Visual Receptors**

- 7.4.91 These impact assessments include judgements of receptors' susceptibility to change, which, combined with judgements on the baseline value attributed to receptors, provides an assessment of the overall sensitivity of each receptor. Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology sets out the typical scales of sensitivity and the criteria for determining susceptibility to change. A summary of overall sensitivity to change arising from the Proposed Development is set out below.

### **Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors**

- 7.4.92 The English Lake District WHS was identified as being of very high sensitivity with consideration given to its UNESCO status. The LDNP was assessed as being of high sensitivity to the Proposed Development, given its national status. The ADC associated with the LDNP were also considered to be of high sensitivity to changes brought about by the Proposed Development. LCTs H: Upland Valley and I: Upland Limestone Farmland were considered to be of high sensitivity given their

susceptibility to change, with *‘very limited / limited capacity to accommodate change without compromising key characteristics.’*

- 7.4.93 All remaining published landscape character was identified as having medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development which recognises that while there are locally identified characteristics of some value, the landscape itself is of moderate condition and would have partial tolerance to the change proposed.
- 7.4.94 Other landscape receptors within the assessment which were identified as having a medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development are: landform; landscape character of the Site; green infrastructure network; and trees, woodland, and hedgerows within the Site. The Site’s landform, trees woodland and hedgerows, and local site character are in moderate condition, provide some scenic quality which is valued at a local and regional levels, form part of the key characteristics, and have partial tolerance to change from the type of Proposed Development.

### **Sensitivity of Visual Receptors**

- 7.4.95 The locations of visual receptors are illustrated on Figure 7.4b: Zone of Theoretical Visibility with View Locations.
- 7.4.96 Visual receptors at view locations VL13a-c and VL14 have been identified as having a very high sensitivity. This is because of being located within the LDNP/ WHS.
- 7.4.97 Visual receptors at view locations VL2b, VL3c, VL6a / 6b, VL7, VL9, VL12 and VL15 are judged as having a high sensitivity. This is based on, in the case of VL3c, VL5, VL6a / 6b, VL7 and VL9, their residential status and/or proximity to the Site, and in the case of VL10 and VL12 being from a location where receptor’s attention is likely to be focussed on the visual experience of the landscape.
- 7.4.98 Visual receptors at VL1b–c, VL2a, VL2c, VL8a-b, VL9, VL10 and VL11 were judged as having a medium sensitivity based on their moderate

scenic value for receptors with a broadly moderate interest in their surroundings.

7.4.99 Table 7.5: Evaluation of Sensitivity of Receptors below outlines the combination of value and susceptibility which resulted in the sensitivity rating for each receptor.

**Table 7.5: Evaluation of Sensitivity of Receptors**

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
The English Lake District WHS	Very High	High	Very High
Lake District National Park (Special Qualities)	High	High	High
LCT Sub-type 9a: Open Moorlands	Medium	Medium	Medium
LCT Sub-type 9d: Ridges	Medium	Medium	Medium
LCT Sub-type 5a: Ridge and Valley	Medium	Medium	Medium
ADC 6: Setmurthy Common & Embleton	High	Medium	High
ADC 8: Loweswater	High	Medium	High
LCT D: Lowland	High	Medium	High
LCT G: Rugged Angular Slate High Fell	High	Medium	High
LCT H: Upland Valley	High	High	High
LCT I: Upland Limestone Farmland	High	High	High
LCT J: High Fell Fringe	High	Medium	High
Landscape Character of the Site	Medium	Medium	Medium
Topography and Site Landform	Medium	Medium	Medium
Green Infrastructure Network	Medium	Medium	Medium
Trees, woodland and hedgerows within the Site	Medium	Medium	Medium
VL1b-c	Medium	High	Medium
VL2a	Medium	Medium	Medium
VL2b	Medium	High	High
VL2c	Medium	Medium	Medium
VL3c	High	Medium	High
VL6a / 6b	Medium	High	High

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
VL7	Medium	High	High
VL8a-b	Medium	Medium	Medium
VL9	Medium	High	High
VL10	Medium	Medium	Medium
VL11	Medium	Medium	Medium
VL12	High	High	High
VL13a / 13b / 13c	Very High	High	Very High
VL14	Very High	High	Very High
VL15	Medium	High	High

### **Magnitude of Impacts on Landscape and Visual Receptors**

- 7.4.100 The magnitude of impacts on the identified receptors is derived through the combination of size/scale, geographical extent, duration, and reversibility in relation to the Proposed Development.
- 7.4.101 A detailed description of the process which results in a judgement of magnitude for receptors is provided within Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology within section 3.

### **Level of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects**

- 7.4.102 Significance of landscape and visual effects vary with the location, landscape context and type of proposed development. Effects may be adverse (negative) or beneficial (positive) to a receptor.
- 7.4.103 The level of significance of landscape and visual effects is determined from a combination of the receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effects, as set out in Table 7.4, Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology. In general, Substantial, Major, and Moderate levels of effect are considered 'significant'. However, there may be occasions where a Moderate level of effect can be identified as 'not significant' on balance. Where this is the case a thorough explanation for the judgement will be given. Minor and negligible levels of significance are identified as 'not significant'.

- 7.4.104 The judgements of receptors' sensitivity and the magnitude of effects are set out in the detailed landscape and visual impact assessments contained in Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects and Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects. Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology sets out the criteria used to assess the receptors' sensitivity and the magnitude of landscape and visual impacts.

### **Future Baseline Conditions**

- 7.4.105 The landscape and visual baseline are likely to change very slightly in locations where established trees, woodland and other vegetation that is retained, is still growing, and developing. Typically, the growth of that vegetation by 2026 would incur a minimal increase in visual screening properties in views from and to the Site and surrounding area. Conversely, ongoing management, including pruning and tree felling, may periodically increase views of the Site.
- 7.4.106 Overall, the prevailing baseline conditions in 2024 are unlikely to experience noticeable change up to the year 2026, which is the earliest works can be expected to commence should the DCO be made. Potential change does however include the limitation of vegetation growth within 50m of the Wind Farm which is required to be kept at 5m or less in height. It should be noted that this has also influenced the design iteration of the Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 7.6.1-7.6.5).
- 7.4.107 In relation to this Chapter, the identified baseline could evolve through the changes to vegetation species composition due to changes in rainfall and average temperatures. The extent and nature of such changes is unquantifiable but may include, for example, decreasing prevalence of beech trees within the area as a result of increasing temperatures. However, within the timescales considered in this assessment, such changes are unlikely to be discernible, and it is not anticipated that the effects of climate change would result in material changes to the baseline conditions as described above.



- 7.4.108 Therefore, for the purposes of this assessment it is assumed that the baseline vegetation of 2026 would provide similar function to that in 2024.

### **Decommissioning of the Potato Pot Wind Farm**

- 7.4.109 The Potato Pot Wind Farm is scheduled for decommissioning by 2043 which falls during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.
- 7.4.110 The assessment undertaken within this Chapter has considered the effects of the Proposed Development on the current baseline with the Potato Pot Wind Farm present. This is considered a worst-case scenario as discussed below.
- 7.4.111 This worst-case scenario is taken given the presence of the existing wind turbines as part of the current baseline which are noted within the 'Baseline Conditions' section of this chapter as comprising elevated features which *'impinge on the visual and tangible landscape qualities.'*
- 7.4.112 Whilst these baseline features do have an influence on the existing characteristics of the Site, given the presence of other infrastructure (electricity pylons and farm buildings), it is not considered that their removal would alter the overall susceptibility or sensitivity of the landscape receptors, considered within this chapter.
- 7.4.113 Furthermore, the assessment considers the combination of the effects of Proposed Development on the landscape and visual receptors with the baseline presence of the wind turbines. Their removal would not materially alter the magnitude or likely effects resulting from the Proposed Development or lead to an increase in adverse impacts in respect of any assessed landscape or visual effects.
- 7.4.114 However, the decommissioning would also likely remove the restriction for the growth in height of the vegetation surrounding the turbines which could lead to a reduction in visibility of the Proposed Development in the longer term.

## 7.5 Likely Significant Effects

### Receptors Discounted at the PEIR Stage

7.5.1 As part of the PEIR assessment undertaken, a range of receptors were predicted to experience no change because of the Proposed Development. Given that the ES has sought to focus on assessment of likely significant effects, these receptors have been discounted from the ES. The ES has however sought to retain landscape receptors within the baseline text to provide context, and Table 7.6 below provides the rationale as to why these receptors were discounted from the ES assessment.

**Table 7.6: Receptors Discounted at the PEIR Stage**

Receptor	Assessed Significance of Effect	Reason for Discounting
<b>Landscape Receptors</b>		
The English Lake District WHS	No change	Pre-application advice from the LDNPA in August 2023 advised that “...the impact, if any, is likely to be visual...” however it was agreed that “...the impact on the Lake District National Park both as a National Park and a World Heritage Site should be addressed”.  The PEIR therefore assessed the LDNP and WHS and found there to be no change from a landscape perspective.
Lake District National Park (Special Qualities)	No change	As above.
LDNP ADC: Setmurthy Common & Embleton	No change	No changes to the key characteristics of the ADC were predicted as a result of overall distance, lack of intervisibility and non-encroachment of its boundaries.
LDNP LCT D: Lowland	No change	No direct or indirect changes to the LCTs definitive attributes as described in the LDNP Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines (2021)
LDNP LCT H: Upland Valley	No change	No direct or indirect changes to the LCTs definitive attributes as described in the LDNP Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines (2021)
LDNP LCT J: High Fell Fringe	No change	No direct or indirect changes to the LCTs definitive attributes as described in the LDNP Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines (2021)

Receptor	Assessed Significance of Effect	Reason for Discounting
Watercourses of the Site	No change	Watercourses within the Site would be protected during the construction/decommissioning phase of the works. No changes are proposed to the features.
<b>Visual Receptors</b>		
VL1a	No change	No view of the Proposed Development during any stage of construction, operation, or decommissioning.
VL3a	No change	No view of the Proposed Development during any stage of construction, operation, or decommissioning.
VL3b	No change	No view of the Proposed Development during any stage of construction, operation, or decommissioning.
VL4	No change	No view of the Proposed Development during any stage of construction, operation, or decommissioning.
VL5	No change	No view of the Proposed Development during any stage of construction, operation, or decommissioning.

### Embedded Mitigation

7.5.2 Embedded mitigation measures are primary measures of mitigation which have been developed through the iterative design process and are now integrated, or embedded, into the design of the Proposed Development.

7.5.3 A range of embedded mitigation measures which are relevant to construction, operational, and decommissioning phases, and which have been considered for this Chapter are shown on Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5: Landscape Strategy Plan [REF: 6.2]. These indicative planting proposals and measures will be secured via a DCO Requirement and include:

- Retention of existing Site boundary vegetation where practicable, particularly established/mature woodland habitats;
- Use of existing field entrances during delivery / construction of the Proposed Development to minimise impact on field boundaries;
- Careful siting of proposed infrastructure to minimise visual intrusion, including ‘no-build’ areas on the elevated open moorland within the southern part of Area C, with relaxed grazing in place to ultimately attain species-rich grassland, and taller plant and features located centrally within the site to minimise visibility from sensitive receptors;
- Suitable buffers to the Site’s features from the proposed elements, including ancient woodland to the western Site boundary, and watercourses and electricity infrastructure within the Site;

- Provision of sheep grazing (where possible, and as controlled by the OGMP within the OLEMP), providing the opportunity to retain the Site in agricultural use;
- Reinforcement of existing field boundaries (hedgerows and dry-stone walls) where beneficial; and
- New native structural landscape planting to provide visual screening, including native hedgerows, hedgerow trees, scrub / shrub planting, with the aim of breaking up the extent of development, and linking existing habitats / landscape features where possible to provide enhanced green infrastructure and biodiversity opportunities.

7.5.4 Embedded mitigation measures (once established) collectively will provide green infrastructure resources which have multifunctional environmental benefits for the natural environment.

### **Enhancement Measures**

7.5.5 Enhancement measures are those which are additional to the embedded measures listed above. Enhancement measures as shown on Figure 7.6.1

– 7.6.5: Landscape Strategy Plan include:

- Additional scrub and woodland planting on the steeper, southern section of Thief Gill in line with green infrastructure policies within the Allerdale Local Plan (Policy S24);
- Scrub and marginal planting including wildflower areas along watercourses to enhance habitat connection and provide BNG;
- Infilling of existing field boundary hedgerows where gappy and retained at 3-3.5m height;
- Opportunities to enhance existing dry stone walls at the Site's boundaries by rebuilding to a height of 1-1.5m and repairing where necessary; and
- Enhance the pond within Area D by removing / clearing existing overgrown vegetation and re-planting with suitable marginal species.

### **Construction Phase**

7.5.6 An assessment of the likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase has been undertaken (see Appendix 7.1: Landscape and Visual Methodology).

7.5.7 The principal elements and activities that will influence landscape character, landscape features, and visual amenity during the construction phase include:

- The loss of openness and alterations to the existing appearance of the Site caused by construction activities, albeit this is a worked landscape and does contain certain agricultural operations;
- The introduction of new temporary elements, including construction compounds, new internal access tracks, equipment stockpiles, welfare facilities, plant and machinery, and construction site security features where required;
- Groundworks, including topsoil stripping and excavation for ancillary structures and cables;
- The noise and movement of plant and machinery within the Site and the surrounding landscape, including crane activities and construction/delivery traffic on local roads;
- Installation of protective barriers which may include tree protection fencing to BS 5837:2012<sup>32</sup> standard and / or silt fencing for protection of watercourses; and
- The building and emergence of new built forms, including solar arrays, ancillary structures including the grid connection infrastructure, fencing, and CCTV.

## Landscape

- 7.5.8 Full details of assessment of landscape effects during construction are set out in Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects.
- 7.5.9 During construction there are **moderate adverse**, short-term, reversible, direct and **significant** level of effects predicted on the landscape character of the Site. This is as a result of the introduction of construction activity across the Site including an increase in traffic activity, the presence of temporary construction compounds and small-scale loss of field boundary hedgerows to facilitate Site access. The Proposed Development would also result in a change from open agricultural land to a solar development with associated ancillary items such as the solar PCS units, substation buildings and external electrical equipment, and perimeter and internal security fencing. This would therefore alter the intrinsic character of the majority of the Site, and the influence of the Proposed Development would affect the baseline conditions.

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<sup>32</sup> BSI Standards Publication (2012). Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations.

- 7.5.10 There are predicted to be **moderate adverse**, short-term, reversible, direct / indirect, and **significant** level of effects on LCT 9a: Open Moorlands as a result of localised changes within the character of the wider LCT.
- 7.5.11 There are predicted to be a **minor adverse**, short-term, reversible, direct, and indirect, and **not significant** level of effects on LCT 9d: Ridges, LCT 5a: Ridge and Valley because of the Proposed Development encroaching into a small area of the wider landscape associated with the LCTs.
- 7.5.12 There are predicted to be a **minor adverse**, short-term, reversible, indirect, and **not significant** level of effects on the LDNP ADC Loweswater, LCT I: Upland Limestone Farmland and LCT G: Rugged Angular High Slate Fell as a result of the Proposed Development. This largely results in a negligible change in the experiential qualities of the ADC given its proximity to the Site and high sensitivity, and negligible changes to experiential qualities within the LCTs.
- 7.5.13 A **negligible adverse**, short-term, reversible, direct, and **not significant** level of effect is predicted for topography and site landform, the green infrastructure network, and trees, woodland and hedgerows within the Site. This is because of negligible change on these landscape features overall during construction. Installation of the Proposed Development would retain existing landform where practicable and widening of access for vehicle movement (which would incur loss of hedgerow) would be minimal.
- 7.5.14 All remaining landscape receptors are predicted to experience **no change** because of the Proposed Development during construction.



## Visual

- 7.5.15 Full details of assessment of visual effects during construction are set out in Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects. All effects for visual receptors are direct.
- 7.5.16 A **major to substantial adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for receptors at VL6a / 6b (Dean Cross) and VL7 (Rigg House). This is largely due to their high sensitivity, broadly representing residential receptors, and proximity to construction activity within and adjacent to the Site.
- 7.5.17 A **major adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for receptors at VL9 (Wythemoor House). This is because of their high sensitivity to change, and overall change in views as a consequence of the Proposed Development under construction.
- 7.5.18 A **moderate adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for receptors at VL3c (Dean Cross Road), VL10 (PRoW FP 230010), VL13c (Blake Fell), and VL14 (Darling Fell). This is because of increasing visibility as users of the PRoW approach the Site from the east for VL3c, and views towards activity within an expansive view of the LDNP for VL10 and from the LDNP at VL13c and VL14.
- 7.5.19 **Minor adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **not significant** level of effects are predicted for receptors at VL1c (PRoW BW 260005), VL2a (Gilgarran), VL2b (Gilgarran Road), VL2c (Gilgarran Road), VL8b (PRoW FP 260005), VL11 (Dean), VL12 (PRoW FP 412025) and VL15 (Pica).
- 7.5.20 **Negligible adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **not significant** effects are predicted for visual receptors at VL1b (PRoW BW 260005), and VL8a (PRoW FP 260005).
- 7.5.21 **No change** is predicted for receptors at the remaining view locations.

## Operational Phase

### Landscape

- 7.5.22 Full details of assessment of landscape effects during operation are set out in Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects. For the majority of receptors, the level of effect would reduce during operation given that activity associated with the construction phase would cease, and any temporary construction compounds removed.
- 7.5.23 A **moderate adverse**, medium to long-term, reversible, direct, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for the landscape character of the Site. This reduction in effect is due to the reduction in construction activity across the Site as mentioned above, including removal of temporary construction features such as fencing or welfare buildings, however the Proposed Development would still represent a material change in landscape character overall.
- 7.5.24 A **minor adverse**, medium to long-term, direct, reversible, and **not significant** level of effect is predicted for LCT 9a: Open Moorlands given the change to the LCT within its wider footprint as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 7.5.25 A **negligible adverse**, medium-term, direct, reversible, and **not significant** level of effect is predicted for topography and landform of the Site, the green infrastructure network, trees, woodland, and hedgerows within the Site, LCT 5a: Ridge and Valley, and LCT 9d: Ridges given the limited change within the wider footprint of the LCTs as a result of the Proposed Development. An indirect effect of the same nature is predicted for the LDNP ADC Loweswater given the limited effects on its experiential qualities.
- 7.5.26 **No change** is predicted for the remaining landscape receptors.

### Visual

- 7.5.27 Full details of assessment of visual effects during operation are set out in Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects. All effects for visual receptors

are direct. For the majority of receptors, the level of effect would reduce during operation given that activity associated with the construction phase would cease, and any temporary construction compounds removed.

- 7.5.28 A **major adverse**, medium to long-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for residential receptors at VL6a / 6b (Dean Cross), VL7 (Rigg House), and VL9 (Wythemoor House). The embedded mitigation measures would provide some filtering of views but would not be established to the level of screening views of the Proposed Development entirely.
- 7.5.29 A **moderate adverse**, medium to long-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effect is also predicted for receptors of very high sensitivity at VL13c (Blake Fell), and VL14 (Darling Fell). The proposed planting measures would not have matured, and therefore the solar panels and associated elements would remain noticeable for these receptors.
- 7.5.30 Following the removal of construction activity, including vehicle movements, a **minor adverse**, medium to long-term, reversible, and **not significant** level of effect is predicted for receptors at VL1c (PRoW BW 260005), VL2a (Gilgarran), VL2b (Gilgarran Road), VL2c (Gilgarran Road), VL3c (Dean Cross Road), VL8b (PRoW FP 260005), VL10 (PRoW FP 230010), VL11 (Dean), and VL12 (PRoW FP 412025). For the same reasons, a **negligible adverse**, medium to long-term, reversible, and **not significant** level of effect is predicted for receptors at VL1b (PRoW BW 260005), and VL8a (PRoW FP 260005).
- 7.5.31 **No change** is predicted for the remainder of visual receptors.

## Decommissioning Phase

### Landscape

- 7.5.32 Full details of assessment of landscape effects during the decommissioning phase are set out in Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects. It should be noted that during decommissioning of the Proposed Development it is considered that the mitigation planting (both

embedded and additional) would provide increased levels of visual screening and enhancement to local landscape character in comparison with conditions during the construction phase of works. However, this would not result in a material change to the level of effects reported.

- 7.5.33 During decommissioning of the Proposed Development, a **moderate adverse**, short-term, direct, reversible, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for the landscape character of the Site. The removal of the generating station would create effects similar to those experienced during the construction phase, albeit in reverse, over the short-term.
- 7.5.34 A **minor adverse**, short-term, direct, reversible, and **not significant** level of effect is predicted for LCT 9a: Open Moorlands, LCT 9d: Ridges, and LCT 5a: Ridge and Valley as a result of activity during decommissioning. A **minor adverse**, short-term, indirect, reversible, and **not significant** effect was predicted for the LDNP ADC Loweswater, LCT I: Upland Limestone Farmland, and LCT G: Rugged Angular High Slate Fell during decommissioning.
- 7.5.35 A **negligible adverse**, short-term, direct, reversible, and **not significant** level of effect was predicted for topography and landform of the Site, trees, woodland and hedgerows within the Site and the green infrastructure network.
- 7.5.36 **No change** was predicted for the remaining landscape receptors during decommissioning.

### Visual

- 7.5.37 Full details of assessment of visual effects during the decommissioning phase are set out in Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects. All effects for visual receptors are direct.
- 7.5.38 **Major adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effects were predicted for visual receptors at VL7 (Rigg House). There would be an increase in activity visible for residential receptors at VL7 similar to the construction phase, however the mitigation of improved landscape

structure that forms part of the Proposed Development including hedgerow and hedgerow trees which would provide a reasonable level of screening for some activity.

7.5.39 **Moderate adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **significant** level of effects were predicted for receptors at VL3c (Dean Cross Road), VL6a / 6b (Dean Cross), VL9 (Wythemoor House), VL10 (PRoW FP 230010), VL13c (Blake Fell) and VL14 (Darling Fell). This is largely due to the relatively clear views towards parts of the Site experienced by the majority of these receptors. At VL6a / 6b, the closest of receptors to the Site, views of activity for residential receptors would be screened to some level by the improved landscape structure that forms part of the mitigation for the Proposed Development.

7.5.40 **Minor adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **not significant** level of effects were predicted for visual receptors at VL1c (PRoW BW 260005), VL2a (Gilgarran), VL2b (Gilgarran Road), VL2c (Gilgarran Road), VL8b (PRoW FP 260005), VL11 (Dean), VL12 (PRoW FP 412025), and VL15 (Pica).

7.5.41 **Negligible adverse**, short-term, reversible, and **not significant** level of effects were predicted for the remaining receptors at VL1b (PRoW BW 260005), and VL8a (PRoW FP 260005).

## 7.6 Mitigation Measures

### Construction Phase

7.6.1 Standard best practice construction and operational management practices will be adopted for avoiding and reducing environmental effects. These measures are considered as additional mitigation measures (secondary mitigation) and form the basis of the assessment of residual landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development during the construction phase. They would be implemented through a suite of management plans secured by DCO Requirement, with outline versions provided as part of this ES. These include:

- The OCEMP (Appendix 5.1) which covers ecological/arboriculture interests and other environmental effects on-Site such as surface water flood risk, waste management, noise impact management.
- An Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan ('OCTMP') (Appendix 5.2) which relates to the control of HGV and LGV traffic, including worker vehicles, for the safety and amenity of the local road network ('LRN') around the Site.
- An Outline Soil Management Plan ('OSMP') (Appendix 5.3) which will help to preserve soils as a resource in their own right, and as a resource that is critical for the success of the operational LEMP.

## **Operational Phase**

- 7.6.2 In terms of operational effects, the OOMP (Appendix 3.1) sets out the responsibilities, controls, and environmental management measures which will support the operation of the Proposed Development. This is considered as additional mitigation.
- 7.6.3 Furthermore, the establishment and growth of planting proposals and their ongoing maintenance, and the management of existing landscape features are considered as additional mitigation measures (secondary mitigation) and form the basis of the assessment of residual landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development during the operational phase at Year 15.
- 7.6.4 It is anticipated that the future management of the indicative planting proposals (considered as embedded mitigation and shown on Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5: Landscape Strategy Plan) will be carried out in compliance with the LEMP (an OLEMP accompanies this ES as Appendix 7.7) to secure the successful long-term establishment of the final mitigation measures. The LEMP will be secured via a DCO Requirement.

## **Decommissioning Phase**

- 7.6.5 Standard and best practice decommissioning management practices will be adopted for avoiding and reducing environmental effects. These measures are considered as additional mitigation measures (secondary mitigation) and form the basis of the assessment of residual landscape



and visual effects of the Proposed Development during the decommissioning phase.

7.6.6 They would be implemented through a suite of management plans secured by a DCO Requirement, with a Framework Decommissioning Management Plan ('FDMP') provided at (Appendix 5.4) [REF: 6.3].

Documents expected to be part of any DMP document suite include:

- A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan ('DEMP') which will cover ecological/arboriculture interests and other environmental effects on-Site such as surface water flood risk, waste management, noise impact management, etc.
- A Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan ('DTMP') which relates to the control of HGV and LGV traffic, including worker vehicles, for the safety and amenity of the LRN around the Site.
- A Decommissioning Soil Management Plan ('DSMP') which will help to preserve soils as a resource in their own right, and as a resource that is critical for the successful restoration of the landscape.

## 7.7 Residual Effects

7.7.1 Residual effects are those predicted on receptors following implementation of additional (secondary) mitigation measures including management plans and the successful establishment and management of new and existing planting, in the case of this ES at Year 15 of operation.

### Construction Phase

7.7.2 Full explanatory commentary on the magnitude and significance of effects on receptors is set out in Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects, and Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects.

7.7.3 The residual landscape and visual effects relating to the construction phase from the implementation of the OCEMP (Appendix 5.1) are not anticipated to result in changes to the reported likely significant effects.

### Operational Phase

#### Landscape

7.7.4 Full details of assessment of landscape effects during operation are set out in Appendix 7.2: Schedule of Landscape Effects.

- 7.7.5 Following successful establishment of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, a **moderate beneficial**, long-term, partially reversible, direct, and **significant** level of effect is predicted for trees, woodland and hedgerow within the Site, and the green infrastructure network. This is as a result of the successful establishment of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures which would increase BNG across the Site and improve habitat network connectivity.
- 7.7.6 A **minor adverse**, long-term, partially reversible/partially permanent, direct, and **not significant** level of effect was determined for the landscape character of the Site. The localised change in character as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development would remain in place, however the successful establishment of the mitigation measures, including land being retained for grazing purposes would reduce the level of effect from the opening year.
- 7.7.7 **Negligible adverse**, long-term, partially reversible/partially permanent, direct, and **not significant** level of effects were predicted for LCT 9a: Open Moorlands, LCT 9d: Ridges, LCT 5a: Ridge and Valley, and Topography and Site Landform. An indirect, partially reversible/partially permanent level of effects of the same level were predicted for the LDNP ADC Loweswater.
- 7.7.8 **No change** was predicted for the remaining landscape receptors.

### Visual

- 7.7.9 Full details of assessment of visual effects during operation are set out in Appendix 7.3: Schedule of Visual Effects. All effects for visual receptors are direct.
- 7.7.10 A **major adverse**, long-term partially reversible/partially permanent, and **significant** level of effects was predicted for receptors at VL7 (Rigg House). Although the proposed mitigation measures would provide some level of visual filtering for residents at the nearby property, given the

orientation of the property and the widespread nature of the solar arrays, the Proposed Development would remain highly visible.

- 7.7.11 **Moderate adverse**, long-term, partially reversible, and **significant** level of effects were predicted for visual receptors at VL6a / 6b (Dean Cross), and VL9 (Wythemoor House). This reduction in level of effect from Year 1 results from the screening afforded by the successful establishment of mitigation/enhancement measures by Year 15 of operation, in particular the woodland, hedgerow and hedgerow trees proposed adjacent to the receptors. A **moderate adverse**, long-term, partially reversible, and **significant** level of effect was predicted to remain at VL13c (Blake Fell), and VL14 (Darling Fell). This is largely as a result of the very high sensitivity of the receptors; the relevant magnitude being negligible for both.
- 7.7.12 **Minor adverse**, long-term, partially reversible/partially permanent, and not **significant** level of effects were predicted for receptors at VL1c (PRoW BW 260005), 2a, and 2b, VL2c (Gilgarran Road), VL3c (Dean Cross Road), VL8b (PRoW FP 260005), VL10 (PRoW FP 230010), and VL12 (PRoW FP 412025).
- 7.7.13 **Negligible adverse**, long-term, partially reversible/partially permanent and **not significant** level of effects were predicted for receptors at VL1b (PRoW BW 260005), VL8a (PRoW FP 260005), and VL11 (Dean).
- 7.7.14 **No change** in view was predicted for visual receptors at VL15 (Pica).

## Decommissioning Phase

- 7.7.15 The residual landscape and visual effects relating to the construction phase from the implementation of the DMP are not anticipated to result in changes to the reported likely significant effects.

## 7.8 Cumulative Effects

- 7.8.1 A detailed assessment of potential cumulative effects in relation to other consented or developments in the planning system, that lie within the

Study Area is discussed within the Appendix 7.4: Cumulative Assessment which is further supported by Figure 7.4a: Cumulative View Location Plan, and Figure 7.4b: Cumulative Photosheets. The results of the cumulative assessment are summarised below.

- 7.8.2 A Cumulative Landscape and Visual Assessment was undertaken for two discrete developments: Lostrigg Solar (formerly EN0110004), which would be located directly north of the Site, and Land at Lillyhall North (planning ref. FUL/2021/0009) which is a hybrid infrastructure / industrial application whereby development would be located northwest of the Site. The Lostrigg Solar project was at the pre-application stage for a solar farm with over 50MW capacity. While this has since been withdrawn as a DCO project, it remains under consideration within the ES due to the expectation that it may come forward under the Town and Country Planning Act regime.
- 7.8.3 With regards to landscape character, given that Land at Lillyhall North lies within LCT Sub-type 5d: Urban Fringe, while Lostrigg Solar and Areas A and B of the Proposed Development lie within LCT Sub-type 5a: Ridge and Valley there are no additional cumulative effects predicted over any phase of works.
- 7.8.4 From a visual perspective, users of Branthwaite Road would experience the most prominent visual change as they pass to the south of Land at Lillyhall North and the initial southern boundary of Lostrigg Solar in relatively quick succession travelling west to east, (with approximately 240m between the developments) before then reaching the northern boundary of the Proposed Development / the most south eastern area of the Lostrigg Solar site shortly thereafter.
- 7.8.5 Previously, cumulative effects for road users along Branthwaite Road which considered the Proposed Development and Land at Lillyhall North were considered to be minor adverse and not significant during the construction and operational phases. Decommissioning effects, should they occur, would be similar to those experienced during construction but

in reverse. Effects would however be reduced to some degree given that the roundabout proposed as part of the application would likely remain and would not be part of the decommissioning process.

- 7.8.6 With the introduction of Lostrigg Solar within the view for road users in tandem with the Proposed Development and Land at Lillyhall North, there would be an increase in both construction activity and visibility of solar development, which would result in an increase in the associated magnitude of effect from slight to moderate across all phases of the works. This would largely be as a result of an increase in geographic extent (medium) and scale (medium).
- 7.8.7 During the construction phase, this would result in a **moderate adverse**, direct, short-term, partially reversible / partially permanent and **significant** level of cumulative effect for users of Branthwaite Road.
- 7.8.8 During the operational phase, this would result in a **moderate adverse**, long-term, partially reversible / partially permanent and **significant** level of cumulative effect for users of Branthwaite Road.
- 7.8.9 **Significant** adverse effects were also found for visual receptors at View Location Cumulative ('VLC')1, VLC3, VLC4, VLC5, during construction, with only VLC3 reducing to **not significant** during the operational phase.
- 7.8.10 For the purposes of this cumulative assessment, it is considered that any cumulative effects resulting from the construction phase of works would be similar or reduced during the decommissioning phase but would be experienced in reverse as elements are removed from Site. Consequently, decommissioning effects are not considered within this cumulative assessment.

## 7.9 Summary

- 7.9.1 An assessment of the likely landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development has been undertaken with cognisance of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition).

- 7.9.2 Initial desktop study was undertaken followed by Site visits to gain an understanding of the baseline conditions of the Site and its surrounding landscape. This Chapter reports on landscape designations, its character, and features within the Site, within a defined 2.5km Study Area.
- 7.9.3 Given the importance of the LDNP and The English Lake District WHS which lies 3.2km east of the Site, the landscape character, and views from it, have also been assessed.
- 7.9.4 To understand the landscape character of the area, published landscape character assessments were considered including those produced by CCC and the LDNPA. The CCC assessments describe a landscape of moorland and ridges, with scattered areas of woodland, hedgerow field boundaries and individual and small settlements. The LDNPA character assessment describes the fells and valleys associated with the LDNP which are often tranquil, with visual sensitivity to any development cited from the higher fells.
- 7.9.5 Visually, the effects of the Proposed Development have been considered using representative view locations which have been agreed upon with relevant stakeholders. These located within and beyond the 2.5km Study Area to provide a suitable geographical and demographical spread.
- 7.9.6 The Site itself is largely agricultural land, bound by hedgerows which are often gappy and of varying quality, with occasional hedgerow trees and blocks of woodland. Land to the south of the Site is characterised by a moorland plateau which provides distant views to the north and northwest, visible from Dean Cross Road. From the plateau, the Site drops sharply in elevation to an undulating and complex landscape which continues northwards to meet Branthwaite Road.
- 7.9.7 This undulating and complex landscape is typical of the area, and visually this often leads to views being foreshortened by landform or vegetation. Occasional distant views are possible, particularly from the plateau along Dean Cross Road with views to the coastline at Whitehaven and the fells within the LDNP. The network of PRow which criss-cross the landscape at



times provide long-distance views, and at other times enclosure. The high fells of the LDNP are a common feature and from these widespread open views, often in all directions when weather permits, are possible. The Open Access Land within the LDNP provides walkers with opportunities to experience these.

- 7.9.8 The design process has been an iterative one, developed over time to inform an indicative Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 7.6.1 – 7.6.5) which provides the framework for the embedded mitigation on which this assessment is based.
- 7.9.9 The assessment has been undertaken for the construction phase, the opening year (Year 1), and Year 15 of operation when the proposed mitigation measures are expected to have become fully established, and the decommissioning phase.
- 7.9.10 During the construction phase, significant adverse effects on the landscape were assessed for the landscape character of the Site and for LCT 9a: Open Moorlands only. The remaining landscape receptors, including the WHS and the Special Qualities of the LDNP would not experience significant effects. Significant adverse visual effects during construction were largely focussed on view locations either in close proximity to the Site for highly sensitive receptors, or for very highly sensitive receptors from within the LDNP.
- 7.9.11 At operation Year 1, significant adverse effects remained for most receptors indicated during the construction stage, with only LCT 9a: Open Moorlands, VL3c and VL10 reducing in effects to not significant levels. This is not unusual as in most cases the level of effect was reduced to some degree, but the landscape planting would not yet be fully established to meet its environmental function.
- 7.9.12 At operation Year 15, once the landscape planting has matured, no significant adverse effects are predicted for landscape receptors. Significant adverse effects remain in place for five visual receptors, namely VL6a / 6b, VL7, VL9, VL13c, and VL14 most of which are

residential receptors at or near the Site boundary. There are beneficial effects predicted, largely as a result of the green infrastructure enhancements including new and improved planting (trees, woodland, hedgerows) and for the watercourses within the Site which would all benefit from enhanced landscape structure, new and improved habitats and improved ecological connectivity.

- 7.9.13 During the decommissioning phase, effects are predicted to be similar to those experienced during the construction phase, albeit in reverse, with significant adverse effects are predicted the landscape character of the Site as the Proposed Development is removed. Visually, effects will also be like those experienced during construction, however the majority will be reduced in severity because of screening afforded by successful establishment of green infrastructure enhancement measures.
- 7.9.14 As part of this Chapter, a cumulative assessment was undertaken on other consented but not implemented, or proposed developments, deemed relevant to the Proposed Development. This covers two individual cumulative schemes; Lostrigg Solar directly north of the Proposed Development, and Land at Lillyhall North, a hybrid industrial / employment development west-northwest of the Site.
- 7.9.15 The cumulative assessment is summarised in Section 7.8 of this Chapter and set out in detail within Appendix 7.4: Cumulative Assessment.
- 7.9.16 With regards to the overall combined cumulative effects (i.e. potential effects of all developments considered as a whole), no significant cumulative landscape effects were predicted. From a visual perspective, only road users along Branthwaite Road were predicted to experience significant cumulative effects as they would pass all three developments on their journey in either direction.

## Conclusions

- 7.9.17 Overall, significant adverse landscape and visual effects are broadly limited to the Site itself, and visual receptors in close proximity of the Site.

Generally, as time passes and the mitigation measures become established, the significance of these effects would reduce, with potential beneficial effects predicted for vegetation within the Site.

- 7.9.18 Table 7.7: Table of Significance – Landscape and Visual contains a summary of the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development.

**Table 7.7: Table of Significance – Landscape and Visual**

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect	Significance	Secondary / Tertiary Additional Mitigation	Geographical Importance						Residual Effect
				I	UK	E	R	UA	L	
Construction Phase										
Effects on Landscape Designations / Character	Reversible, short-term	No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>	Implementation of best practice measures to be substantially in accordance with the construction phase management plans including the OCEMP, OCTMP, and OSMP.	X	X		X	X		No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>
Effects on Landscape Features		Negligible adverse (Not significant)						X	Negligible adverse ( <b>Significant</b> )	
Effects on Visual Receptors		Negligible – <b>Major to Substantial adverse (Significant)</b>						X	Negligible – <b>Major to Substantial adverse (Significant)</b>	
Operational Phase										
Effects on Landscape Designations / Character	Reversible to permanent, medium to long term	No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>	Maintenance and management of comprehensive landscape mitigation strategy implemented substantially in accordance with OLEMP.	X	X		X	X		No change – Negligible adverse (Not significant)
Effects on Landscape Features		Negligible adverse (Not significant)						X	Negligible adverse – <b>Moderate beneficial (Significant)</b>	
Effects on Visual Receptors		Negligible – <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>						X	Negligible – <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>	
Decommissioning Phase										
Effects on Landscape Designations / Character	Reversible, short-term	No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>	Implementation of best practice measures in accordance with a	X	X		X	X		No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect	Significance	Secondary / Tertiary Additional Mitigation	Geographical Importance						Residual Effect
				I	UK	E	R	UA	L	
Effects on Landscape Features		Negligible adverse (Not significant)	DMP document suite to be provided by a DCO Requirement to be substantially in accordance with the FDMP.						X	Negligible adverse (Not significant)
Effects on Visual Receptors		Negligible – <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>							X	Negligible – <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>
Cumulative Effects										
Construction Phase										
Effects on Landscape Designations / Character	Temporary, short-term	No change - <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>	Implementation of best practice measures in accordance with the construction phase management plans secured by DCO Requirement including CEMP, CTMP, and SMP.					X		No change - <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>
Effects on Visual Receptors		Negligible - <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>							X	Negligible - <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>
Operational Phase										
Effects on Landscape Designations / Character	Temporary, medium-term	No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>	Maintenance and management of comprehensive landscape mitigation strategy implemented to be substantially in accordance with OLEMP.					X		No change – <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>
Effects on Visual Receptors		Negligible - <b>major adverse (Significant)</b>							X	Negligible - <b>major adverse (Significant)</b>

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect	Significance	Secondary / Tertiary Additional Mitigation	Geographical Importance						Residual Effect
				I	UK	E	R	UA	L	
Decommissioning Phase										
Effects on Landscape Designations / Character	Temporary, short-term	No change - <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>	Implementation of best practice measures in accordance with a DMP document suite to be provided by a DCO Requirement to be substantially in accordance with the FDMP.					X		No change - <b>Moderate adverse (Significant)</b>
Effects on Visual Receptors		Negligible – <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>							X	Negligible – <b>Major adverse (Significant)</b>

Nature of Effect \* Permanent or Temporary Short-term, Medium-term, or Long-term

Significance\*\* Major/ Moderate/ Minor/ Negligible Beneficial/ Adverse

Geographical Importance \*\*\* I = International; UK = United Kingdom; E = England; R = Regional; UA = Unitary Authority; L = Local

Residual Effects \*\*\*\* Major / Moderate / Minor / Negligible Beneficial / Adverse