Lime Down
Solar Park

Environmental Statement

Volume 1, Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual

September 2025

Revision 1

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010168

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APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

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8 Landscape and Visual

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) presents the findings of an assessment of the likely significant landscape and visual effects as a result of the Scheme during the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases. For more details about the Scheme, refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3 The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

8.1.2 The following aspects are considered within the Landscape and Visual Impact assessment (LVIA) process:

- The existing landscape and visual baseline scenario within a defined Study Area, and the nature of change.
- The effects upon landscape and visual receptors arising as a result of the Scheme and the significance associated with identified effects based on the sensitivity of these receptors to change and the magnitude of any change that will likely occur. It also defines whether an effect is beneficial, adverse, or neutral.
- Embedded mitigation proposals established in response to design proposals to date and identified landscape and visual receptors.

8.1.3 This chapter should be read in conjunction with the following Chapters in **ES Volume 1 [EN010168/APP/6.1]:**

- **Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity;**
- **Chapter 10: Arboriculture;**
- **Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage; and**
- **Chapter 18: Glint and Glare.**

8.1.4 This chapter is supported by the following figures in **ES Volume 2 [EN010168/APP/6.2]**:

- **Figure 8-1: Study Area;**
- **Figure 8-2: Aerial Photography;**
- **Figure 8-3: Landform;**
- **Figure 8-4: Agricultural Land Classification;**
- **Figure 8-5: Landscape Character Areas;**
- **Figure 8-6: Landscape Receptors;**
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- **Figure 8-8: Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the Full Scheme;**
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- **Figure 8-11: Private Receptors Identified;**
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- **Figure 8-14: Baseline Photography and Photomontages; and**
- **Figure 8-15: Cumulative Sites.**

8.1.5 This chapter is supported by the following appendices in **ES Volume 3 [EN010168/APP/6.3]**:

- **Appendix 8-1: LVIA Methodology**
  - **Section 1: LVIA Methodology**
  - **Section 2: Cumulative Assessment Methodology**
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- **Appendix 8-4: Character Area Descriptions**
- **Appendix 8-5: Landscape Consultation**
- **Appendix 8-6: Assessment on Cotswold NL and Special Qualities**

8.1.6 This Chapter also refers to the following documents:

- **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4: Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan (LEMP) [EN010168/APP/6.2]; and**
- **Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.18]; and**
- **ES Volume 3, Appendix 10-1 : Appendix 10-1 Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Outline Arboricultural Method Statement [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.2 Consultation

8.2.1 A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion was sought from the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate in July 2024. The issues raised in the Scoping Opinion are summarised and responded to within **Appendix 1-2: Scoping Opinion Response Table [EN010168/APP/6.3],** which demonstrates how the matters raised in the Scoping Opinion are addressed in this ES. Matters where the scope of the assessment has been raised by the Planning Inspectorate are summarised in **Table 8-1** below.

Table 8-1 Planning Inspectorate Scoping Opinion Responses

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
Response from Planning Officer, Wiltshire Council 07th November 2024	Request for additional viewpoints: WC1 Church Road, Sherston, just south of New Barn. WC2 Bridleway HULL18 WC3 Bridleway MALW54 and footpath MALW53	These additional Viewpoints are included in **Section 8.6.** and **Table 8-9.** Both winter and summer photography have been included in the Environmental Statement.
Response from Planning Officer Cotswold National Landscape Board (CNLB). 16th October 2024	Request for additional viewpoints: CNLB A-Footpath WT|LUCK|46 to Site C CNLB B- Footpath WT|SHER|19 to Site A, C CNLB C- Footpath WT| SHER 15 looking northwest to Sherston Church from A11 CNLB D- Bridleway WT|NORT|2 to Site B CNLB E- Footpath WT|SHER|10 to Site A, B CNLB F- Footpath WT|SHER|13 to Site B	These additional Viewpoints are included in Section 8.6. and Table 8-9. Both winter and summer photography have been included in the Environmental Statement.
Remote meeting with Senior Landscape Officer Wiltshire Council and Planning Officer Cotswold National Landscape Board 17th September 2024	Discussion regarding scoping response and viewpoint agreement	Viewpoint agreement undertaken. Viewpoints are included in **Section 8.6.** and **Table 8-9**.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 ID 321	Tables 7.8 and 21.1 and Figure 7.8 of scoping report- Matters proposed to be scoped out of the LVIA. The Scoping Report proposes to scope out: • LVIA considering visual receptors with no direct, extensive, or open views within 2km of the Proposed Development; • Visual receptors over 2km from Lime Down A to E, the land at Melksham Substation and the Cable Route Search Corridor; • Visual receptors within the 5km outer study area of the Proposed Development; and	The Applicant has agreed with the relevant consultation bodies the scope of receptors to be included within the final ES submission and this has been supported by ZTV's. The suite of ZTVs in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-8: Bare Earth ZTV and Figure 8-9: Augmented ZTV [EN010168/APP/6.2]** have been updated to include the 400kV and 132kV substations at heights of 13m and 7m respectively. The ZTVs represent a worst case scenario in terms of the visibility of the Scheme and does not acknowledge the

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
	• Landscape receptors over 5km from Lime Down A to E, the land at Melksham Substation and the Cable Route Search Corridor. The preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) shown in Figure 7.8 shows high potential visibility of the Proposed Development up to and beyond the 5km study area boundary. On the basis of this potential visibility, and in the absence of further detailed information including agreement from relevant statutory consultees, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope these matters out of the ES. The assessment of impacts to landscape and visual amenity (including the study area, ZTV and photomontages) should be based on the relevant worst-case having regard to any parameters applicable to the Proposed Development, including panel orientation and all proposed structures such as the BESS. The ES should include an assessment of impacts on all landscape and visual receptors which are likely to result in significant effects or information demonstrating agreement with the relevant consultation bodies that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment and the absence of a likely significant effect.	effect that distance has on visibility as a result of atmospheric perspective where distant objects often appear blurred and less detailed, nor does the ZTV pick up more incidental vegetation, which across a large area can compile to provide additional visual screening. The potential visibility of the Scheme has been ground truthed by CNLB and Wiltshire Council (WC) and no additional Viewpoints have been requested from outside the I km study area. In addition to the above, winter photomontages have been used as part of the final ES submission to assess worst case effects. Full winter and summer photomontages have informed the final assessment and are included in the ES. The preliminary assessment of likely visual effects in **section 8.9** demonstrates that there are no Significant effects outside of the I km study area. Further consultation with CNLB and WC have been undertaken to agree where significant effects are anticipated.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 ID 322	Table 21.1 Photomontages where no significant effects are anticipated proposed to be scoped out The Scoping Report proposes to scope out the production of photomontages where no significant effects are anticipated. The Inspectorate agrees that given the nature of the proposals and the reasoning provided in the Scoping Report that this matter can be scoped out of further assessment.	The Applicant has agreed the production of photomontages where significant effects are anticipated with the relevant consultation bodies.
The Planning Inspectorate	Para 7.3.11 - LVIA and Cultural Heritage Assessment	The LVIA has considered the findings of the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Cultural**

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
22nd August 2024 ID 323	Paragraph 7.3.11 of the Scoping Report states that the LVIA will consider the findings of the Cultural Heritage ES chapter. However, there is minimal information presented in the Scoping Report on how the Landscape and Cultural Heritage assessments will be integrated. The ES should explain how the LVIA and cultural heritage assessments have been integrated and clear cross-referencing should be provided between the Cultural Heritage and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment chapters.	**Heritage [EN010168/APP/6.1].** Proposed mitigation measures have been formed with consideration to both LVIA receptors and heritage assets as well as buried archaeological remains.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 ID 324	Para 7.5.34 - Preliminary Landscape Baseline The Scoping Report states that the land at Melksham Substation is not located within any Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs) in Wiltshire. The Applicant's attention is drawn to the comments from Wiltshire Council (Appendix 2 of this Opinion) regarding the inclusion of the North and West Wiltshire LCAs within the LVIA. The baseline presented in the ES must be an accurate reflection of the existing situation.	Land at Melksham Substation has been removed from the Scheme. The Cable Corridor Search Area is located within the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, and this has been added to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5: Landscape Character Assessment series [EN010168/APP/6.2].**
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 ID 325	3.2.5 Para 7.6.90 and Table 4.1 ZTVs The Scoping Report states that the ZTVs were based on the Scheme at 4.5m above ground level and that separate ZTVs will be provided for the substations once locations have been established. Table 4.1 of the Scoping Report states that the anticipated heights of the 400kV and 132kV substations are 13m and 7m respectively. Consequently, the ZTVs may not be representative of the full extent of visibility. In order to demonstrate that the full extent of the Proposed Development has been assessed, the ZTVs should be based on maximum design parameters to be permitted by the DCO. The ES should clearly evidence and justify the final extent of the ZTVs and ensure that any assessment of significance is based on this maximum extent.	The suite of ZTVs in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-8: Bare Earth ZTV and Figure 8-9: Augmented ZTV series [EN010168/APP/6.2]** have been updated to include the 400kV and 132kV substations at heights of 13m and 7m respectively.
The Planning Inspectorate	Figure 7.7 - 7.7.8 Viewpoints and photomontages	The Applicant has agreed with the relevant consultation bodies the representative

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
22nd August 2024 ID 326	Figures 7.7 to 7.7.8 of the Scoping Report set out representative viewpoints for the Proposed Development. The Inspectorate notes that most of these viewpoints are in close proximity to the Proposed Development boundary. The Applicant should justify the location of viewpoints, ensuring these capture a worst case scenario of impacts from the Proposed Development and are representative of visual receptors. Efforts should be made to agree the number and location of viewpoints as well as the locations for photomontages with relevant consultation bodies including local authorities, Historic England and Natural England (NE). The Applicant's attention is drawn to the comments from Wiltshire Council (Appendix 2 of this Opinion) regarding the inclusion of additional representative viewpoints in the LVIA to capture any long-distance views of the Proposed Development.	viewpoints and photomontages which have been included within the final ES. Following consultation with Wiltshire Council three (3) additional Viewpoints for inclusion in the ES have been requested. The three viewpoints are all within the 1km Study Area.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 ID 327	Para 7.7.1 and 7.7.2 LVIA Methodology The Inspectorate notes that the LVIA methodology is set out in Appendix 7.2 of the Scoping Report. For ease of reference and consistency with other chapters, the LVIA methodology should be included in the relevant ES chapter rather than in a separate document.	The LVIA methodology is included within **ES Volume 1, Appendix 8.1: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].**
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 ID 328	Para 7.7.4 / Appendix 7.2-Potential effects and mitigation The Inspectorate notes that while the LVIA methodology (Appendix 7.2) defines the general approach to mitigation and enhancement it does not outline any specific mitigation measures or enhancement plans for the Proposed Development. The ES should describe any relevant mitigation measures identified from the LVIA assessment and explain how delivery of these measures has been secured.	Specific mitigation measures and enhancement plans are included in **Section 8.9** and **8.11.**
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024	Any Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') prepared as part of an Environmental Statement should include a detailed consideration of the landscape and visual impact of the	A detailed consideration of the landscape and visual impact of the proposed solar park upon the National Landscape and its setting

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Cotswolds Conservation Board	proposed solar park upon the National Landscape and its setting, including the potential impacts upon local landscape character (including land within the setting of the CNL which may complement the character of the CNL landscape) and impacts upon views from within the National Landscape or towards the National Landscape.	have been included in the ES in **Section 8.10.113** onwards.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Cotswolds Conservation Board	For avoidance of doubt, we agree with the Applicant's assessment that: The northern boundary of three field parcels (Fields A1, A11 and A12) within Lime Down A adjoin the boundary of the CNL south and southeast of Sherston; The CNL boundary follows Foxley Road to the north of Lime Down B, however a combination of topography and strong hedgerow limits intervisibility; The CNL boundary adjoins the western edge of Lime Down C at Fields C1, C6, C8 and C10 along an unnamed road to the east of Alderton. Lime Down D has no landscape and visual relationship with the Cotswolds National Landscape; Lime Down E has no landscape and visual relationship with the Cotswolds National Landscape; Land at Melksham Substation has no landscape and visual relationship with the Cotswolds National Landscape; The Cable Route Search Corridor is located either close to or adjacent to the Cotswolds National Landscape boundary near Sherston, Alderton, Grittleton, Yatton Keynell and Biddlestone.	Noted.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024	Lime Down A- We agree with the location and orientation of Viewpoints 2, 3, 4 and 5; We recommend that Viewpoint 6 is relocated c.150m eastwards to the junction of the unnamed lane with bridleway SHER16 (shown on the photograph below) where a clearer view of the site is available and is a	The requested changes and additional Viewpoints have been included within the ES in **Section 8.6.** and **Table 8-9.**

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Cotswolds Conservation Board	location more likely to be used by walkers and riders. We recommend an additional viewpoint is provided located on footpath SHER15 at the southern boundary of field A11, looking northwards across the field towards the CNL boundary to enable an assessment of the impact of the proposal on views back towards the CNL. Lime Down B- We agree that Viewpoint 18 provides a representative view of the site from the CNL boundary. Lime Down C - We agree with the location and orientation of Viewpoints 25, 26, 27b, 31, 32 and 33. Viewpoint 30 should be extended westwards or an additional viewpoint provided to incorporate the clear view across the site to the CNL including the spire of St Giles' church at Alderton as shown in the photograph below:	
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Cotswolds Conservation Board	Having reviewed the Landscape and Visual chapter of the EIA Scoping Report and its associated Appendices, including the proposed LVIA methodology outlined at Section 7.3 and Appendix 7.2 of the EIA Scoping Report, much of its scope and content is appropriate.	Noted.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Cotswolds Conservation Board	Based on the preliminary site visit by the Board's Planning Officer, we recommend that photomontages of the proposal are provided from the following viewpoints to enable an accurate assessment of the potential impacts of the proposal on the CNL: Viewpoint 3 and Viewpoint 4 Additional viewpoint located on footpath SHER15 at the southern boundary of field A11, looking northwards across the field towards the CNL boundary Viewpoint 6 (amended location referred to above) Viewpoint 25, Viewpoint 26, Viewpoint 27b Viewpoint 30 (amended orientation referred to above)	It is agreed that AVR level 1 Photomontages are prepared for these viewpoints These are presented in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14: Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].** These have been added to **Table 8-9.** AVR Level 3 photomontages have been prepared for agreed Viewpoints for inclusion in the ES. Full winter and summer photomontages have informed the final

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
	Viewpoint 31 We also request that view cones are added to the viewpoint locations shown at Figures 7.7 and 7.10 to help readers to interpret the orientation and direction of the viewpoints.	assessment included in this ES. View cones are included in the photosheets in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14: Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].**
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Cotswolds Conservation Board	We note and agree that cumulative impacts are to be scoped into the ES and that an assessment of the in-combination landscape and visual effects of Lime Down A to E will be undertaken to determine the effects of the Scheme as a whole. A cumulative assessment will be undertaken, assessing both the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Scheme ('Cumulative Sites') and of the Scheme in conjunction with other local developments ('Cumulative Developments') within the Cumulative Effects chapter of the ES.	Noted. An assessment of Cumulative Sites and Cumulative Developments is included in **Sections 8.8** and **8.13.**
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	7.2 Study Areas The Scoping Report identifies preliminary study areas to be used to inform the assessment of landscape and visual effects. These are measured from the outer edge of identified development areas and include: 0.5km study Area for the cable route corridor (The Cable Route Study Area) 1km Study Area (The Local Study Area) 2km Study Area (The Wider Study Area) 5km Study Area (The Outer Study Area) The extent of these preliminary study areas is considered to support a proportionate approach to assessment. It is noted at para 7.2.1. which states ''*The preliminary Study Area will be further assessed as part of the iterative design process and through consultation with the Local Planning Authority's Landscape officers and consultants at Wiltshire Council*.'' This offers some additional comfort should the refinement of the scheme during the EIA process indicate that these	Noted.

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
	provisional study areas should be revised for any reason.	
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	7.3 Assessment Methodology The described assessment methodology and the industry recognised guidance listed at 7.3.1 of the scoping report and further detail included at appendix 7.2 comprise an appropriate basis for the assessment of landscape and visual effects including potential cumulative effects.	Noted.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	7.4 Legislation, policy, and guidance The following legislation policy and guidance is recommended for inclusion in the ES: NPPG – Natural Environment – Landscape-Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 8-039-20190721 - Revision date: 21 07 2019 NPPG - Renewable and low carbon energy-NPPG, Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 5-003-20140306 - Revision date: 06 03 2014 NPPG, Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 5-007-20140306 - Revision date: 06 03 2014 Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) Core policies CP 42: Standalone renewable energy installations CP 51: Landscape CP 52: Green Infrastructure CP 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping. Saved District Local Plan Policies from the North Wiltshire District Local Plan (2011) Core Policy NE12: Woodland. Core Policy NE14: Trees, site features and the control of new development. Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act 2000) - Section 85, Duty of Regard.	The NPPG references are included in **Section 8.3.** The addition of core policies from the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) are included in **Section 8.3.** The addition core policies from Saved District Local Plan Policies from the North Wiltshire District Local Plan (2011) are included in **Section 8.3.** Reference to CRoW Act and LURA Act are included in **Section 8.3.**

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
	Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA 2023) - Section 245 (Protected Landscape)	
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	7.5 Preliminary landscape baseline- Published Landscape Character Assessments Refence is made to the presentation of Landscape Character Assessment information on Figure 7.5 and missing reference to the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment in relation to the Land at Melksham Substation Site.	**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5: Landscape Character Area [EN010168/APP/6.2]** has been amended to display the appropriate information: • Figure 8.5.1 National and regional Landscape Character Areas • Figure 8.5.2 Cotswolds Landscape Character Areas • Figure 8.5.3 North and West Wiltshire Landscape Character Areas Land at Melksham Substation has been removed from the Scheme.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	Appendix 7.4 – Landscape Receptor Scoping Sheets In light of the above observations, it is anticipated that an additional entry should be included within the Landscape Receptor Scoping Sheets, identifying which landscape Character Types and Character. Areas for 'West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment' will be scoped in and out for assessment i.e. Scope in: Landscape Character Type A: Limestone Lowland Landscape Character Area A3: Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland	The West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment' has been scoped into the ES. However, the area it covers only relates to the Cable Corridor Search Area as Land at Melksham Substation has been removed from the Scheme.

Consultee and Date	Response	Chapter Section Where Consultation Comment is Addressed
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	7.6 Preliminary visual baseline The identified viewpoint locations as illustrated by Figures 7.7 & 7.7.1 to 7.7.6 appear to be representative of different types of visual receptors and appear to be proportionate in number. Further consideration should be given to potentially including more representative middle distance and possibly some longer distance representative viewpoints from the wider landscape, especially in the context of views towards and from the Cotswolds National Landscape / AONB where development may occupy exposed land considered to contribute to the contextual character and visual setting of this national landscape designation.	Consultation with Wiltshire Council to agree additional viewpoints for inclusion in the ES were received on 07/11/2024. Three (3) additional Viewpoints within the I km Study Area were requested for inclusion in the ES. These have been added to **Table 8-9.** **B**oth winter and summer photography are included in this ES.
The Planning Inspectorate 22nd August 2024 Appendix 1: Consultation bodies formally consulted Wiltshire Council	7.7 Potential effects and mitigation The LVIA will obviously be used as an iterative assessment and design tool and will identify appropriate measures to mitigate identified harmful landscape and visual effects wherever possible, but it could also be used to help identify appropriate environmental opportunities to deliver environmental enhancement e.g. to the landscape fabric of the site / site features, landscape character, improved public access.	Consultation with Wiltshire Council (and other interested parties) has been undertaken to develop the approach to mitigation as set out in **Section 8.9** to help identify appropriate environmental opportunities to deliver environmental enhancement and has been undertaken as part of the iterative design process.

8.2.2 Engagement has been undertaken with stakeholders comprising Cotswold National Landscape and Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer. The matters raised are summarised in **Table 8-2** below.

Table 8-2: Summary of Engagement Undertaken

Consultee and Date	Issue/Topic	Response
Remote meeting with Senior Landscape Officer Wiltshire Council and Planning Officer Cotswolds National Landscape Board	Discussion regarding scoping response and viewpoint agreement	Viewpoint agreement undertaken. Additional Viewpoints included in the ES as noted above.

Consultee and Date	Issue/Topic	Response
17th September 2024		
Response from Landscape Officer, Wiltshire Council 07th November 2024	Viewpoint Agreement Request for additional viewpoints: WC1 Church Road, Sherston, just south of New Barn. WC2 Bridleway HULL18 WC3 Bridleway MALW54 and footpath MALW53	These additional Viewpoints are included in **Table 8-9** of this report. Both winter and summer photography are included in this ES (refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2]**).
Response from Planning Officer Cotswolds National Landscape Board (CNLB). 16th October 2024	Request for additional viewpoints: CNLB A-Footpath WT|LUCK|46 to Site C CNLB B- Footpath WT|SHER|19 to Site A, C CNLB C- Footpath WT| SHER 15 looking northwest to Sherston Church from A11 CNLB D- Bridleway WT|NORT|2 to Site B CNLB E- Footpath WT|SHER|10 to Site A, B CNLB F- Footpath WT|SHER|13 to Site B	These additional Viewpoints are included in **Table 8-9** of this report. Both winter and summer photography are included in this ES (refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.
CNLB and CC 26/03/2025	Email proposal to prepare iterative section drawings to inform the developing layout of the Scheme as part of the iterative design process regarding: •Proposed panels in C6, C7, & C9 and the southern part of A1 which are within the setting of the CNL, and •Proposed panels in E2, E3 and E4.	Viewpoints on the edge of the CNL where agreed. Sections prepared for Viewpoints 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, CNL A and additional VP CNL G from Alderton Road at field entrance across C7 and C8.
CNLB and CC 24th April 2025	Meeting to discuss options for the red line boundary following removal of parcels A11, A12, C2, C3 and C4 in response to Statutory Consultation and to discuss positive enhancement measures in parcels on the edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape (to further the purposes of the	Parcels on the edge of the CNL boundary (C1, C6, C8, parts of C9 and C10.) have remained within the Scheme and provide opportunities for positive enhancement measures. Parcels C2, C3 and C4 which are not on the edge of the CNL have been removed from the Order Limits. Information received from CNL on positive enhancement measures from CNLs Nature Recovery Lead including

Consultee and Date	Issue/Topic	Response
	CNL) within parcels on the edge of the CNL - parcels C1, C6, C8, C9 and C10.	grassland and woodland mosaic creation.
Response from CNL on sections 8th July 2025	Testing of parcels through iterative visualisation work being undertaken regarding S42	Section commentary received from CNL and WC officers about parcels C6, C7, & C9 which are within the setting of the CNL, and proposed panels in E2, E3 and E4.

8.2.3 Statutory consultation was held between 29 January 2025 and 19 March 2025. A full list of consultation responses in relation to the Cotswold National Landscape CNL and Wiltshire Council are presented in the **Consultation Report [EN010168/APP/5.1]** submitted as part of the Application.

8.2.4 A further round of targeted consultation was undertaken between 3 June 2025 and 11 July 2025 following changes to the order limits of the Scheme presented in the PEIR and at Stage Two Statutory Consultation. Further detail regarding the targeted consultation is provided in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.3 Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

8.3.1 This section provides an overview of the legislation planning policy and guidance against which the Scheme will be considered in relation to Landscape and Visual matters.

8.3.2 Full details of the legislation, policy, and guidance of relevance to the assessment of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is provided in full in **Volume 1, Chapter 5: Energy Need Legislative Context and Energy Policy [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

Legislation

European Legislation

European Landscape Convention (Ref 8-4)

8.3.3 The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international treaty dedicated to the protection, management, and planning of all landscapes in Europe. Signed by the UK government in 2006 and introduced in March 2007, the ELC provides a people-centred and forward-looking way to reconcile management of the environment with the social and economic challenges of the future and aims to help people reconnect with place. The ELC is not a directive of the European Union, rather it is a Convention of the Council of Europe.

8.3.4 The ELC does not advocate the same measures and policies for all landscapes. Instead, it encourages approaches that are adaptable to particular landscape types and which respond to their unique characteristics.

8.3.5 The ELC contains 18 articles which, collectively, promote landscape protection, management and planning and organising European cooperation on landscape issues. Articles 5 and 6 commit signatory states to a number of actions which are designed to help ensure compliance with the overarching aims of the ELC. These include the need to recognise landscapes in law, to establish policies aimed at landscape planning, protection and management and the integration of landscape into other policy areas.

UK Legislation

8.3.6 For general legislation information on the Planning Act 2008 and EIA Regulations 2017 please refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

The Environment Act 2021 (Ref 8-5)

8.3.7 The Environment Act 2021 provides a framework for environmental protection in the UK and requires government and public bodies to set targets for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction.

8.3.8 Key commitments of the Act include halting species decline by 2030 and the introduction of mandatory BNG requirements for all Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) developments.

8.3.9 Commitments that would be secured through the DCO application which are relevant to the LVIA include:

- Part 6 Nature and Biodiversity
  - Section 99: Biodiversity gain in nationally significant infrastructure projects outlines that Schedule 15 makes provision about biodiversity gain in relation to development consent for nationally significant infrastructure projects specifically. This is expected to become a legal requirement for nationally significant infrastructure projects from November 2025.

Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA 2023) - Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) (Ref 8-14)

8.3.10 This Act places a duty on relevant authorities in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, the Broads or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (National Landscapes) in England, ‘to seek to further the statutory purposes of the area’. The duty applies to local planning authorities and other decision makers in making planning decisions on

development and infrastructure proposals, as well as to other public bodies and statutory undertakers.

8.3.11 This legislation in effect increases the duty on relevant authorities to be more pro-active in its consideration of new development proposals to conserve and enhance the statutory purpose and function of Nationally Protected Landscapes. The new legislation also elevates the weight of these protected landscapes within any wider planning balancing exercises undertaken in preference of conserving and enhancing national landscapes if resulting conflict arises with other material planning considerations.

National Planning Policy

National Policy Statement (NPS) (Ref 8-6)

8.3.12 National Policy Statements for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are produced by government. These NPSs set out the Government's energy policy for the delivery of nationally significant energy infrastructure, the need for new energy infrastructure, and guidance for the determination of an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). They give reasons for the policy set out in the statement and include an explanation of how the policy takes account of government policy relating to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

8.3.13 The National Policy Statements (NPSs) that are relevant to the Scheme are:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (January 2024) (Ref 8-1)
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (January 2024) (Ref 8-2)
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (January 2024) (Ref 8-3)

8.3.14 These are set out in **Volume 1, Chapter 5: Energy Need, Legislative Context and Energy Policy [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

Local Planning Policy

Wiltshire Core Strategy

8.3.15 The Scheme is located wholly within the administrative boundary of Wiltshire Council.

8.3.16 In Wiltshire, the current Local Plan is the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), adopted in 2015. This incorporates Saved policies from former District Local Plans, that were not replaced by the WCS, and will continue to be saved until replaced as part of the Local Plan Review process.

8.3.17 The following planning policy documents collectively form the Development Plan in Wiltshire:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy 2006 to 2026 (adopted January 2015) (Ref 8-8)
- Wiltshire and Swindon Minerals Core Strategy 2006 to 2026 (adopted June 2009) (Ref 8-9)

8.3.18 The following current Development Plan policies from the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) are identified to be relevant to the consideration of landscape and visual matters.

Core Policy 42: Standalone renewable energy installations

8.3.19 Policy 42 states that Proposals for standalone renewable energy Schemes will be supported subject to satisfactory resolution of all site specific constraints and that proposals will need to demonstrate how impacts have been satisfactorily assessed, including any cumulative effects. Proposals should take into account: the landscape, particularly in and around AONBs; biodiversity; the historic environment; use of the local transport network; residential amenity, including noise, odour, visual amenity and safety; and best and most versatile agricultural land.

Core Policy 51: Landscape

8.3.20 Policy 51 states that development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and that new development must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character. The policy is clear that any negative effects arising from new development must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies.

Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure

8.3.21 The purpose of CP52 is to ensure that any existing green/blue infrastructure present on development sites is retained and successfully integrated within any development proposal and that opportunities to enhance the value of onsite green / blue infrastructure is incorporated wherever this is achievable. The policy also requires that provision is made for the future ongoing maintenance of green/blue infrastructure directly associated with new development.

8.3.22 It goes on to state that if damage or loss of existing green infrastructure is unavoidable, the creation of new or replacement green infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, which maintains the integrity and functionality of the green infrastructure network will be required.

Core Policy 57: Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

8.3.23 The purpose of CP57 is to ensure that all new development proposals deliver a high standard of design and that a strong distinctive sense of place is maintained / created and that development proposals draw on the local context and are complementary to the locality Emerging Local Plan Policy

8.3.24 Wiltshire Council has published a draft Wiltshire Local Plan (Ref 8-13) with adoption expected in late 2025. The Wiltshire Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation was undertaken in autumn 2023 and the Wiltshire Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government for independent examination on 28 November 2024.

8.3.25 The following saved policies from the 2011 North Wiltshire District Local Plan are identified to be relevant to the landscape and visual matters:

Core Policy NE12: Woodland.

8.3.26 States that '*The creation, conservation enhancement and positive management of woodlands across the district [former North Wiltshire District Council – administrative area] will be supported. In particular, areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland should be protected.'* The policy recognises the value that woodlands contribute to visual amenity and nature conservation.

Core Policy NE14: Trees, site features and the control of new development

8.3.27 Requires that existing trees, hedges, ponds/lakes or other valued landscape or ecological site features, such as dry-stone walls, and watercourses etc. that are present within and adjoining development sites are retained and appropriately integrated within development proposals, and that appropriate provision for the preservation of existing trees and new tree planting is secured.

8.3.28 It is anticipated that these currently saved policies will be replaced by new policies to be included within the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review, including:

- Policy 90: Woodland, hedgerows, and trees;
- Policy 91: Conserving and enhancing Wiltshire's landscapes; and
- Policy 93: Green and blue infrastructure.

8.3.29 Policy 90 of the emerging local plan which will replace Policy NE12, places greater emphasis on protecting woodland, hedgerows and trees from development through retention, enhancement and incorporating these assets into development design as part of the wider Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Network. This effectively replaces NE14 which is deleted. The policy provides further guidance for decision making with regards the retention, enhancement, and management of these assets and encompasses broader topics such as tree planting targets of Wiltshire Council's Climate Strategy, its

Woodland, Hedgerow, and Tree Strategy, and the sustainable management of onsite planting.

8.3.30 Proposed Policy 91 on Conserving and enhancing Wiltshire's landscapes states:

"Development will conserve and where possible enhance Wiltshire's landscapes by:

1) being located and designed to respect landscape character and maintain an area's distinctive sense of place and reinforce local distinctiveness as set out in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment and landscape strategy;

2) conserving, enhancing, and restoring the characteristics and views of landscapes along with valued attributes and existing site features …..

3) conserving and enhancing the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings;

4) conserving and enhancing the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe;

5) being of high-quality design appropriate to its townscape and landscape context in accordance with the National Design Guidance and Wiltshire Design Guide,…..

6) be located and designed to prevent erosion of relative tranquillity (light pollution and noise) and intrinsically dark landscapes, …

7) where necessary, being supported by a proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment,…

8) protecting geology and soils that underpin the landscape character of Wiltshire enhancing healthy 'living' …."

Wiltshire's designated landscapes

Great weight will be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of Wiltshire's designated landscapes, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the New Forest National Park. Development within, and influencing the setting of, these designated areas should be limited in scale and extent and are expected to contribute towards conserving and enhancing their natural beauty. Proposals for development within or affecting designated landscapes must demonstrate that they have taken account of the objectives, policies and actions set out in the relevant management plans for these areas. Proposals for development outside of an Area."

8.3.31 Proposed Policy 93 on Green and Blue Infrastructure states:

"Development shall make provision for the retention and enhancement of Wiltshire's green and blue infrastructure network and shall ensure that suitable

links to the network are provided and maintained. Proposals for major development will be required to:

1) retain and enhance the integrity, quantity, quality and connectivity of existing on site green and blue infrastructure;

2) identify and incorporate opportunities for the creation and extension of the green and blue infrastructure network, …

3) put measures in place to ensure appropriate long-term management, maintenance and funding …

4) identify and provide opportunities to enhance and improve linkages between the natural and historic landscapes of Wiltshire;

5) retain and enhance existing public rights of way, maximising accessibility and opportunities for new connections. …

Where damage or loss of existing green or blue infrastructure is unavoidable, only the minimum necessary shall be removed. Any loss must be mitigated through the creation of new or replacement green and/or blue infrastructure equal to or above its current value and quality, that maintains the integrity and functionality of the green and blue infrastructure network.

Green and blue infrastructure projects and initiatives that contribute to the delivery of a high quality and highly valued multi-functional green and blue infrastructure network in accordance with the Wiltshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and GBI Settlement Frameworks will be supported. Developer contributions to support such initiatives will be required where appropriate."

Neighbourhood Plans

8.3.32 The made Neighbourhood Plans relating to the Study Area include:

- Hullavington Neighbourhood Development Plan (made September 2019) (Ref 8-10);
- Sherston Neighbourhood Plan 2006 to 2026 (made May 2019) (Ref 8-11);
- Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan Volumes 1 and 2 (made February 2015) (Ref 8-12); and
- Melksham Neighbourhood Plan 2020 to 2026 (made July 2021) (Ref 8-13).

Other Guidance

Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes

8.3.33 Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes (Ref 8-14). sets out how the Protected Landscapes duty is intended to operate and provides broad principles to guide relevant authorities in complying with it.

8.3.34 'Protected Landscapes' refers to National Parks, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads and National Landscapes (formerly areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs)) in England.

8.3.35 Section 245 (Protected Landscapes) of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) amends the duty on relevant authorities in respect of their functions which affect land in National Parks, National Landscapes, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads (collectively referred to as Protected Landscapes) in England.

8.3.36 Relevant authorities must now 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. This replaces the previous duty on relevant authorities to 'have regard to' their statutory purposes.

8.3.37 In the section on 'What a relevant authority should do' the guidance notes for development plan making and development management decisions affecting a Protected Landscape, a relevant authority should "*seek to further the purposes of the Protected Landscape - in so doing, the relevant authority should consider whether such measures can be embedded in the design of plans and proposals, where reasonably practical and operationally feasible"*

8.3.38 The guidance sets out what the relevant authority should consider. This includes:

- What are the statutory purposes that you should seek to further when exercising a function in the Protected Landscape it affects?
- Do measures which would further the purposes align with and help to deliver the targets and objectives in the Protected Landscape's Management Plan?
- Are such measures appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the function and its implications for the area?
- Could the measures contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the Protected Landscape's wildlife, ecological value and quality, geological and physiographical features, water environment, cultural heritage, dark skies, tranquillity, opportunities for access to nature, and landscape character for which the area was designated.

The Biodiversity Duty

8.3.39 Public authorities must also comply with the strengthened Biodiversity Duty that the Environment Act 2021 introduced. You should consider:

- how your actions taken to comply with the Biodiversity Duty are complementary
- if you have met both duties in full through your decisions.

Statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes

8.3.40 The statutory purposes of National Landscapes (areas of outstanding natural beauty) are:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty

8.3.41 The statutory purposes of National Landscapes (areas of outstanding natural beauty) with Conservation Boards are:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area of outstanding natural beauty
- increasing the understanding and enjoyment by the public of the special qualities of the area of outstanding natural beauty

The setting of Protected Landscapes

8.3.42 The duty also applies to functions undertaken outside of the designation boundary which affects land within the Protected Landscape.

8.3.43 Natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics can be highly dependent on the contribution provided by the setting of a Protected Landscape. Aspects such as tranquillity, dark skies, a sense of remoteness, wildness, cultural heritage or long views from and into the Protected Landscape may draw upon the landscape character and quality of the setting.

8.3.44 Functional connectivity is also important where there are flows or close interconnection between the Protected Landscape and its setting, for example:

- a shared water catchment and management of water resources
- ecological connectivity where species are able to move across and between the designated and non-designated area
- Rights of Way, Open Access Land and other recreational links joining the designated area to the wider countryside

8.3.45 Development and the management of land, water and estates located in the setting have the potential to adversely affect the natural beauty, special qualities, and key characteristics of a Protected Landscape.

National Planning Policy Guidance

8.3.46 National Planning Policy Guidance on the Natural Environment – Landscape (Ref 8-14) states:

"Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 and section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 require that 'in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land' in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, relevant authorities 'shall have regard' to their purposes for which these areas are designated. A list of the public bodies and persons covered under 'relevant authorities' is found in Defra guidance on this duty, and Natural England has published good practice guidance.

This duty is particularly important to the delivery of the statutory purposes of protected areas. It applies to all local planning authorities, not just National Park authorities, and is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on their setting or protection".

Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 8-039-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019

And:

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

Paragraph: 042 Reference ID: 8-042-20190721 Revision date: 21 07 2019.

8.3.47 Paragraph 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721 outlines the following:

"The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that plans should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and that strategic policies should provide for the conservation and enhancement of landscapes. This can include nationally and locally-designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence. Policies may set out criteria against which proposals for development affecting these areas will be assessed. Plans can also include policies to avoid adverse impacts on landscapes and to set out necessary mitigation measures, such as appropriate design principles and visual screening, where necessary. The cumulative impacts of development on the landscape need to be considered carefully."

Planning Practice Guidance, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (as amended March 2015)

8.3.48 Planning Practice Guidance, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (as amended March 2015) Reference: ISBN 9781409839835 (Ref 8-14) Paragraph 026 and 028 outline that:

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

and that

"The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero"

Wiltshire Council Renewable Energy Study Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

8.3.49 The Wiltshire Council Renewable Energy Study Landscape Sensitivity Assessment was prepared by LUC in March 2023 for Wiltshire Council to inform plan-making, development management and land use decisions within Wiltshire. The landscape sensitivity assessments focuses on the landscape considerations associated with ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind energy developments at a strategic level. The assessment uses the spatial framework of Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and component Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) identified by the existing Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (2005). Refer to Section 8.8 of this report for full details of the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment which identifies Sites A-E falling wholly within LCT 16 Limestone Lowland and LCA 16 A - the Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands.

8.3.50 The assessment identifies the characteristics of solar PV and their potential landscape impacts which include:

- Solar PV developments may be particularly visible in open landscapes or on upper slopes of hillsides or where overlooked;
- On a sunny day they can appear blue, while on a cloudy day they can appear a dark grey, both of which contrast with surrounding green areas;
- The presence of Solar PV panels and associated infrastructure may increase the perceived human influence on the landscape and erode intrinsically rural character;
- Solar PV development will change the land use and appearance of a field or fields, affecting land cover patterns;
- The regular edges of solar PV developments may be conspicuous in more irregular landscapes (particularly where field boundaries are irregular);
- The height of racks (up to 3 metres) may overtop typical hedgerow field boundaries;
- Screen planting around solar PV developments may change the sense of enclosure of a landscape;
- Construction of solar PV development may result in damage to landscape features such as hedgerow field boundaries and alter the landscape scale; and
- Structures may appear out of place in particularly wild or undeveloped landscape which are valued for their qualities of remoteness.

8.3.51 The assessment judges the suitability of different scales of solar PV developments, based on bandings that reflect those that are most likely to be put forward by developers. The sizes used for the assessment are set out below:

- Very small solar PV installation: Up to 1 hectares;
- Small solar PV installation: 1 to 5 hectares;
- Medium solar PV installation: 5 to 20 hectares;
- Large solar PV installation: 20 to 50 hectares;
- Very large solar PV installation: 50 to 120 hectares.

8.3.52 Proposed solar PV developments larger than 120 hectares have not been considered in the assessment. The assessment notes that “Landscape sensitivity to these very large schemes would be categorised as “high” sensitivity regardless of location, requiring developers to pay particular attention to this issue in their specific applications”.

8.3.53 The sensitivity assessment uses five criteria, informed by the attributes of landscape that could be affected by solar and wind energy development, which consider 'landscape', 'visual' and 'perceptual' aspects of sensitivity. These include:

- Landform and scale (including sense of openness/enclosure);
- Landcover (including field and settlement patterns);
- Historic landscape character;
- Visual character (including skylines); and
- Perceptual and scenic qualities.

8.3.54 A Summary of overall landscape sensitivity is provided:

- Landscape characteristics which increase landscape sensitivity to solar PV development include the sloping land associated with river valleys, expansive vistas from higher ground, frequent heritage assets, seminatural habitats (including ancient woodland and chalk/limestone grasslands) relative tranquillity and the scenic qualities of the landscape identified through the designation of the western edge of LCT as part of the Cotswolds AONB.
- The undulating landform, strong network of hedgerows with frequent trees, and scattered woodland blocks provide an opportunity to integrate smaller scales of solar PV development.
- Hullavington and Kemble airfields may offer suitable locations for designed solar PV installations.
- There is an existing solar farm to the southwest of Crudwell, south of Corsham and north-west of Hullavington.
- Parts of the LCT that are within or forming part of the wider setting to the Cotswolds AONB are more sensitive to all scales of solar PV development.

8.3.55 The assessment presents a spatial representation of the landscape sensitivity of Wiltshire to new solar PV development within Figures 3.1 to 3.6 and a tabular format within Table B.55: LCT 16 - Landscape sensitivity to various scales of solar PV development. The individual sensitivity scores contained within the figures and tables are not consistent, and so the written information contained within Table B.55 has been used to inform this assessment.

8.3.56 Table B.55 sets out that the LCT 16 are shown as one of least sensitive areas within Wiltshire for Very Small Scale Solar schemes of Up to 1 hectares and for Small Scale Solar Schemes of 1 to 5 hectares, with both receiving a sensitivity score of 5, (Lesser Landscape Impact).

8.3.57 For Medium Scale Solar schemes Table B.55 sets out that LCT 16 is again one of the least sensitive areas within Wiltshire for schemes of 5 to 20 hectares, with LCT 16 receiving a score of 4, towards the Lesser Landscape Impact end of the scale.

8.3.58 For Large Scale Solar schemes of 20-50ha, for land outside of the CNL, LCT16 is assessed as having a sensitivity score of 3, within the middle of the assessment scale and one of the lesser sensitive areas of Wiltshire. It is worth noting that LCTs 12B- the open clay vales and 8A – the limestone ridge are also assessed as having a Moderate Sensitivity to schemes of 20-50ha. It should also be noted that the presence of the CNL within the Limestone Lowland and its setting elevates its Sensitivity score, specifically relating to its perceptual and scenic qualities.

8.3.59 For Very Large Scale schemes of 50 to 120ha landscape within LCT16 but outside of the CNL receives a sensitivity score of 2 towards the Greater Landscape Impact, but not the highest.

8.3.60 Reviewing the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment results across all the various scales, LCT16 (outside of the CNL) continually scores as one of the least sensitive areas to solar energy development.

Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan

8.3.61 Although the Scheme is situated outside of the Cotswolds National Landscape (previously known as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) it does adjoin the Scheme and an understanding of the policy context of the National Landscape is considered due to the potential for the Scheme to impact on its setting. The Cotswolds National Landscape Board has a statutory duty to prepare a management plan for the Cotswolds National Landscape. The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2023-2025 (Ref 8-18) was adopted in February 2023. The ‘special qualities’ of a National Landscape are ‘those aspects of the area’s natural beauty which make the area distinctive, and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. They are the key attributes on which the priorities for its conservation, enhancement and management are based. They bring out the essence of the National Landscape as an evocative description of the area rather than as a statistical account’

8.3.62 The special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape are described in Section 4 of the Plan and provides a statement of significance. It states:

“The Cotswolds is a rich mosaic of historical, social, economic, cultural, geological, geomorphological and ecological features. The special qualities of the Cotswolds National Landscape are:

- *The unifying character of the limestone geology – its visible presence in the landscape and use as a building material;*

- *The Cotswold escarpment, including views from and to the National Landscape;*
- *The high wolds – a large open, elevated predominately arable landscape with commons, 'big' skies and long-distance views;*
- *Distinctive dry stone walls;*
- *River valleys, the majority forming the headwaters of the Thames, with high-quality water;*
- *Flower-rich grasslands particularly limestone grasslands;*
- *Ancient broadleaved woodland particularly along the crest of the escarpment;*
- *Variations in the colour of the stone from one part of the National Landscape to another which add a vital element of local distinctiveness;*
- *The tranquillity of the area, away from major sources of inappropriate noise, development, visual clutter and pollution;*
- *Extensive dark sky areas;*
- *Distinctive settlements, developed in the Cotswold vernacular with high architectural quality and integrity;*
- *An accessible landscape for quiet recreation for both rural and urban users, with numerous walking and riding routes, including the Cotswold Way National Trail;*
- *Significant archaeological, prehistoric and historic associations dating back 6,000 years, including Neolithic stone monuments, ancient drove roads, Iron Age forts, Roman villas, ridge and furrow fields, medieval wool churches and country estates and parks; and*
- *A vibrant heritage of cultural associations, including the Arts and Crafts movement of the 19th and 20th centuries, famous composers and authors and traditional events such as the Cotswolds Olimpicks, cheese rolling and woolsack races."*

Wiltshire Council Design Code (Wiltshire Council, 2024)

8.3.63 The county wide design guide is a Supplementary Planning Document which expands upon the current Wiltshire Core Policy 57 *"Ensuring high quality design and place shaping"*. The guidance relates primarily to the built environment but does include an introduction to Wiltshire's variety of landscapes whose diversity *'adds significantly to the county's charm, contributing both to the distinct identities of local economy, communities and is a basis for a flourishing tourist and rural*'.

8.3.64 There are three 'golden threads' which underpin the design guidance and support the delivery of the Council's strategic aims. These are:

- Health, Wellbeing and Community;
- Sustainability and Climate Resilience; and
- The right homes in the right places.

8.3.65 On Sustainability and Climate Resilience Wiltshire Council *"recognises the importance of keeping its aims for net zero and its responsibility for the environment central to all it does. The council has acknowledged a climate emergency and is committed to becoming carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030".*

Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy

8.3.66 The Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a roadmap designed to guide nature recovery initiatives throughout Wiltshire. It is part of a broader national effort, driven by the Environment Act 2021, to create a national nature recovery network across the country, made up of county-scale LNRS documents and is part of delivering the UK's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30x30) for which habitat creation is key.

8.3.67 The strategy is under development and at the time of writing has not been published. The Consultation Draft of March 2025 has been used to inform the development of the Scheme. However, it has now been removed from Wiltshire Council's website while it and the links and mapping are updated.

LVIA Guidance

8.3.68 The LVIA will be undertaken in line with the following guidance which represents the standard approach and guidance relevant to LVIA for renewable energy developments within the UK:

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Effect Assessment', 2013, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Ref 8-19):
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note LITGN-20/24-01 Published August 2024 (Ref 8-20);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 8-21);
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals (Ref 8-22);
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/19, Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) (Ref 8-23); and

- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21, Assessing landscape value outside national designations (Ref 8-24).

8.4 Assessment Assumptions and Limitations

8.4.1 The methodology for landscape and visual assessment has considered the following assumptions and limitations:

- The LVIA is based upon the Scheme layout illustrated within the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plans included within **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4 Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2];**
- Fieldwork has been undertaken from publicly accessible locations only;
- Assessment of effects upon residential properties has been undertaken from the curtilage of residential properties where publicly accessible unless other arrangements are agreed with individual residents to gain access to their property. Professional judgement has been used to assess views from residential properties aided by the ZTV, aerial photography and LVIA figures; and
- Photography included within Figures Figure series 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages is verifiable in line with TGN 06/19 and has been captured in both summer and winter.

8.4.2 Assessment of effects at construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning is assessed as follows:

- Construction – Assessment is based on the construction of Lime Down A – E and associated infrastructure including energy storage, substations, Cable Route Corridor and other infrastructure integral to the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases as set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. Assessment work has been undertaken in both summer and winter in order to assess a worst-case scenario;
- Operation (Year 1) - Assessment is based on Lime Down A – E and associated infrastructure being operational at the same time and assessment work has been undertaken in both summer and winter in order to assess a worst-case scenario;
- Operation (Year 15) - Assessment is based on Lime Down A – E and associated infrastructure being operational at the same time and assessed in summer with vegetation in leaf offering maximum screening potential.

  A uniform rate of growth is allowed for trees, shelterbelts, and woodland mitigation planting of 0.4m every 1 year. At Year 15 this will result in new trees, shelterbelts, and woodland plantings having reached a minimum height of 7.5m. A uniform growth rate is allowed for new hedgerows of 0.4m

every 1 year. This would result in hedgerows being able to be maintained at a height of between 3 - 5m by Year 15.

It is expected that alongside the regular maintenance of equipment, infrastructure such as panels and batteries will require replacement. It is not expected that an extensive replacement of all components will be required across the entirety of the Scheme during one period; instead, the programme for replacement of equipment across the Scheme should is anticipated to be staged to maintain the electrical export to the National Grid. The replacement activity would be considerably less intensive than during construction, with any environmental effects identified being appropriately mitigated with similar measures to those identified for the construction of the Scheme.

Whilst Solar PV Panels typically have a lifespan of up to 40 years or more, and it has been assumed that Solar PV Panels will be replaced once during the lifetime of the Scheme. The Solar PV Panels are anticipated to be replaced over a 24 month period. The BESS could be replaced up to five times during the operational phase. Details of replacement are set out in more detail within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3 The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**; and

- Decommissioning – Assessment is based on a similar process to that of construction with the scheme being no longer operational. Assessment work has been undertaken in winter in order to assess a worst-case scenario but assumes retention of existing and mitigating green infrastructure on site.

8.5 Study Area

8.5.1 The following Study Areas have been defined based on the Development Area as described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: The Order Limits [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and physical characteristics and key activities of the proposed Scheme as described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

8.5.2 The boundaries of the Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A-E), the Cable Route Corridor and other infrastructure together define the extents of the Scheme.

8.5.3 GLIVA3 states that the Study Area must be reasonable and proportionate and must ensure that the focus when defining the appropriate Study Area is on where likely significant effects upon Landscape and Visual receptors may occur, together with likely significant cumulative effects.

8.5.4 The Study Areas have been informed through a combination of desktop study, as well as professional judgement on similar scale projects. They have been established through consideration of the existing landform and vegetation, as well as the scale of the Scheme and heights of the proposed infrastructure and the potential for significant effects. Identification of the Study Areas has

considered the diminishing nature of visual perception as distance from visual receptors increases. As per GLVIA 3 Paragraph 6.11 *The effects of distance on views must also be considered – for example parts of the ZTV that are most distant from the proposal may be omitted from the final visual effects baseline if it is judged that visibility from this distance will be extremely limited. This will vary with the type of project and must be agreed with the competent authority.*

8.5.5 As a result, the proposed Study Areas for visual receptors are smaller than the proposed Landscape Study Areas, which consider the interconnectivity of the wider landscape context. The proposed Study Areas are illustrated on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1: Study Area series [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and comprise four Study Areas which are described below.

8.5.6 The following Study Areas have been agreed to be a proportionate approach with Wiltshire Council as per scoping response dated the 24 August 2024.

The 0.5 km Study Area for the Cable Route Corridor (The Cable Route Corridor Study Area)

8.5.7 A Study Area of 0.5 km is proposed from the outer boundary of the Cable Route Corridor.

8.5.8 The 0.5km radius is considered appropriate for the Cable Route Corridor, as the proposed cable would be underground and the only above ground features visible during the operational phase would be limited to ground level inspection chambers. Construction activity and lay down areas would be visible during the construction phase only. Visual effects from construction of the Cable Route Corridor would be short term and temporary.

8.5.9 Landscape and visual effects resulting from the Cable Route Corridor would be localised and loss of landscape features such as trees and hedgerows would be mitigated through micro siting of the proposed cabling and directional drilling.

8.5.10 Beyond 0.5 km, even with good visibility, it is deemed that this element of the Scheme would be barely perceptible. Within the assessment, this parameter is referred to as the Cable Route Study Area.

- The Cable Route Corridor is shown on **Figure 1-2: The Order Limits [EN010168/APP/6.2];** and
- The Cable Route Corridor Study Area is shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.5.11 All Landscape and Visual receptors within this Study Area are assessed during the construction, operation (Year 1 and year 15) and decommissioning phases.

The Solar PV Sites

8.5.12 The land associated with the Solar PV Sites A-E themselves is defined as the Landscape Fabric. Landscape Fabric being the individual tangible elements or features of the landscape, such as landform, woodland, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, for example which can usually be described and quantified), and the local landscape character (informed by all relevant landscape character assessments).

8.5.13 The Landscape Fabric of the Solar PV Sites is considered a landscape receptor which will be assessed separately to relevant the following Study Areas.

The 1km Study Area (The Local 1km Study Area)

8.5.14 The assessment of Local 1km Study Area focuses on impacts upon both Landscape and Visual receptors. This is the 1km area extending as a radius from the outer boundary of Lime Down A to E and is considered reasonable and proportionate as the Local Study Area for the LVIA. The assessment of the Local 1km Study Area focuses on impacts upon both Landscape and Visual receptors.

8.5.15 All Visual Receptors within the Local 1km Study Area have been included within the LVIA. However, Visual receptors within the Local 1km Study Area with no intervisibility of the main solar sites have been scoped out of the LVIA as it is considered unlikely that effects (if any) would be identified as being Significant.

8.5.16 Within the assessment, this parameter is referred to as the ‘Local 1km Study Area’. Please refer to Paragraph 8.5.4 above for reasoning of proposed variation of Study Areas.

The 2km Study Area (The Wider 2km Study Area)

8.5.17 This is the 2km area extending as a radius from the outer boundary of Lime Down A to E and is considered reasonable and proportionate as the Wider 2km Study Area for the LVIA. The Wider Study Area focuses on impacts upon both Landscape and Visual receptors.

8.5.18 Effects to landscape character within the Wider 2km Study Area will be included within the LVIA, (informed by all relevant landscape character assessments).

8.5.19 Visual receptors located outside of the Local 1km Study Area that are identified as having direct, extensive, and/or open views towards the Scheme (particularly larger and taller elements or large open expanses of PV arrays) will be separately identified and included within this 2km Study Area and included within the LVIA.

8.5.20 Visual receptors which are considered to have direct, extensive, and/or open views towards the scheme have been identified through a combination of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) and site surveys to ground truth visibility. For

further detail about how the ZTV have been applied to identify these visual receptors refer to **ES Volume 3: Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.5.21 All visual receptors located beyond the Local 1km Study Area which do not have direct, extensive and / or open views towards the Scheme have not been carried forward for further assessment within the LVIA, as beyond this point, receptors without direct, extensive, and/or open views towards the Scheme are unlikely to experience significant effects.

8.5.22 Within the assessment, this parameter is referred to as the 'Wider 2 km Study Area'. Please refer to Paragraph 8.5.4 above for reasoning of proposed variation of Study Areas.

The 5 km Study Area (The Outer 5 km Study Area)

8.5.23 This is for the area extending as a radius from the outer boundary of Lime Down A to E that is considered appropriate as the extent of the Outer 5km Study Area for the LVIA. Any Landscape or Visual receptors beyond the Outer 5km Study Area are not included within the LVIA.

8.5.24 Effects to landscape character within the Outer 5km Study Area will be included within the LVIA (informed by all relevant landscape character assessments).

8.5.25 The Outer 5km Study Area focuses on impacts upon landscape receptors only, with all visual receptors beyond the Wider 2km Study Area scoped out of the LVIA. Please refer to Paragraph 8.5.4 which refers to GLVIA3 and reduction of visibility due to distance.

8.5.26 It is considered that within the Outer 5km Study Area, even with excellent visibility it is deemed that the Scheme would be barely perceptible and that it would not lead to any significant Visual effects, either independently or cumulatively. **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-9 Augmented ZTV [EN010168/APP/6.2]** demonstrate potential visibility of the Scheme considering landform and vegetation.

8.5.27 Within the assessment, this parameter is referred to as the 'Outer 5km Study Area'. Please refer to Paragraph 8.5.4 above for reasoning of proposed variation of Study Areas.

The 10km Study Area (The Cumulative Study Area)

8.5.28 As requested by Wiltshire Council, the Study Area for the assessment of Cumulative Effects has been increased to 10km. This is defined as the Cumulative Study Area and focuses on cumulative development sites within 10km radius of the solar PV sites.

8.5.29 The LVIA Cumulative Assessment is an additional stage beyond LVIA. It takes the findings of the LVIA and then tests these against the Cumulative Baseline to

give an understanding of the likely significant effects of all the developments when taken together.

8.6 Temporal Scope: Assessment Years

8.6.1 The assessment scenarios for the purposes of the EIA (and considered in this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices) are:

- Existing Baseline: 2025;
- Construction: 2027 – 2029. The construction programme for the entire Scheme is anticipated to be approximately 24 months with the potential likelihood of overlapping construction works on the different Sites;
- Operation: 2029. It has been assumed for the purposes of the EIA that the Scheme will be operational by end of Q1 2029;
- A future year of 2044 (15 years post first operation of the Scheme) is considered for this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices i.e., 15 years after commissioning, which is the typical period for the maturation of landscape planting.
- Decommissioning 2089. This would be the year when decommissioning of the Scheme would commence and has been based on the maximum operational lifetime of the Scheme of 60 years. It has therefore been assumed for the purposes of the EIA that the Scheme will be decommissioned in 2089. Decommissioning is expected to take between 12 and 24 months. A 24-month decommissioning phase has been assumed for the purposes of the realistic worst-case assessment in the LVIA; and

Construction Phase

8.6.2 For the purposes of the assessment, the construction phase effects are effects that result from activities during site preparation / enabling works, construction, and commissioning activities, for example, effects such as construction traffic, noise and vibration from construction activities, dust generation, site runoff, mud on roads, and the visual intrusion of plant and machinery on Site. Construction durations are described in **ES Volume 1, Chapters 6: EIA Methodology** and **Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

8.6.3 An overall 24-month construction phase is anticipated for the Scheme.

Operational Phase

8.6.4 These are effects associated with operation and maintenance activities during the generating lifetime of the Scheme, for example, the effects of the physical presence of the solar arrays and associated infrastructure, and their use and maintenance. Timescales associated with these effects are defined. In EIA terms, effects can be defined as short term (lasts for up to 12 months); medium

term (lasts for 1 - 5 years); long term (more than 5 years); reversible long-term effects (long-term effects, which last for the lifetime of the Scheme, but which cease once it has been decommissioned); and permanent effects (those which cannot be reversed following decommissioning).

Decommissioning Phase

8.6.5 Effects are those arising from activities for the duration of the decommissioning phase and will likely be short term, for example, site traffic, noise and vibration from decommissioning activities, dust generation, site runoff etc.

Assessment Years

8.6.6 The EIA considers the Environmental Impacts of the Scheme at all three stages described above. The operational life of the Scheme no more than 60 years and decommissioning is therefore estimated to be in 2089. This time period is assessed in the EIA (and within this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices).

8.6.7 The 'existing baseline' year for assessment is 2025 as this is the date on which baseline studies for the project were completed. A future baseline, Year 15 (2044) is also considered within this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices. The future baseline considers factors that will change the current baseline, without the Scheme proceeding. Committed developments within the 5km Study Area for this LVIA are one factor that can influence the future baseline (‘committed developments’ are those with current planning permission or allocated in adopted development plans). The potential effects of the Scheme are considered against both the current baseline and the future baseline in this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices.

8.7 Assessment Methodology

8.7.1 The methodologies described in the following section have been developed in line with the relevant guidance for assessing potential significant effects.

8.7.2 A full detailed LVIA methodology is set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. For the overall proposed EIA assessment methodology please refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1]**.

8.7.3 The methodology for this LVIA chapter is based on the general recommendations set out in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, LI ISEP, 2013. The guidelines are not prescriptive and set out a general approach that should be tailored to specific circumstances of the project that is being assessed. The methodology adopted for this assessment is set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. The assessment process comprises broadly of three stages: baseline appraisal (including fieldwork), production of visualisations and

assessment of effects, including cumulative and in-combination effects, within the following step by step process:

- A desk study to assess the landscape and visual baseline is supported by a suite of landscape figures as listed within **ES Volume 2** which includes a review of published landscape character assessments as set out within **Section 8.8**. This baseline stage of the process was undertaken to identify the landscape and visual receptors to be assessed. These landscape and visual receptors have been finalised following consultation with statutory consultees at a series of meetings and workshops, the outcome of which is summarised in **Consultation Report [EN010168/APP/5.1]**;
- Detailed fieldwork to confirm aspects of the desk study and to verify proposed viewpoint locations;
- An assessment of the sensitivity (nature of the receptor) of landscape and visual receptors. This is defined through a combination of their value and susceptibility to change;
- An assessment of the magnitude of impact (nature of effect) of the Scheme during the construction phase (winter), operation at year 1 (winter) and operation at year 15 (summer) and at decommissioning phase (winter). The magnitude of impact is assessed in relation to the size, scale, duration, and reversibility of the effect;
- An assessment of the significance of the effect to the landscape and visual receptors for the four stages of the Scheme (construction, operation (Year 1), operation (Year 15), and decommissioning (For the purposes of the EIA the Scheme has been assessed as being decommissioned in 2089. This would be the year when decommissioning of the Scheme would commence based on the maximum operational lifetime of the Scheme of 60 years). This process systematically and transparently assesses the likely significant effects of the Scheme taking into account of embedded mitigation at each of these four stages;
- Mitigation proposals are set out to prevent/ avoid, reduce, and where practicable offset or compensate for any significant adverse landscape and visual effects. Embedded mitigation forms an integral, committed and deliverable part of the Scheme design and can also comprise standard construction practices. They are assumed to be implemented and are therefore factored into the assessment process. Embedded mitigation is taken into account during the construction, operation (Year 1 and Year 15) and decommissioning phases of the Scheme;
- An assessment of the Cumulative Effects of the Scheme under two divisions, these being: the assessment of Cumulative Sites based on the 5 areas of land forming the Site, and the assessment of Cumulative Developments

being the Scheme in combination with other similar developments, these being other renewable projects in the local area; and

- Preparation of an **Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) [EN010168/APP/7.18]** with a proposed schedule to be implemented throughout the lifetime of the Scheme. The **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]** prescribes how the mitigation measures identified and proposed are to be implemented and managed to ensure the effectiveness and certainty in achieving the objectives of the mitigation strategy. This stage has been undertaken in conjunction with the ecology consultants.

8.7.4 Landscape effects and visual effects are considered separately in this assessment. Landscape effects relate to both direct physical effects of the Scheme (for example loss of existing trees) and effects on wider landscape character, including perceptual effects. Visual effects relate to the effect on views and visual amenity experienced by various receptors including residents, users of PRoW, road users and recreational users. Views from conservation areas, listed buildings, scheduled monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens are also considered where these features include recognised viewpoints, for example, used by tourists or other receptors. It should be noted that this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices address effects on recognised views from cultural heritage resources; effects on 'setting' are not considered in this assessment and are presented in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.7.5 Effects are identified as being either reversible or irreversible and the duration of effects is also considered. Effects are described as being either beneficial, neutral or adverse depending on whether they are considered to have a positive or negative effect on the landscape or within views.

8.7.6 Impact assessment of any proposed development is an iterative process, with the overall aim being to avoid Environmental Impacts or, where impacts cannot be avoided completely, reducing identified impacts to acceptable levels. Based on the findings of this assessment, landscape and visual mitigation measures are designed to help integrate the Scheme into its landscape setting and mitigate any specific visual or physical effects that are identified. This LVIA chapter and supporting appendices considers the effects of mitigation measures being in place and identified residual impacts.

Site Visits and Field Work

8.7.7 Following desk-based assessment, fieldwork was undertaken at key stages during the EIA and augmented by additional fieldwork where necessary. These stages were:

- Preliminary Environmental Information to inform statutory consultation;
- LVIA chapter and appendices, baseline appraisal stage;

- LVIA chapter and appendices, production of visualisations stage; and
- LVIA chapter and appendices, assessment of effects stage.

8.7.8 Initial site work was undertaken over a number of days, between 31 January and 14 February 2024. The weather was variable with some clear days with good visibility and some cloudy and misty days with poor visibility. Trees were predominantly not in leaf representing a worst-case scenario in terms of the screening afforded by vegetation. A second series of site visits were undertaken in July 2024 when there was greater vegetation cover. Further site visits were made with CNLB and WC in January and February 2025 to review the preliminary assessment of effects as part of this submission. A further Site Visit was undertaken in August 2025 to undertake an assessment of the Cable Route Corridor.

8.7.9 Site assessment was undertaken for each Site and Cable Route Corridor using publicly accessible viewpoints. Assessment of residential property and other non-accessible receptors was estimated based on effects identified from the closest publicly accessible areas. In a small number of cases, at the request of near neighbours, visits were undertaken to local residential properties to understand the nature of views from within the private dwelling.

Components of LVIA

8.7.10 There are two components of LVIA that are described in GLVIA3 as follows:

> *1. "**assessment of landscape effects**: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right*
>
> *2. **assessment of visual effects**: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people".*

8.7.11 This LVIA chapter and appendices have taken into account both the landscape and visual effects throughout the assessment process, and this is set out within the full methodology suite included in Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology **[EN010168/APP/6.3]**. This appendix is split into five separate sub appendices:

- LVIA Methodology;
- Cumulative Assessment Methodology;
- Residential Visual Amenity Assessment Methodology;
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility Methodology; and
- Photomontage Technical Methodology.

8.7.12 The consideration of the effects on the landscape resource is therefore based on the landscape receptors shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape**

Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2] and the visual resource is based on the visual receptors shown on **Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.7.13 A series of 'representative and specific viewpoints' are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-10: Viewpoints [EN010168/APP/6.2].** Verified photography and photomontages are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.7.14 These viewpoints have been selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, including users of PRoW, residential properties, transport routes, heritage, and recreational sites. Selected viewpoints include specific locations that are popular vantage points or tourist destinations, and those suggested by Wiltshire Council and the CNL in response to statutory consultation. Viewpoints have also been selected to illustrate landscape character effects or likely Cumulative Effects of the Scheme.

Receptors

8.7.15 Receptors are those parts of the receiving landscape, and the people able to view the proposal, that may be affected by the change that will be affected by them. In LVIA there must be identification of both:

- Landscape Receptors, including the constituent elements of the landscape (the Landscape Fabric), its specific aesthetic or perceptual qualities and the character of the landscape in different areas; and
- Visual Receptors, that is, the people who will be affected by changes in views or visual amenity at different places.

Landscape Effects

8.7.16 Landscape Effects have been assessed upon Landscape receptors collectively for the Sites themselves considered as 'Landscape Fabric'. Landscape Fabric is the tangible elements or features of the landscape, such as landform, woodland, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, for example, which can usually be described and quantified.

8.7.17 Effects to Landscape Character have been assessed within each Study Area (1km, 2km and 5km). Due to the interconnected relationship landform has, the assessment for each Study Area considers the effect of the Scheme on the landscape as a single receptor, made up of all landscape receptors within the Study Area, for example all National Character Areas and all Regional Landscape Character Types and Areas within the individual Study Areas. This approach ensures that the assessment looks at the effects of the Scheme on the unique holistic patchwork of landscape character within each Study Area and avoids focusing the assessment on the effects to individual local or national LCAs where it would be difficult to then ascertain the effect of the Scheme on landscape character as a whole. For assessment of Landscape Effects please

refer to **ES Volume 3: Appendix 8-3 LVIA Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.7.18 It is important to note that the impact of changes to the landscape can appear different depending on the scale at which they are assessed. When assessing effects on the Landscape Fabric within the boundary of each Site, the focus is on the landscape components found in that defined area. Within the context of an individual Site, these changes can be minimal, particularly where the existing landscape components are largely retained and are often reinforced through additional planting.

8.7.19 When assessing effects to the 1km Local Study Area, the 2km Wider Study Area and the 5km Outer Study Areas, this is done on the basis of a complete understanding both of the changes to the planting within the Sites which contributes to the landscape character, and the addition of scheme infrastructure that is inconsistent with it.

8.7.20 When considering how these changes affect the broader landscape character within the 1km Local Study Area, the 2km Wider Study Area and the 5km Outer Study Area, the significance may be greater or diminish over distance. Small alterations to the landscape components within a Site may disrupt or support the overall patters and distinctive character that define the landscape character of the area.

8.7.21 The detailed LVIA methodology used for the ES assessment is set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].** For the overall EIA assessment methodology please refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

Visual Effects

8.7.22 Visual Effects have been assessed upon individual visual receptors which have been given visual receptor numbers as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].** Some visual receptors such as settlements and roads within settlements, are considered collectively in order to understand visual effects to the grouping as a whole. For assessment of Visual Effects please refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3: Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.7.23 The detailed LVIA methodology used for the ES assessment is set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. For the overall EIA assessment methodology please refer to **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

Effects on the Cotswold National Landscape

8.7.24 The Cotswold National Landscape is fully assessed as its own standalone receptor in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-6 LVIA Assessment of the Special**

Qualities of Cotswold National Landscape [EN010168/APP/6.3]. This Appendix assesses the impacts of the proposal upon landscape character and visual amenity, drawing on the findings of the LVIA and also assesses the effects of the proposals on the special qualities of the Cotswold National Landscape. This Appendix also considers the positive enhancement measures incorporated into the scheme to further the purposes of the Cotswold National Landscape.

Impact Assessment Methodology

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

8.7.25 The judgement on landscape sensitivity is based on consideration of both the landscape receptor's value and its susceptibility to change arising from the Scheme.

8.7.26 For details on how landscape value and susceptibility is assessed please refer to **Section 1.6** of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

8.7.27 **Tables 8-1-2** and **Table 8-1-3** of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]** provide criteria for determining landscape value for both designated and undesignated landscapes. As listed, landscape value is based on factors such as natural and cultural heritage, its condition, associations, distinctiveness, and recreational opportunities and how it is perceived.

8.7.28 GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.39) indicates that combining susceptibility and value can be achieved in a number of ways and needs to include professional judgement. However, it is generally accepted that a combination of high susceptibility and high value is likely to result in the highest sensitivity, whereas a low susceptibility and low value is likely to result in the lowest level of sensitivity.

8.7.29 **Table 8-3** below illustrates how landscape value and susceptibility are combined to determine the level of landscape sensitivity.

Table 8-3: Matrix for Determining Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Susceptibility / **Landscape Value**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
High	High	High to Medium	Medium	Medium to Low
Medium	High to Medium	Medium	Medium to Low	Low

Landscape Susceptibility / Landscape Value	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Low	Medium	Medium to Low	Low	Low to Very Low
Very Low	Medium to Low	Low	Low to Very Low	Very Low

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

8.7.30 The judgement on visual sensitivity is based on consideration of both the visual receptor's value and its susceptibility to change arising from the Scheme.

8.7.31 For details on how a visual receptor's value and susceptibility is assessed please refer to **Section 1.7** of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

8.7.32 **Table 8-1.9** of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]** provides criteria for determining value attached to views which is dependent upon designation, cultural associations, popularity, and where views provide appreciation of the landscape.

8.7.33 Professional judgements are made on the merit of the view based on the visual receptor. It should be noted that the levels are indicative and in practice there is not a clear distinction between criteria levels.

8.7.34 **Table 8-4** below illustrates how the visual value and susceptibility are combined to determine the level of landscape sensitivity.

Table 8-4 Matrix for Determining Visual Sensitivity

Visual Susceptibility / Visual Value	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
High	High	High to Medium	Medium	Medium to Low
Medium	High to Medium	Medium	Medium to Low	Low
Low	Medium	Medium to Low	Low	Low to Very Low
Very Low	Medium to Low	Low	Low to Very Low	Very Low

8.7.35 The matrix above uses a range of Sensitivity values based on the combination of value and susceptibility which allows professional judgment to be used to determine if sensitivity should be progressed as, for example, 'High' or 'Medium' for a given receptor when determining the significance of Landscape and Visual effects as shown in **Table 8-5** below.

Magnitude of Landscape Change

8.7.36 The overall assessment of magnitude of landscape change, combines size and scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility. Overall magnitude of change is assessed from high to very low depending on these factors. Not all aspects of a criterion need to be met for an evaluation to be given.

8.7.37 For definitions of landscape change please refer to Section 1.6 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

Duration and Reversibility of Landscape Effects

8.7.38 The following terminology is used to describe the duration of the change within the landscape assessment.

- Short-term: 0-5 years;
- Medium-term: 5-10 years; and
- Long-term: 10 to 40 years (or longer).

8.7.39 For the purposes of the LVIA process, the operation phase of the Scheme is assessed as a long-term duration and the construction and decommissioning phases are assessed as short-term duration.

8.7.40 Reversibility is the judgement about whether or not the Scheme can be removed, and once removed whether the landscape can be fully restored.

Magnitude of Visual Change

8.7.41 The overall assessment of magnitude of visual change, combines size and scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility. Overall magnitude of change is assessed from high to very low depending on these factors. Not all aspects of a criterion need to be met for an evaluation to be given.

8.7.42 For definitions of visual change please refer to **Section 1.7** of **Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Duration and Reversibility of Visual Effects

8.7.43 The following terminology is used to describe the duration of the change within the visual assessment.

- Short-term: 0-5 years;

- Medium-term: 5-10 years; and
- Long-term: 10 to 40 years (or longer).

8.7.44 For the purposes of the LVIA process, the operation phase of the Scheme is assessed as a long-term duration and the construction and decommissioning phases is assessed as short-term duration.

8.7.45 Reversibility is the judgement about whether or not the Scheme can be removed, and once removed whether the view can be fully restored.

Assessment of Significance

8.7.46 Table 8-5 below shows how the combined factors of sensitivity and magnitude are considered together to determine the significance of landscape and visual effects.

8.7.47 Landscape and visual effects assessed as Major, Major/Moderate, and Moderate are considered to be significant as highlighted in grey in **Table 8-5** below:

8.7.48 Landscape and visual effects assessed as Moderate/Minor, Minor, Minor/ Negligible and Negligible are not considered as significant.

Table 8-5 Matrix for Determining Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

Sensitivity / **Magnitude**	**High**	**Medium**	**Low**	**Very Low**
High	**Major**	**Major/ Moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate/ Minor
Medium	**Major/ Moderate**	**Moderate**	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
Low	**Moderate**	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
Very Low	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible

8.7.49 Effects of the Scheme are considered adverse unless stated otherwise (neutral/beneficial) as defined in Section 1.8 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

Cumulative Effects

8.7.50 For details of the cumulative methodology please refer to Section 2 Cumulative Methodology of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.7.51 Cumulative landscape effects, are likely to include effects on:

- The fabric of the landscape;
- The aesthetic aspects of the landscape; and
- The overall character of the landscape.

8.7.52 Cumulative visual effects can be 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*"

8.7.53 as set out in GLVIA3 (Table 7.1) which states 'Combined' visual effects are:

"Where two or more developments are or would be within the observer's arc of vision at the same time without moving her/his head".

8.7.54 The cumulative assessment has been approached as three separate divisions under the following headings:

- The assessment of **Cumulative Sites** based on the Solar PV Sites which make up the Scheme;
- The assessment of **Cumulative Developments** being the Scheme in combination with other similar developments, these being other renewable projects in the local area; and
- The assessment of **Cross Topic Effects**.

8.7.55 The following text defines the separate divisions of cumulative assessment.

Cumulative Site Effects

8.7.56 Due to the dispersed nature of the Solar PV Sites within the Scheme, an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of Lime Down A - E, taken together, has been undertaken to determine the effects of the Solar PV Sites as a whole.

8.7.57 The cumulative effects of each of the Solar PV Sites are assessed and the combined set of effects of the Scheme to reach an overall conclusion on where likely significant effects might occur as a result of the Scheme.

Cumulative Development Effects

8.7.58 A cumulative assessment has been undertaken, assessing both the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Scheme in conjunction with other local developments. The Cumulative Developments assessment considers the additional effects resulting from the Scheme in combination with the effects resulting from other similar developments, these being other renewable projects taken together, that are listed below as set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**, and in line with industry guidance (GLVIA3). In this case, the cumulative effects have been assessed as a combined set of effects from the Scheme with other 'Developments', reaching an overall conclusion on where likely significant effects might occur based on the Cumulative Developments Sites in **Table** 8-6 below:

Table 8-6: Cumulative Developments

ID	App Reference	Description	Distance from Project
231	20/03528/FUL	Renewable energy scheme on land Near Minety Substation, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX	5.3km from Cable Route Corridor 8.87km from Solar Sites
234	20/05893/SCO	EIA screening/scoping opinion for installation of a solar farm with a 49.9 output including battery storage units on land at Bishoper Farm,	1.13km from Cable Route Corridor 5.62km from Solar Sites
237	PL/2022/00664	Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility. The use of the site would change from agricultural to energy infrastructure. On land off Pond Lane, Minety	6.42km from Cable Route Corridor 9.29km from Solar Sites
240	PL/2022/05504	Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) together with associated ancillary infrastructure, equipment and access arrangements. On land at Stonehill, Minety, Wiltshire.,	5.8km from Cable Route Corridor 9.35km from Solar Sites
241	PL/2022/02824	Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility and ancillary development. On land at Somerford Farm, Brinkworth	6.94km from Cable Route Corridor 8.98km from Solar Sites
242	PL/2024/03276	Proposed development of a grid connection cable route for the approved Milou battery energy storage system. On	5.86km from Cable Route Corridor

		land to the south of the National Grid Minety substation, Minety	9.11km from Solar Sites
243	PL/2023/08481	Solar farm of up to 40MW at land at Red Barn, East of Kington St Michael, Chippenham	2.53km from Cable Route Corridor 2.53km from Solar Sites
346	PL/2024/09410	Construction and operation of a solar farm together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure on Land East of Battens Farm, Allington, Chippenham	0.02km from Cable Route Corridor 6.05km from Solar Sites

Cross Topic Effects

8.7.59 Cross topic environmental effects resulting from the Scheme are considered where LVIA impacts and those of another chapter both operate on the same receptor - e.g. cultural heritage; or noise and vibration. Some topics inherently consider cross topic effects as part of their assessment. All other cross-topic effects are assessed within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21: Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. It is anticipated that landscape and visual cross topic effects will primarily arise in relation to the following disciplines:

Glint and Glare

8.7.60 The LVIA considers the conclusions of the **ES Volume 3, Appendix 20-4 Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study [EN010168/APP/6.3]** in association with an assessment of the magnitude of Landscape and Visual impacts using the methodology prescribed above. The potential for cross-topic effects with Glint and Glare has been inherently considered as part of this LVIA.

Lighting

8.7.61 The LVIA has considered the construction, operational and decommissioning lighting proposals (as set out within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and further discussed in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 20: Other Environmental Matters [EN010168/APP/6.1]**) for the Scheme including details of directionality and intermittent lighting.

8.7.62 Lighting is not required within the Solar Arrays for the operational phase. Motion sensing security lighting will be provided within substations and within the BESS Area to be used only for maintenance and security purposes.

8.7.63 Temporary site lighting during construction will be required to enable safe working during construction and decommissioning during hours of darkness and will be designed as far as reasonably practicable to minimise potential for light

spillage outside the Scheme and Cable Corridor, particularly towards houses, traffic and ecological habitats.

8.7.64 Standard good practice measures would be employed to minimise light spill, including glare during construction, operation and decommissioning. The potential for cross-topic effects with the lighting proposals has been inherently considered as part of this LVIA.

Cultural Heritage

8.7.65 The LVIA has considered the findings of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage [EN010168/APP/6.1].** The LVIA focuses on likely significant effects of views from heritage assets (where accessible) but does not comment upon the setting of such assets. This has been undertaken as part of the Cultural Heritage chapter of the ES. However, consultation has been undertaken with the cultural heritage consultant through the LVIA process to help inform landscape character. The potential for cross-topic effects forms an inherent part of both the Cultural Heritage and the LVIA assessments.

Arboriculture

8.7.66 The LVIA has considered the findings of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Arboriculture [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and has considered effects upon Landscape and Visual receptors where vegetation removal be required as part of the Scheme. Due to the nature of the Scheme, it is considered that existing vegetation on site would be retained (where practicable) and any removal to accommodate elements associated with construction or access would be subject to a BS5837:2012 tree survey and associated Arboricultural Impact Assessment. Mitigation associated with any such tree loss associated with the Scheme has been included in the landscape mitigation plans forming part of the LVIA. The Landscape and Visual consultant has worked closely with the arboricultural consultant throughout the iterative Scheme design process to ensure local arboreal assets and character inform the LVIA and associated mitigation plans. The potential for cross-topic effects with arboricultural effects has been inherently considered as part of this LVIA.

Ecology

8.7.67 The LVIA has considered the findings of the ecological reports and close liaison with the ecology consultant has formed a key part of the LVIA mitigation strategy. Whilst ecological effects have been dealt with wholly in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity [EN010168/APP/6.1],** this approach ensures that the landscape mitigation proposed is considered holistically with ecological requirements to maximise the benefits of the Scheme in terms of green infrastructure, habitat creation and ecological mitigation. The potential for cross-topic effects has formed an inherent part of the design of this mitigation, and the proposed landscaping and ecological mitigation forms an inherent part of both the ecology and LVIA assessments.

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

8.7.68 Current guidance on Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is contained within the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 2/19 (Ref 8-23).

8.7.69 Steps 1-3 of RVAA guidance align with the standard LVIA based approach defined in GLIVIA3 to assess the effects on residential amenity as follows:

- Step 1 – Definition of study area and scope of the assessment;
- Step 2 – Evaluation of Baseline Visual Amenity;
- Step 3 – Assessment of likely change to visual amenity of properties; and
- Step 4 – Forming the RVAA judgement.

8.7.70 Step 4 of the RVAA is defined as being required as follows:

"In this final step, and only for those properties where the largest magnitude of effect has been identified, a further judgement is required."

8.7.71 Steps 1-3 have been undertaken as part of the LVIA for the Scheme. Following assessment of affects upon residential properties at year 15, no significant effects at the highest magnitude of significance (Major Adverse) have been identified. Therefore, a full RVAA has not been required.

8.8 Baseline Conditions

8.8.1 This section describes the existing and anticipated future baseline conditions for the Landscape and Visual assessment.

Landscape Baseline

8.8.2 This section describes the baseline environmental characteristics for the Scheme and surrounding areas with specific reference to landscape and visual setting. The existing baseline conditions are derived from desk based and field-based studies.

8.8.3 The character of the landscape evolves over time as a result of the interaction of human activity and the natural environment (people and place). Attributes used to assess landscape character include:

- Physical – geology, landform, climate, soils, landcover;
- Cultural and Social – land use, settlement, enclosure and history; and
- Aesthetics – colour, texture, pattern, form and perception.

8.8.4 The Solar PV Sites cover a total area of approximately 749 ha. and are located wholly within the administrative boundary of Wiltshire Council. The Scheme is situated approximately 800m to the north of Hullavington and lies to the south

and east of the Cotswold National Landscape. The Scheme is spread over a large land area. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.8.5 The Scheme is located approximately 1.7 km north of the M4 motorway, with Junction 17 of the M4 approximately 1.7 km to the south of Lime Down E. The Scheme lies approximately 7.7 km east of the A46 classified road. The A429 runs north of junction 17 of the M4 between Lime Down E to the east and Lime Down A-D to the west. The A429 passes through the villages of Malmsbury, Corston and Lower Stanton St. Quintin. The B4040 (Sherston Road) is located approximately 450 m to the north-west of Lime Down A.

8.8.6 The surrounding area is primarily rural agricultural land with a number of smaller villages within 1 km. These include:

- Sherston is located approximately 300 m to the north of Lime Down A;
- Luckington is located approximately 830 m to the west of Lime Down C;
- Corston is located approximately 480 m east of Lime Down D;
- Hullavington is located approximately 700 m south of Lime Down D;
- Rodbourne is located approximately 150 m south east of Lime Down E;
- The town of Malmesbury is located approximately 3 km north east of Lime Down B;
- Alderton is located is located 140 m west of Lime Down C;
- Norton is located centrally between Lime Down B and Lime Down D, situated roughly 300 m south of Lime Down B and some 860 m northeast of Lime Down D;
- Lower Stanton St. Quintin is located approximately 500 m southwest of Lime Down E;
- Upper Seagry is located approximately 780 m southeast of Lime Down E; and
- Rodbourne Bottom is located circa 400 m to the northeast of Lime Down E.

8.8.7 There are a number of individual farm holdings, rural dwellings and small commercial business properties in the vicinity of the Scheme.

8.8.8 The Great Western Railway South Wales Main Line runs east to west to the south of Lime Down D and intersects Lime Down C and Lime Down E.

8.8.9 The Cotswold National Landscape is located to the west and northwest of the Scheme. The northern boundary of Lime Down A and the western boundary of

Lime Down C, are adjacent to the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape.

8.8.10 The Order Limits cover an area of approximately 1,237ha of land within a rural landscape setting within the County of Wiltshire which comprises predominantly agricultural fields and small rural villages and hamlets.

8.8.11 As shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2]**, the five Solar PV Sites (Lime Down A to E) and the Cable Route Corridor which comprise the Development Area, are situated within a series of land parcels across a large geographic area of approximately 9.5 km east to west and 4.5 km north to south. This area extends from the northeastern extent of Lime Down A near Sherston to the southeastern extent of Lime Down E located near to the settlement of Upper Seagry. To the southwestern extent Lime Down C is located near the village of Alderton, to the east of Luckington and to the northeast, Lime Down E extends north towards the village of Corston. Lime Down D is centrally located within the Scheme and is situated to the north of Hullavington. Each of the Solar PV Sites is separated by varying distances therefore, from a Landscape and Visual perspective, each land parcel is considered to vary in terms of interconnecting relationships. The individual fields within the Scheme have been described from a general wider landscape context within the text below and are described in detail for each Site within this section.

8.8.12 The Solar PV Sites primarily comprise agricultural land delineated by low hedgerows, treed hedgerows, scattered woodland and woodland blocks.

8.8.13 Landform across the Solar PV Sites primarily consists of gently undulating topography with the River Avon to the east which flows from high ground within the Cotswolds through Sherston to the north of the Scheme. With reference to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3: Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**, in the wider landscape a distinct, extensive and large scale, steeply sloping and folded scarp landform, falls from the Cotswold Plateau westwards to lower vales where there are dramatic and panoramic views over the landscape to the west. This highly distinctive Cotswold landscape is designated as a National Landscape (formerly AONB).

8.8.14 The Solar PV Sites are situated to the east of the dip slope of the scarp where the landform gently rises westwards but is undulating over shallow valleys and ridges. Within the Scheme there are a series of small valleys, namely the Gauze Brook which flows predominantly west to east to the River Avon which gives rise to areas of flatter land between. The valleys often provide enclosure while there are more expansive views from higher ground.

8.8.15 Due to the nature of this landform alongside the extensive existing vegetation in the form of hedgerows, trees, and woodland, the Solar PV Sites are relatively well contained from one another. There are occasional views across the

landscape from higher ground where more than one of the Solar PV Sites are visible. Elsewhere containment is provided by the landform and vegetation which limit views to localised short distance rather than wide ranging or panoramic.

8.8.16 The agricultural landscape in which the Scheme is located is characterised by medium to large scale arable fields divided by hedgerows, either clipped low or left to grow tall. Different hedgerow management practises throughout the Solar PV Sites and Study Area contribute to the sense of enclosure or openness of the landscape. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees, predominantly Oak, often form treed horizons which, combined with blocks of woodland and tree belts, limit long distance views especially in flatter areas.

8.8.17 The Cotswolds is famous for its honey-coloured chocolate box villages, dry stone walls and imposing wool churches, all of which are made from the local Cotswold stone. The presence of iron oxide in the stone gives it the distinctive warm, yellowish tint today. The stone is also used in the wider landscape outside of the Cotswold National Landscape, in the buildings within the villages of Norton, Hullavington, Corston and Rodbourne. Although stone walls are found within these villages and some farmsteads within the Scheme's Study Area, they are rarely seen within the landscape to divide fields.

8.8.18 The Fosse Way, a Roman road built during the first and second centuries AD between Exeter and Lincoln is a strong linear feature of the landscape which runs southwest-northeast through the Scheme. Within the Study Area it is made up of sections of unsurfaced Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT) and surfaced roads with hedges predominantly to both sides and mature trees with gaps allowing views in both directions over grassland fields. The topography along the Fosse Way rises and falls as it crosses a number of small streams but is generally on higher, flatter land. Views are predominantly enclosed by hedgerows but there are some longer views over the arable landscape from higher ground fields, bounded in the background by dense woodland, limiting views beyond.

8.8.19 The landscape is also crisscrossed by narrow lanes which follow the field pattern with sharp right-angled bends in places; byways and bridleways which are predominantly straight and enclosed by hedgerows; and footpaths which follow field boundaries or diagonally cross arable fields with open views.

8.8.20 The Great Western Railway South Wales Main Line runs east to west to the south of Lime Down D and intersects Lime Down C and Lime Down E. It forms a linear feature in the landscape especially when on an embankment and enclosed when within a cutting. The railway is tunnelled to the west within the Cotswold National Landscape.

8.8.21 **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2]**, illustrates the proposed Solar PV Sites and the Cable Route Corridor which the Development

Area comprises and the associated Study Areas for the LVIA which has been defined based on Development Area's setting described in this section.

8.8.22 All relevant designations are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. A description of key designations within the Outer 5 km Study Area is included within the Solar PV Site Character descriptions in Paragraph 8.8.112 onwards, to provide a more rounded assessment of designations within the wider landscape. The exception is the listed buildings, due to the high number of listed buildings within the 2km and Outer 5km Study Area, only those closest have been described. All the listed buildings have been recorded on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Published Landscape Character Assessments

8.8.23 The character of the landscape evolves over time as a result of the interaction of human activity and the natural environment (people and place). Attributes used to assess landscape character include:

- Physical – geology, landform, climate, soils, land cover;
- Cultural and Social – land use, settlement, enclosure and history; and
- Aesthetics – colour, texture, pattern, form and perception.

8.8.24 All published National Character Areas (NCAs), Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) within the 5km Study Area from National to District level are summarised in **Table 8-7** below. Those in **bold** have been Scoped into the Assessment of the Scheme within the 5km Outer Study Area as agreed with Wiltshire Council at Scoping (refer to **Appendix 1-2: Scoping Opinion Response Table [EN010168/APP/6.3]**). Following consultation with Wiltshire Council regarding the approach to the Cumulative Assessment, the Study Area for cumulative effects was extended to 10km, and all relevant Landscape Types and Character Areas listed are included in the Cumulative Assessment.

Table 8-7: Summary of Landscape Character Assessments

National Level	**Natural England - National Character Area Profiles** Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-1: National and Regional Landscape Character Areas
	NCA Profile: 107 - Cotswolds
	NCA Profile: 108 - Upper Thames Clay Vales
	NCA Profile: 117 - Avon Vales
	Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

Regional (county) Level	Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-1: National and Regional Landscape Character Areas
	LCT 9: Limestone Wold LCA 9A: Cotswolds Dip Slope
	LCT 10: Limestone Valley LCA 10A: By Brook Limestone Valley
	LCT 11: Rolling Clay Lowland LCA 11: Minty Rolling Clay Lowland
	LCT 12: Open Clay Vales **LCA 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale**
	LCT 16: Limestone Lowland **LCA16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands**
Local Level	**Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment** Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-2: Cotswolds National Landscape Local Character Areas
	LCT 9: High Wold Dip Slope LCA 9D: Cotswolds High Wold Dip Slope
	LCT 11: Dip Slope Lowland **LCA 11A: South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands**
	LCT 12: Dip Slope Lowland Valley LCA 12A: Upper By Brook Valley
	LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands **LCA 14A: Biddestone Lowland Farmland**
	LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands LCA 14B: West Malmesbury Lowland Farmland
	The North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-3: North and West Wiltshire Local Landscape Character Areas
	Lowland Clay Farmland LCT LCA 5 - Minty and Malmsbury Rolling Lowland
	Settled Farmland Valley LCT **LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley**
	Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland LCT **LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope**

	Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland LCT **LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland**
	Lowland Clay Farmland LCT LCA 5: Minety and Malmsbury Rolling Lowland
	Wooded Lowland Valley LCT LCA 9: By Brook Valley
	Rolling Settled Lowland LCT **LCA 10 - Corsham Rolling Lowland**
	Lowland River Farmland LCT **LCA 11 - Avon Valley Lowland**
	Wooded Parkland Hill LCT LCA12: Bowood and Bowden Parkland
	The West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment
	LCT A: Limestone Lowland **LCA A3 - Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland**
	LCT B: Clay River Floodplain LCA B1: Avon Clay River Floodplain
	LCT C: Open Clay Vale LCA C2 - Semington Open Clay Vale

8.8.25 A full suite of landscape characteristics and sensitivities of the relevant Character Areas within the Outer 5km Study Area have been included within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-4 Landscape Character Area Descriptions [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.8.26 These are described below and are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

National Landscape Character

8.8.27 The 5km Study Area is located within three of the National Character Areas (NCA's) as defined by Natural England. These include:

- NCA Profile: 107 - Cotswolds (NE 420), to the west of the Study Area;
- NCA Profile: 108 - Upper Thames Clay Vales; and
- NCA Profile: 117 - Avon Vales (NE 522), in the centre of the Study Area.

8.8.28 Lime Down A, C and the western part of Lime Down B are situated within the Cotswolds NCA. Lime Down D, E and the eastern part of Lime Down B are situated within the Avon Vales NCA. A small part of NCA Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA is within the 5 km Study Area for Lime Down E. The Cable Route Corridor falls within both the Cotswolds NCA and the Avon Vales NCA.

8.8.29 As noted, only a small area of NCA108 - Upper Thames Clay Vales is located within the eastern edge of the 5km Study Area but none of the Solar PV Sites fall within this Character Area. As such, NCA 108 was scoped out of the assessment. An overview of the two relevant NCAs is provided below:

NCA 107-The Cotswolds (Ref 8-28)

"The Cotswold scarp, rising to 330 m, provides long, expansive views westwards over the Severn and Avon Vales to the Forest of Dean and Wales, to the Malvern and Shropshire hills and the nearby outliers such as Bredon Hill. From the dip slope, long easterly views can still be seen across the Vale of the White Horse to the North Wessex Downs and the Chilterns. Unlike the scarp, the eastern side of the National Character Area (NCA) merges gently with the neighbouring NCAs. The scarp forms the backdrop to the Severn and Avon Vales and in particular the setting for Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Bath, a World Heritage Site (WHS).

Most of the principal rivers in the NCA are tributaries of the Thames and flow south-eastwards into the Upper Thames Clay Vales, providing strong ecological and functional links. Rivers in the south and west flow into the River Avon and then the Severn Estuary. The area is underlain by a limestone aquifer, and both this and the rivers are a key supply of high-quality water for this and the surrounding areas, including the Cotswold Water Park.

The Cotswolds provide drinking water for populations as far away as Birmingham and London, but also provide outdoor recreation and learning, and many other services. The Cotswolds are also internationally renowned and popular with overseas visitors and as a domestic short-break and day-trip destination. There is an extensive network of public rights of way, particularly footpaths, including the start of the 184-mile Thames Path National Trail, the majority of the 102-mile Cotswold Way National Trail and parts of the National Cycle Network, which connect beyond the Cotswolds. The A46 and A429 run the length of the Cotswolds along the route of the former Roman road, the Fosse Way. The A41 follows the route of Akeman Street, another former Roman road, from east to west. These Roman roads connected Exeter to Lincoln and St Albans and Cirencester respectively. The M4 and A40 cross the area from east to west linking it to major cities and communities, as do the M40 in the north-east near Banbury and the Oxford to Worcester and London to Bristol, Bath and South Wales railway lines.

The Cotswolds area is famed for its building stone, used extensively within the NCA but also much further afield, for example in Oxford and London."

8.8.30 Statements of Environmental Opportunities for the Cotwolds NCA include:

- ***"SEO 1:** Protect and enhance the highly distinctive farmed landscape, retaining the balance between productive arable, pastoral and wooded*

elements and the open, expansive views particularly from the scarp, high wold and dipslope.

- ***SEO 2:** Safeguard and conserve the historic environment, cultural heritage and geodiversity that illustrate the history, evolution, foundations, land use and settlement of the Cotswolds landscape, and enable access to and interpretation of the relationship between natural processes and human influences.*
- ***SEO 3:** Protect, maintain and expand the distinctive character of the Cotswolds and the network of semi-natural and arable habitats, including limestone grassland, beech woods and wetlands along streams and rivers, to enhance water quality, strengthen ecological and landscape connectivity, support rare species and allow for adaptation to changes in climate.*
- ***SEO 4:** Safeguard and manage soil and water resources, allowing naturally functioning hydrological processes to maintain water quality and supply; reduce flooding; and manage land to reduce soil erosion and water pollution and to retain and capture carbon."*

NCA 117-The Avon Vales (Ref 8-29)

"The Avon Vales form a low-lying, clay-dominated open landscape, with the higher ground of the Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs National Character Area (NCA) to the south, Berkshire and Marlborough Downs NCA to the east, and the Cotswolds NCA to the west. In the south and north there is a gradual merging with the clay of the Blackmore Vale and Vale of Wardour NCA and the Upper Thames Clay Vales NCA respectively. The town of Frome forms a 'gateway' to the eastern tip of the Mendip Hills NCA.

There are wide views over the Vales from these adjoining, more elevated areas, to the west and south.

There is an extensive road network within the NCA, with links generally to all directions, but the historic links east–west between Bristol and London remain strong. The main rail connections are still on this route, although connections to Warminster and Weymouth to the south also pass through the area.

The main river connection is the (Bristol) Avon, meandering somewhat from its source north of Malmesbury and flowing generally south to Trowbridge, where it heads west towards the Bristol, Avon Valleys and Ridges NCA. The (Somerset) Frome rises in the NCA and flows through the town of Frome to the north, joining the Avon near Bath in the Cotswolds NCA.

The NCA is largely underlain by hard rock aquifers, with little scope for greater water extraction; it also benefits from access to water from the adjoining chalk of the Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs NCA to the south."

8.8.31 This is a high-level assessment, which provides general characteristics over a large geographical area. A finer grain of detail is provided by the Wiltshire landscape character assessment.

8.8.32 Statements of Environmental Opportunities for the Avon Vales NCA include:

- ***"SEO 1:*** *Protect, manage and enhance the semi-natural habitats, including the pastoral waterside landscape of permanent pasture and wet grassland, calcareous and neutral grasslands, and (as site appropriate) ponds, and investigate and pursue opportunities to create such habitats, to increase resilience to climate change, reduce soil erosion and provide benefits to the water environment and biodiversity in general.*
- ***SEO 2:*** *Protect, manage and enhance the area's woodlands and parklands for their rich ecological, historical and archaeological resource, to foster a sense of place and to provide benefits to wildlife, and work to establish appropriate access, thus enhancing cultural, health and recreational benefits for local residents.*
- ***SEO 3:*** *Plan for the creation of new landscapes associated with the expansion of towns such as Chippenham, Melksham and Trowbridge, while incorporating the existing landscape features into green infrastructure planning. This would serve the interests of local landscape character, access and recreation, biomass provision, biodiversity and water flow regulation.*
- ***SEO 4:*** *Protect and manage the varied rural landscape of small urban areas amid gently rolling arable and pasture, and thick hedges interspersed with small woods, securing wide-ranging views, reinforcing landscape character, preventing soil erosion, promoting sense of place and tranquillity, and providing recreational benefits."*

County Landscape Character

8.8.33 There are five County level Landscape Character Areas within the 5km Study Area as defined by the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, (Ref 8-25). These include:

- LCT 9: Limestone Wold - LCA 9A: Cotswolds Dip Slope;
- LCT 10: Limestone Valley - LCA 10A: By Brook Limestone Valley;
- LCT 11: Rolling Clay Lowlands - LCA 11B; Minty Rolling Clay Lowlands;
- LCT 12: Open Clay Vales - LCA 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale; and
- LCT 16: Limestone Lowland - LCA 16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands.

8.8.34 All the Lime Down Solar PV Sites and all the Cable Route Corridor are located within Landscape Character Type (LCT) 16: Limestone Lowland and the

Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands Landscape Character Area (LCA 16A). A very small area of the Open Clay Vale (LCT 12) and Avon Open Clay Vale (LCA 12B) is within the Cable Route Corridor and the within the 5km Study Area of Lime Down E. The remaining character areas as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas (including figure series 8-5-1 to 8-5-3) [EN010168/APP/6.2]** only extend slightly into the 5 km Study Area and are therefore not assessed further. Details are of the two relevant LCTs and LCAs are provided below.

LCT 12 Open Clay Vale

8.8.35 The Open Clay Vales Landscape Type contains the open lowland centred on the floodplains of the Rivers Thames and Avon. Area 12A: Thames Open Clay Vale is situated at the far north of the county and area 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale runs through the northwestern section of the county. Boundaries are defined by topography and usually follow a physical feature, often a road that runs along the first contour above winter flooding level.

LCA 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale

8.8.36 Area 12B: Avon Open Clay Vale is an extended area following the course of the River Avon from Great Somerford in the north to Bradford on Avon in the south. As well as the Avon the area is characterised by the presence of other rivers, tributary streams, lakes, and, to the south, the Kennet and Avon Canal.

8.8.37 The Avon Open Clay Vale is a level, open area with views to the higher ground of the Limestone Ridge to the east. Land is predominantly intensively managed permanent pasture with some arable and small isolated pockets of meadow (such as Sutton Lane Meadow SSSI).

8.8.38 Hedgerows, gappy or low flailed in places, enclose fields of varying size. There are sparse hedgerow trees plus lines of willows (some pollarded) marking the waterways and poplar shelter belts.

8.8.39 Sections of the area remain rural and tranquil despite major routes travelling through (the M4, A350, A342) plus railway lines in cuttings and embankments and the visual influence of modern large scale development on the edges of Chippenham, Trowbridge and Melksham. This urbanising influence is particularly prevalent to the south of the area while the northern section is more akin to area 12A with scattered settlement of small brick and stone built villages and farmsteads.

8.8.40 In terms of Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities which are fundamental to the character of the landscape, the assessment includes:

- *"Wide open skies and views to ridges and downs.*

- *Rich variety of rivers, tributaries, drainage channels and open water bodies, including scarce marl water habitats.*
- *Watercourses lined with riparian vegetation with prominent lines of willows (some pollarded).*
- *Hay meadows with unimproved grassland of ecological interest.*
- *Villages and farmsteads with vernacular mix of local stone and brick.*
- *Visible archaeology in Roman roads, pattern of medieval villages, long established grazing meadows, and the Kennet and Avon Canal corridor".*

8-7-53 On condition the assessment notes "*the Open Clay Vales are an intensively managed type with large areas under arable cultivation. Although there are limited areas still managed as unimproved grassland most of the meadows, a substantial part of the hedgerow network and riparian vegetation has been lost. The condition of the Open Clay Vales is judged as moderate".*

8-7-54 On 'Strength of character' the assessment notes: "*there are still some highly rural, tranquil areas within the Open Clay Vales which are dominated by the varied waterways with their lush vegetation, with small scattered villages and farmsteads of vernacular materials. However elsewhere in the type the influence of the busy transport corridors and the large urban areas is pervasive making the type as a whole moderate in strength of character*".

8.8.41 The strategy for the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type is to "*to conserve the elements that contribute to the rural, tranquil landscape; the rivers, streams and open water, the meadows and riverside tree lines, the brick and stone villages and farmsteads and to improve elements in decline such as the hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and the visual influence of the large settlement edges and major transport corridors*".

LCT 16: Limestone Lowland

8.8.42 The Limestone Lowland Landscape Type covers a large swathe of northwest Wiltshire. The area extends from Bradford-on-Avon in the south to the Kemble Airfield in the far north. The county border constrains the area to the north and west. The boundary to the east is a less distinct transition, occurring with the change in underlying geology from limestone to clay. There is only one character area within the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type, 16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands. The western edge of the Limestone Lowlands Landscape Type forms part of the Cotswolds AONB.

8.8.43 Within the Limestone Lowland LCT, there is only one Landscape Character Area (LCA) within Wiltshire. This is the Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands LCA 16A which applies to the whole Scheme and Study Area as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and described below:

LCA 16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands

8.8.44 Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands is the only area of the Limestone Lowlands Landscape Type within Wiltshire. It covers a large area of northwest Wiltshire occurring between areas of limestone valleys and higher limestone wold to the west (outside the county) and clay to the east.

8.8.45 The area is predominantly rolling mixed pastoral and arable farmland, in a pattern of large fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The hedgerows vary in condition with some gappy and low flailed hedges in evidence for example around Grittleton.

8.8.46 In terms of Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities which are fundamental to the character of the landscape, the assessment includes:

- *"Peaceful rural landscape.*
- *Panoramic views from higher ground.*
- *Strong network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional woodland copses.*
- *Dry stone walls.*
- *Remaining areas with medieval field pattern.*
- *Historic parklands.*
- *Remaining areas of ancient woodland, chalk grassland and other areas of ecological diversity.*
- *Distinctive traditional limestone villages.*
- *Network of rural roads."*

8.8.47 On condition the assessment notes: *"of the Limestone Lowland Landscape type is generally good with intact hedgerows, traditional villages of vernacular stone dwellings, village greens and stone walls. In some sections of the areas there are elements in poorer condition such as gappy and flailed hedgerows, overgrown stone walls and encroaching horse pasture close to some of the larger settlement."*

8.8.48 On 'Strength of character' the assessment notes: *"The Limestone Lowland Landscape Type is united by the strong character of its traditional stone built settlements however, other elements such as land use, topography and field boundaries vary subtly across the type making it less distinctive and cohesive and therefore the strength of character overall is judged as moderate."*

8.8.49 The strategy for the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type is to*: "conserve those elements intrinsic to the type's character or important in their own right, such as*

the distinctive stone villages, the areas of ecological importance and the historic parkland and to strengthen locally degraded elements such as the flailed hedgerows and overgrown stone walls."

8.8.50 This is a mid-level assessment, which provides a more detailed overview of the characteristics within the Study Area. A finer grain of detail is provided by the North Wiltshire landscape character assessment.

8.8.51 Broad Management Objectives for the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type include:

- *"Conserve the network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland copses and take opportunities for new planting where this would strengthen local character (for instance avoiding planting that would affect the open views in the high ground at the west of the area).*
- *Encourage conservation and rebuilding of dry stone wall field boundaries, particularly close to settlement.*
- *Conserve the remaining areas of ecological interest such as those with statutory designations, areas of ancient woodland, veteran hedgerow trees and chalk grassland.*
- *Maintain the subtle variations that occur throughout the landscape, encouraging local distinctiveness for instance in the variation in field boundaries from hedgerows to stone walls.*
- *Encourage management and restoration of the historic parkland landscapes that are characteristic of the area.*
- *Retain the distinctive character of the villages; ensuring any change respects the traditional stone built character and vernacular form.*
- *Resist urbanisation of the country lanes through addition of road markings and concrete kerbs or lamp posts or excessive signage that detracts from the rural character of the area."*

District / Local Landscape Character Assessment

8.8.52 At the local district level, the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 8-27) applies to the northern half of the 5km Study Area associated with Lime Down A-E and the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 8-27) applies to the southern half of this Study Area associated with the southern end of the Cable Route Corridor.

8.8.53 The Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 8-26) is also a local level assessment and addresses the character of the landscape contained within the National Landscape.

The North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

8.8.54 The North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, June 2004 (Ref 8-27) as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]** identifies 14 separate Landscape Character Types (LCT) within North Wiltshire which are divided into seventeen Landscape Character Areas (LCA). Eight of these LCTs are within the 5km Study Area or 0.5km Cable Route Corridor Study Area.

8.8.55 Following the scoping response from Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer (see **ES Volume 3, Appendix 1-2 Scoping Opinion Response Table [EN010168/APP/6.3]**) there is an agreement to Scope Out the following LCAs from the Assessment as they are on the fringes of the 5 km Study Area and the 0.5 km Cable Route Corridor Study Area.

- LCA 5 - Minety and Malmesbury Rolling Lowland of Type- Lowland Clay Farmland;
- LCA 9 - By Brook Valley of Type Wooded Lowland Valley; and
- LCA 12 - Bowood and Bowden Parkland of Wooded Parkland Hill.

8.8.56 The following five (5) Landscape Character Areas are considered within this Assessment:

- LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley of type Settled Farmland Valley LCT.
- LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope Lowland of type Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland
- LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland of type Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland
- LCA 10 - Corsham Rolling Lowland of type Rolling Settled Lowland
- LCA 11 - Avon Valley Lowland of type Lowland River Farmland.

8.8.57 All of the Solar PV Sites are situated within LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland. However, parts of Lime Down A and C adjoin boundaries with LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope to the west and LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley to the north. Lime Down B has a visual relationship with LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley.

8.8.58 LCA 10 and LCA 11 are associated with the Cable Route Corridor Study Area and LCA 11 extends northwards and is within the 5 km Study Area of Lime Down E.

8.8.59 A description of the Landscape Character Types and the corresponding Landscape Character Areas which are scoped IN to the Assessment is provided below:

LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley

8.8.60 LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley is one of the Character Areas within the Settled Farmland Valley Landscape Type which is described as "*Distinct valley, enclosed in places, focussed on valley floor and river course. Mixed farming and scattered rural settlement*".

8.8.61 The Upper Avon Valley is small area lies to the west of Malmesbury, focused on the Sherston branch of the River Avon. The area is defined by two roads – the B4040 which runs between Malmesbury and Chipping Sodbury, and an unclassified road to the south. The river runs eastwards on a convoluted course, in a valley which is in places steep sided, and in other locations more open and shallow. The topography lies at between 85-110 m AOD, and sits on a complex geology of Oxford Clay, Cornbrash, Forest Marble and alluvial deposits.

8.8.62 LCA 6 - Upper Avon Valley is one Character Areas within the Settled Farmland Valley Landscape Type which is described as "Distinct valley, enclosed in places, focussed on valley floor and river course. Mixed farming and scattered rural settlement".

8.8.63 Small blocks of woodland and copses are a feature of the area, in particular on the steeper slopes and where closely related to the estates at Pinkney Park and Easton Grey. They comprise both deciduous woodland dominated by oak with hazel coppice, some of which is ancient woodland, as well as softwood plantations. Mature oak trees are also a feature of the agricultural land, some in hedgerows and some singly in larger fields. Adjacent to the river and tributaries, there are also characteristic groups of mature willow and lines of alder. In places in winter, the orangey colour of the stems of Crack willow stands out brightly and complements the lighter brown of the ploughed fields. The river and bank side is also an important habitat for wildlife, particularly the brown trout, bullhead and rare and protected native white-clawed crayfish.

8.8.64 The main characteristics of the area can be defined as follows:

- *"Steep and intimate or more open, shallower valley;*
- *Complex geology and resulting variation in fertility and agriculture, from riverside meadows to arable;*
- *Variation in field sizes and shapes, from small irregular medieval, to larger fields enclosed or amalgamated in the modern period;*
- *Continuity of settlement and richness of archaeological sites;*
- *Important river ecology;*
- *Small blocks of woodland and copses, both deciduous and coniferous;*
- *Mature oaks on drier land, and willow and alder by stream-sides;*

- *Bright winter colours of crack willow and soils on the cornbrash;*
- *Fine stone buildings, and use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates;*
- *Dry stone walls as field boundaries; and*
- *Quiet and unspoilt character, with a strong sense of time depth."*

LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope Lowland

8.8.65 LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope Lowland is one of the Character Areas within Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland Landscape Type which is described as: *"Gently undulating lowland farmland underlain by limestone. Open landscape with broad low hills and shallow river valleys. Limestone walls boundaries in places and stone built settlements".*

8.8.66 The Sherston Dip Slope Lowland lies on gently undulating land underlain by the Forest Marble limestone. The land rises from an average of around 90 m to 125 m AOD towards the Cotswolds in the west, with some localised higher ground. There are a number of shallow river valleys and associated alluvial soils, and some dry valleys especially towards the south. Some of the river valleys have locally steeper and more enclosed valley forms. Towards the south of the area the area becomes segmented, divided by steep valleys.

8.8.67 The main characteristics of the area are defined as follows:

- *"Gently undulating, broad low hills and shallow river valleys;*
- *Locally steeper and more enclosed valley forms;*
- *Rich heritage of human settlement and archaeological sites;*
- *Broad panoramas and distant views;*
- *Continuity of hedgerows and veteran oak trees;*
- *Dry stone walls as field boundaries and in relation to larger properties and village houses;*
- *Variation in field sizes and shapes, from small irregular medieval, to larger fields enclosed or amalgamated in the modern period;*
- *Variation in woodland cover, with many areas devoid of woodland cover, and other areas with small woods or copses;*
- *Small areas of unimproved calcareous grassland;*
- *Dispersed settlement and few villages;*
- *Fine stone buildings, and use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates;*

- *Long distance footpaths; and*
- *Localised developments such as Castle Combe circuit and Colerne airfield."*

LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland

8.8.68 LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland is also one of the Character Areas within the Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland Landscape Type which is described as: "*Gently undulating lowland farmland underlain by limestone. Open landscape with broad low hills and shallow river valleys. Limestone walls boundaries in places and stone built settlements*".

8.8.69 The Hullavington Rolling Lowland is large area which lies between Malmesbury in the north and Chippenham in the south. It is a rural area of gently rolling hills and shallow valleys, based on a number of geological formations, predominantly Forest Marble limestone, Oxford Clay and Cornbrash. The landform rises from approximately 60 m AOD in the east of the area close to the Avon valley, to over 120 m with some localised high points of up to 139 m AOD.

8.8.70 The main characteristics of the area are defined as follows:

- *"Rolling or lowland hills between 60-120 m AOD, on Forest Marble limestone, Oxford Clay and Cornbrash;*
- *Patchwork of irregular, medium sized fields, mainly pasture, and larger more recent enclosures used for arable, especially in on the richer soils;*
- *Continuous hedges with many mature oaks;*
- *Medium sized woodlands and deciduous copses;*
- *Fine stone villages with muted colours and dispersed farms;*
- *Historic Corsham Park;*
- *Use of undressed limestone to walls, ashlar quoins, lintels and mullions, and stone slates; and*
- *Detractors of the M4, the edge of Chippenham and Hullavington airfield."*

8.8.71 Management Guidelines for the Hullavington Rolling Lowland state:

- *"The overall objectives for the area are to conserve and enhance its pastoral character, and to ensure that any new development respects the grain of the dispersed settlement in the area and the vernacular building materials.*
- *The continuity of hedgerows is important in shaping the character of the area, and should be encouraged through appropriate land management programmes.*
- *River valleys should be enhanced by encouraging habitat creation and planting of riverside trees.*

- *The use of limestone in buildings and free standing walls should be supported, both in helping conserve existing features, and in the appropriate use of materials in new construction.*
- *Protect the setting and intrinsic character of Corsham Park."*
- *Minimise the landscape and visual effects of the expansion of Chippenham."*

8.8.72 Management strategy actions recommended the following actions to help realise the overall objectives for the area:

- *"Conserve hedgerows and mature trees, including planting new trees in existing hedges and planting specimen trees in field corners.*
- *Encourage woodland management to provide continuity of cover while optimising ecological value.*
- *Enhance the wetland character in riverside locations by planting willows along water courses in informal groups and broken lines, and by encouraging landowners to help in the creation of more diverse waterside habitats.*
- *Ensure development reinforces the locally distinctive character and respects the vernacular. The use of traditional building materials including limestone are important in this area."*

LCA 10 - Corsham Rolling Lowland

8.8.73 The Corsham Rolling Lowland is one of the Character Areas within the Rolling Settled Lowland Landscape Type which is described as **"***Rolling lowland farmland with hedges and woodland. Strong influence of settlement in parts*".

8.8.74 The Corsham Rolling Lowland rises up to a gentle rolling sloped east west ridge to the south, ranging from approximately 60 m AOD near the Avon Valley to approximately 170 m to the west of the area. It extends beyond the county borough to the south, which at this point follows a Roman Road, running east to west. To the north and east the area is defined by break in topography. The area is a catchment for both the Avon to the east and By Brook to the west.

8.8.75 Key characteristics include:

- *"Gently sloping topography with a small steep valley.*
- *Traditional core of Corsham.*
- *Urban fringe character of areas at periphery with Corsham including mosaic housing, military infrastructure, industrial areas, communication corridors, small fields and woodlands.*
- *Rural character in the southern part of the area with traditional rural settlements.*

- *Panoramic views out towards north and east in parts.*
- *Visual influence of electricity transmission lines."*

LCA 11 - Avon Valley Lowland

8.8.76 The Avon Valley Lowland is one of the Character Areas within the Lowland River Farmland Landscape Type which is described as: "*Low lying mixed farmland centred on river and associated watercourses and riparian vegetation. Damp meadow and pasture on valley floor with species such as poplar and willow. Hedges are main enclosure. Scattered settlement in slightly higher areas"*.

8.8.77 This large character area is focused around the River Avon, its tributaries, Brinkworth Brook and Marston River and the surrounding low-lying landscape. The Avon meanders from Malmesbury to the north, through Chippenham, to leave the district below Lacock Abbey in the south. Brinkworth Brook runs from below Wootton Bassett to join the River Avon in the west; and River Marston runs west from Calne. The area is hemmed in by elevated ground surrounding the area and sits below 70 m AOD, and at its lowest point is 36 m AOD below Lacock.

8.8.78 Key characteristics include:

- *"Low-lying river landscape, between 70 m and 30 m AOD on river terrace and alluvial geology with heavy soils, interspersed with light sands.*
- *Dominant presence of water in the form of ditches, streams and river with related riparian vegetation and structures.*
- *Damp meadow and pasture along watercourses/valley floor.*
- *Intact and predominantly well managed hedgerows frequently with hedgerow trees.*
- *Areas of high quality arable agricultural land located through out the area, on areas of Kellways Sand.*
- *Shelterbelts of poplar act as significant vertical elements in the horizontal landscape.*
- *Rural and somewhat isolated feel to remoter parts of character area.*
- *Scattered settlements and dwellings.*
- *Strong rural sense of place, which begins to break down around Chippenham and communication corridor.*
- *Green valley floor through Chippenham.*
- *Broad expansive skyline, frequently unbroken by development.*

- *Significance of electricity transmission lines."*

The West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment

8.8.79 There are three local level Landscape Character Types and Areas within the 5km Study Area as defined by the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, June 2004 (Ref 8-27) as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5-3: Local Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2].** These include:

- LCT A: Limestone Lowland - LCA A3 - Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland;
- LCT B: Clay River Floodplain - B1: Avon Clay River Floodplain; and
- LCT C: Open Clay Vale - LCA C2 - Semington Open Clay Vale.

8.8.80 Following the scoping response from Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer (**Appendix 1-2: Scoping Opinion Response Table [EN010168/APP/6.3]**) it was agreed to Scope OUT LCT B: Clay River Floodplain - B1: Avon Clay River Floodplain; and LCT C: Open Clay Vale - LCA C2: Semington Open Clay Vale as they are on the fringes of the 5km Study Area and the 0.5 km Cable Route Corridor.

8.8.81 A description of the Landscape Character Type A and the corresponding Landscape Character Area which are scoped IN to the Assessment is provided below:

<u>LCT A: Limestone Lowland</u>

8.8.82 Key Characteristics include:

- *"Gently undulating lowland landscape which rises gradually from east to west across the type.*
- *A mixture of arable farmland and permanent pasture underlain by geology of predominantly mudstone and limestone with some pockets of clay.*
- *Numerous small rivers and stream corridors crossing the landscape.*
- *Field boundaries delineated by a strong network of hedgerows, often containing hedgerow trees.*
- *Scattered settlement pattern, consisting predominantly of villages and isolated farmsteads.*
- *Predominantly rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and watercourses.*
- *Large-scale, predominantly geometric field pattern, typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure with small-scale irregular fields of medieval pattern close to small settlements.*

- *Landscape scattered with traditional buildings, of local limestone, which provide a key distinguishing characteristic."*

8.8.83 The limestone lowlands are "*underlain by geology of the Great Oolite Groups, formed in the Mid Jurassic Period. The landform undulates, rising from 35 m AOD adjacent to the Limestone River Floodplain Landscape Type in the southeast to higher land in the northwest (200 m). Numerous small rivers and stream corridors cross the type. There is a strong network of hedgerows, with frequent hedgerow trees and field trees visible. Settlement pattern consists of scattered villages and isolated farmsteads, which are connected by a series of minor rural roads. Villages are peaceful and rural, often centred on a village green, pond or area of common land. Buildings are traditional in style, with many dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, built from local limestone. Away from the main A363 and A365 road corridors, there is a relatively strong sense of tranquillity*".

8.8.84 There are four different Landscape Character Areas within the Limestone Lowland Landscape Type. The Scheme is within the Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland LCA A3 which is described below:

LCA A3 Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland

8.8.85 The area encompasses the villages of Atworth, Whitley, Shaw, Broughton Gifford and Holt. The northern edge is formed by the district boundary whilst the floodplain of the river Avon restricts the area in the east and west. The A365 and the B3107 run along the northern and southern edge of the area respectively and meet in Melksham in the east.

8.8.86 Key Characteristics include:

- "*Gently undulating limestone lowland.*
- *Predominantly rural character with several linear villages and scattered farm buildings connected by a dense network of rural roads and footpaths.*
- *Distinct pattern of small sized mainly irregular fields enclosed by in places fragmentary hedgerows with mature trees*
- *Generally extensive views.*
- *Pylons as a conspicuous vertical element.*"

8.8.87 On visual character, the assessment notes: "*the area has a strong rural character with a mixture of pasture and arable farmland. The small sized, mainly irregular fields are enclosed by generally mature and intact but in places gappy, hedgerows with trees. Views tend to be open with the main notable vertical elements being pylons and hedgerow trees. A few small woodland blocks are scattered in the area, including the more expansive ancient Great Bradford Wood, in the south, cupped in one of the coils of the River Avon. The*

villages of Atworth and Shaw in the north of the area are situated linearly along the A365 whilst Whitley, Broughton Gifford and Holt are, also linearly, situated along secondary and more rural roads, with the exception of the higher part of Broughton Gifford, which is centred round a village green or Common. A large number of footpaths cut across the area, linking the villages and many scattered farms".

Landscape Character of the Cotswolds National Landscape

8.8.88 There are five Landscape Character Areas within the 5km Study Area which are situated within the Cotswolds National Landscape as defined by its Landscape Character Assessment, 2005 (Ref 8-26). These include:

- LCT 9: High Wold Dip Slope - LCA 9D: Cotswolds High Wold Dip Slope
- LCT 11: Dip Slope Lowland - LCA 11A: South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands
- LCT 12: Dip Slope Lowland Valley - LCA 12A: Upper By Brook Valley
- LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands - LCA 14A: Biddestone Lowland Farmland
- LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands - LCA 14B: West Malmesbury Lowland Farmland

8.8.89 The Landscape Character Assessment of the Cotswold AONB (Ref 8-26) is shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. Lime Down A, B and C adjoin the Cotswold National Landscape.

8.8.90 Fields C1, C2, C8, C9 and C10 and parcel A1 (refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 2-2 Field Boundaries and Numbering [EN010168/APP/6.2])** adjoin the Dip Slope Lowland LCT 11 and the South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands LCA 11A.

8.8.91 Fields A11 and A12 adjoin Cornbrash Lowlands LCT14 and West Malmesbury Lowland Farmland LCA 14B. Fields B6 and B12 are approximately 200m away from the boundary of this LCT and LCA.

8.8.92 The Cable Route Corridor also adjoins the boundary of the Cotswolds National Landscape and adjoins the Dip Slope Lowland LCT 11 and the South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands LCA 11A; and the Cornbrash Lowlands LCT14 and Bidderstone Lowland Farmland LCA 14A.

8.8.93 As formally agreed with the Cotswolds National Landscape Board, LCTs 11 and 14 and LCAs 11A and 14B are scoped into the assessment. These Landscape Types and Character Areas, as well as separate Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for the Landscape Type are described below:

LCT 11 Dip Slope Lowland

8.8.94 The Dip-Slope Lowland "*forms a broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly south-easterly fall, and provides the final transition*

between the high Cotswold country and the Thames Valley. The lowland form is gently, although infrequently, dissected by small watercourses, with the overall impression of a well managed, productive landscape of mixed arable and improved pasture. Medium to large scale regular fields enclosed by hedgerows predominate, although fences and stone walls are not entirely absent. Intermittent small villages and isolated farmsteads define the pattern of settlement, although there are some larger settlements present. There is also a distinctive pattern of large estates and their associated parks and woodland, some of which are of national importance. Otherwise, woodland is limited to isolated copses and shelter belts".[1]

8.8.95 The Dip-Slope Lowland comprises a broad tract of land that forms the transition between the High Wold Dip-Slope to the north-west, and the lower lying and flatter Thames Basin to the southeast. The principal section of this landscape type extends north of Bath near Marshfield and North Wraxall and then sweeps first northwards, and then north-eastwards along the southeastern perimeter of the AONB as far as Burford. In contrast to this large and almost continuous tract of land, broken only by the valleys of the Churn and Coln, there are a number of much smaller and fragmented sections of this landscape type. These principally occur in the extreme south of the AONB, forming small sections of a larger area of Dip-Slope Lowland that extends to the east of the Limpley Stoke section of the Avon Valley, and beyond the designated area, encompassing land extending up to the settlements of Bradford-on-Avon, Melksham and Corsham.

8.8.96 Key features of the Landscape Type include:

- Broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly southeasterly fall, changing to a north-easterly fall in the southern perimeter of the area;
- Lowland landform gently dissected by infrequent small watercourses flowing into the main rivers that cross the area, reinforcing the general grain of the topography;
- Strong and structured farmland character, more intimate and smaller in scale than the High Wold and High Wold Dip-Slope;
- Well-managed, productive agricultural landscape of mixed arable and improved pasture, together with more limited areas of permanent pasture, mainly within the valley bottoms;
- Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with mixed arable farming;

[1] Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change, Landscape Character, p17

- Medium to large scale, regular fields predominate mainly enclosed by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees, together with some stone walls or post and wire fencing;
- Woodland cover limited to intermittent copses and shelterbelts within agricultural land, but balanced by extensive broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantations within the large estates and associated farmland areas;
- Limited areas of ancient woodland and species rich grassland
- Settlement pattern of intermittent small, nucleated villages, hamlets, and isolated farmsteads, together with occasional larger settlements;
- Distinctive pattern of large estates and associated planned parkland landscape and woodland occurring throughout the Dip Slope Lowland; and,
- Evidence of long period of occupation of the area.

8.8.97 There are two Landscape Character Areas within the Dip Slope Lowland. The Scheme adjoins the South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands Landscape Character Area 11A which is described below:

LCA 11A South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands

8.8.98 The South Cotswolds Lowlands "*forms an almost continuous area of Dip-Slope Lowland along the eastern and south-eastern side of the Cotswolds, broken only by the valley of the River Churn at Cirencester. Despite the linear extent of the area, there is a strong continuity in its character principally relating to the landform. Generally below the 160 m AOD levels, the area has a gently sloping mainly south-easterly grain with more subtle undulations and shallower slope profiles than in the adjacent Dip-Slope Character Type. In the eastern part of the South Cotswolds Lowlands, however, small, often tree lined tributary watercourses and dry valleys systems have dissected the otherwise gentle terrain. There is a consistent pattern of well-managed, productive mixed arable and pastoral landscape across this lower tract of land enclosed by both stone walls and hedgerows with hedgerow trees being a common feature*.

8.8.99 *This main section of the Dip-Slope Lowland is remarkable for the concentration of Historic Parks, Registered Gardens and private estates throughout the area. A particularly strong cluster occurs in the south-west including Badminton, Westonbirt, Highgrove and Estcourt House, and part of the smaller Pinkney Park adjacent to the River Avon.*

8.8.100 *Woodlands within this Character Area vary between the extensive woodlands and plantations within the large estates and a pattern of intermittent smaller woodlands associated with the farmed landscape. Many of the farm copses have been planted within the last two centuries following enclosure and are generally geometric in form, functioning as shelterbelts and game coverts*."

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (2016) for the LCT 11 Dip slope Lowland[2]

The Cotswolds National Landscape also provides Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCT 11 Dip Slope Lowland. On Potential Landscape Implications; for Solar Farms in this Landscape Type the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines states:

- *"Industrialisation of the rural landscape*
- *Change of character due to colour and texture and heliographic glint*
- *Loss of seasonal change in the landscape*
- *Loss of characteristic agricultural landscape*
- *Damage to and loss of landscape features such as Ridge and Furrow, Strip Lynchets, trees and dry stone walls*
- *Impact of supporting infrastructure such as buildings, cables, roadways,*
- *Security fencing, CCTV masts and lighting*
- *Concealment of geomorphological or archaeological features*
- *Decline in quality of landscape."*

8.8.101 Landscape Strategies and Guidelines for Solar Farms in this Landscape Type are to:

- Prevent proposals for solar farms that will impact negatively on landscape character and/or intrude into views
- Ensure a comprehensive LVIA is undertaken (including potential cumulative effects)
- Avoid proposals that will result in the loss or harm to landscape features such as Strip Lynchets, hedgerows and walls
- Ensure a glint/glare assessment is undertaken to determine the heliographic impact on receptors.
- Reduce landscape impact with appropriate screening
- Bury cables underground and seek opportunities to bury existing overhead cables
- Keep supporting infrastructure to a minimum and ensure it is in keeping with landscape character.
- Ensure removal and restoration of temporary construction access.

[2] Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, Section 11.4

- Avoid the inclusion of any security lighting proposals
- Seek appropriate landscape enhancement to field boundaries and margins within solar farm development proposals.
- Promote the use of roof space for photovoltaic panels particularly on modern farm buildings.

LCT 14 Cornbrash Lowlands

8.8.102 *"The Cornbrash Lowlands provide the transition from the Dip-Slope Lowland of the south Cotswolds to the flatter, more open landscapes to the south-east, though only two small areas of this character type occur within the AONB. It is a very gently undulating, rural landscape that offers wide views over productive farmland with vertical elements such as pylons having a strong presence. A network of tributary streams in shallow valleys run south-east to the River Avon. Rich, fertile soils derived from the underlying cornbrash geology support a predominance of arable farming, with some pastoral land bordering water courses. Fields are medium to large in size, bounded by intermittent hedgerows and the occasional stone wall. Woodland is infrequent and mainly confined to geometric plantations. Nucleated villages, hamlets and farms make up the dispersed pattern of settlement."*[3]

8.8.103 The Cornbrash Lowlands landscape type extends beyond the eastern perimeter of the Cotswolds Dip-Slope Lowland. Within the boundary of the AONB, the areas of land classified as Cornbrash Lowland is very limited, and confined to two separate sections in the vicinity of Biddestone and immediately to the west of Malmesbury. An examination of the wider context of the landscape that adjoins the Cotswolds AONB provides a better understanding of the setting of the designated area and the potential effects arising from landscape change and development within these adjacent landscapes. Therefore, the descriptions below apply to areas of Cornbrash Lowland Landscape Character Type within the AONB, but consider their wider landscape setting.

8.8.104 The Cornbrash Lowlands form a transition from the South Cotswolds Lowlands area of Dip-Slope Lowland to the flatter and more open landscapes to the southeast, beyond the AONB. The area forms part of the catchment of the upper River Avon and its tributaries, which have dissected the area to form a subdued, gently undulating topography with occasional very low hillocks rising above the general landform. The rich and fertile soils derived from the underlying Cornbrash Formation that extends across the area, support a land use focused on arable cultivation, together with more limited pastoral areas, principally utilising wetter areas of land bordering water courses. The area has a predominantly rural character derived from the expanse of cultivated arable fields, and a dispersed pattern of small villages, hamlets and farms. Intermittent woodlands, mainly geometric in form, and comprising both broadleaved, and

[3] Local Distinctiveness and Landscape Change, Landscape Character, p18

mixed coniferous and broadleaf trees, extend across the area. These provide local enclosure and landmarks within an otherwise undistinguished agricultural landscape.

8.8.105 Key features of the Landscape Type include:

- "*Flat or very gently undulating landform with occasional low hills;*
- *Occasional wide views over productive farmland limited only by small farm copses and woodlands;*
- *Vertical elements such as hedgerow trees and pylons gain visual prominence;*
- *Network of tributary streams draining eastwards occupy shallow valleys with course of narrow*
- *Streams marked by alder and other wetland tree species; fertile soils derived from the Cornbrash Formation bedrock;*
- *Predominance of arable farming together with some pastoral land mainly bordering water courses;*
- *Medium to large scale rectilinear fields with intermittent hedgerows and occasional stone walls; dispersed settlement pattern of mainly nucleated villages, hamlets and farms;*
- *Infrequent woodland cover of mainly geometric broadleaf and coniferous plantations;*
- *Network of principal roads surround or cross the area but have limited effect on the quiet settled rural character; and*
- *Quiet rural lanes bordered by tall hedgerows, narrow grass verges and drainage ditches that weave through the landscape".*

8.8.106 There are two Landscape Character Areas within the Cornbrash Lowlands. The Scheme adjoins the West Malmesbury Lowland Farmland Landscape Character Area 14A which is described below:

<u>LCA 14B West Malmesbury Lowland Farmland</u>

8.8.107 This character area to the west of Malmesbury comprises part of the valley of the upper reaches of the River Avon, into which flow a number of small tributaries. Slope orientation and the general grain of the gently undulating or shallow falls of the landform have been largely determined by this drainage pattern. Thus, to the north and south of the river, there is a general fall to the southeast and north-east, respectively. This is a quiet rural area dominated by arable farming although improved permanent pastures are prevalent in low lying areas bordering river channels. Fields are generally medium to large scale enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. These provide strong vertical

elements within an otherwise flat landscape. A number of woodlands extend across the southern side of the River Avon and comprise a mix of small geometric coniferous farm plantations, and broadleaved woodland in the vicinity of the River Avon. A number of these are ancient in origin. Parkland trees and shelter belts contribute significantly to woodland cover in the character area, with three parks located in close proximity to each other bordering the Sherston section of the Avon valley.

8.8.108 In view of the limited extent of the character area, settlement is sparse and confined to the hamlets of Foxley Green and Easton Grey and the village of Brokenborough which is located at the northern perimeter of the character area. All are sited at crossing points over the river. At Easton Grey, for example, a cluster of whitewashed rubble stone houses are located adjacent to the stone bridge that crosses the river. Beyond these small villages, settlement consists of isolated farms. To the east the ancient town of Malmesbury borders the character area.

Landscape Strategy and Guidelines (2016) for the LCT14 Cornbrash Pastoral Lowlands[4]

8.8.109 The Cotswolds National Landscape also provides Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCT 14 Cornbrash Pastoral Lowlands LCT 11 Dip slope Lowland.

8.8.110 On Potential Landscape Implications for Solar Farms in this Landscape Type the Landscape Strategy and Guidelines states:

- Industrialisation of the rural landscape;
- Change of character due to colour and texture and heliographic glint;
- Loss of seasonal change in the landscape;
- Loss of characteristic agricultural landscape;
- Damage to and loss of landscape features such as Ridge and Furrow, Strip Lynchets, trees and dry stone walls;
- Impact of supporting infrastructure such as buildings, cables, roadways, security fencing, CCTV masts and lighting;
- Concealment of geomorphological or archaeological features; and
- Decline in quality of landscape.

8.8.111 Landscape Strategies and Guidelines for Solar Farms in this Landscape Type are to:

[4] Cotswolds AONB Landscape Strategy and Guidelines, Section 14.4

- Prevent proposals for solar farms that will impact negatively on landscape character and/or intrude into views;
- Ensure a comprehensive LVIA is undertaken (including potential cumulative effects);
- Avoid proposals that will result in the loss or harm to landscape features such as Strip Lynchets, hedgerows and walls;
- Ensure a glint/glare assessment is undertaken to determine the heliographic impact on receptors;
- Reduce landscape impact with appropriate screening;
- Bury cables underground and seek opportunities to bury existing overhead cables;
- Keep supporting infrastructure to a minimum and ensure it is in keeping with landscape character;
- Ensure removal and restoration of temporary construction access;
- Avoid the inclusion of any security lighting proposals;
- Seek appropriate landscape enhancement to field boundaries and margins within solar farm development proposals; and
- Promote the use of roof space for photovoltaic panels particularly on modern farm buildings.

Site Character

8.8.112 Lime Down A to E and the Cable Route Corridor are separated by varying distances and therefore from a landscape and visual perspective Lime Down A-E is considered to have varying interconnecting effects on the local landscape. The Lime Down A-E within the Study Areas are shown on the **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2]** series and the associated landscape baseline for the individual Solar PV Sites are shown in the **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** series are described below.

Lime Down A

8.8.113 Lime Down A is located approximately 240 m to the southeast of the small village of Sherston which is situated on the eastern edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape. The village is situated approximately 8 km west of main town of Malmesbury. The area of Lime Down A is 94 ha and the area is entirely in agricultural use. The area consists of parcels of farmland either side of the road running between Sherston and the Fosse Way (Roman Road) to the east

and Commonwood Lane, a no through road to the west. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.8.114 The land broadly slopes up from east to west from 105 m to 115 m elevation. The nearest properties are located at Lordswood Farm, Ladyswood Farm and Southfields. The land is characterised by agricultural fields separated by hedgerows and scattered trees. To the south blocks of woodland surrounding Lordswood House provide separation between Lime Down A and C.

8.8.115 The topography to the north of the area falls steeply towards the River Avon (Sherston Branch) before rising towards the village of Sherston which has a designated Conservation Area.

8.8.116 There are four PRoW located on the boundary or within Lime Down A. Landscape designations in and around Lime Down A are shown on in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

8.8.117 There are no Scheduled Monuments within Lime Down A. Within the 1 Km Study Area there is one Scheduled Monument:

- Earthwork, (180 m) west of Sherson parish church. List entry number 1004703.

Conservation Area

8.8.118 Sherston Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village to the north of Lime Down A.

Listed Buildings

8.8.119 There are no listed buildings within Lime Down A. Those in closest proximity include:

- Widley's Farmhouse Grade II to the west List entry number: 1,199,103;
- New Barn at Widley's Farmhouse, to the west, List entry number: 1,356,005; and
- 15 Thompson’s Hill, List entry number 1,199,883.

8.8.120 There is a concentration of listed buildings within Sherston Conservation Area (nearest distance-580 m to the north west) and in the village of Norton (nearest distance 1800 m to the east).

8.8.121 In Sherston the Grade 1 Listed Church of the Holy Cross, List entry number 1,023,223 is a locally prominent feature of the landscape. In Norton the Grade II* Norton Manor: List entry number 1,023,215 is noted. All listed buildings in Norton are visually separated from Lime Down A by woodland.

Ancient Woodlands

8.8.122 There are no Ancient Woodlands within Lime Down A. Lord's Wood to the south of Lime Down A is Ancient Replanted Woodland.

Ecological Designations

8.8.123 There are no Ecological Designations associated with Lime Down A.

Landscape Character

8.8.124 Lime Down A is situated within the Cotswolds National Character Area; the Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A) at the county level; the Hullavington Rolling Lowland LCA 8) at the local level; and it adjoins the South and Mid Cotswolds Lowland (LCA 11A) and the West Malmsbury Lowland Farmland (LCA 14b) as defined in the Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Lime Down B

8.8.125 Lime Down B consists of parcels of farmland located to the east of Fosse Way; located approximately 300 m to the north and west of the village of Norton, and approximately 180 m to the south of Foxley to the north, where there are some isolated residential properties. The western part of the Solar PV Site is relatively flat at a height of approximately 100 m, with the eastern part sloping away to the east to a height of approximately 85 m. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.8.126 Malmesbury is the nearest major settlement and is located approximately 3.4 km to the north-east of Lime Down B. Sherston lies to the west and the hamlet of Easton Grey. is sited approximately 1.3 km to the north.

8.8.127 Foxley Road runs east to west approximately 180 m north of Lime Down B at its nearest point. Honey Lane bounds part of the southeast of Lime Down B. The southwest site boundary is bounded by an unnamed road between Norton to the south and Easton Grey to the north. The Fosse Way forms a distinctively straight boundary to the west of the area. Including the Fosse way (SHER 37) there are seven Public Rights of Way (PRoW) located on Lime Down B.

8.8.128 The area of Lime Down B is 70ha and the area is entirely in agricultural use. The land is characterised by agricultural fields separated by hedgerows, with small irregular blocks of woodland in the wider area.

8.8.129 Landscape designations in and around Lime Down B are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

8.8.130 There are no Scheduled Monuments within Lime Down B. Within the 1 km Study Area there is one Scheduled Monument:

- Early medieval settlement, palace, church and Bronze Age ring ditches 340 m east of Cowage Farm, List entry number 1,018,389 situated 995 m to the east of Lime Down B.

Listed Buildings

8.8.131 There are no listed buildings within Lime Down B. Those in closest proximity include two clusters in Foxley Green to the north of the area and in the village of Norton to the south as follows:

- Grade I Parish Church List entry number 1023219;
- Two Grade II unidentified monuments in the churchyard, 2 to 3 metres south of the tower, Parish Church List entry number 1199088;
- Grade II Foxley House List entry number 1199062;
- Grade II Foxley Manor List entry number 1023221; and
- In Norton the Grade II* Norton Manor: List entry number 1,023,215 is noted. All the listed buildings in Norton are visually separated from Lime Down B by woodland.

Conservation Area

8.8.132 Sherston Conservation is located approximately 2350 m to the north west of Lime Down B.

Ancient Woodlands

8.8.133 There are two ancient woodlands within the 1 km Study area of Lime Down B. These include:

- Cowage Grove, 647 m to the east of Lime Down B, designated as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland; and
- Bradfield Wood, 960 m to the southeast of Lime Down B, designated as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland.

Ecological Designations

8.8.134 There are no Ecological Designations associated with Lime Down B.

Landscape Character

8.8.135 The western part of Lime Down B is situated within the Cotswolds NCA and the eastern part is situated within the Avon Vales NCA. The whole of Lime Down B is situated within the Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A) at the county level and the Hullavington Rolling Lowland (LCA 8) at the local level.

To the north it is in close proximity to the West Malmsbury Lowland Farmland (LCA 14b) as defined in the Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Lime Down C

8.8.136 Lime Down C consists of parcels of land both to the east and west of Fosse Way, which lies to the east of the village of Alderton. Its church spire within the Conservation area is visible in some views within Lime Down C. The boundary of the Cotswolds National Landscape follows the southwestern parcels of land. To the south the Great Western railway line runs through the area. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

8.8.137 The land is relatively flat at a height of approximately 120 m AOD though it predominantly slopes down to the east. Gauze Brook, a tributary of the River Avon runs east west through the area giving rise to gently sloping land in its vicinity.

8.8.138 The area of Lime Down C is 241 ha and the area is entirely in agricultural use. There are hedgerows and some woodland blocks scattered outside Lime Down C.

8.8.139 Landscape designations in and around Lime Down C are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

8.8.140 There are no Scheduled Monuments within Lime Down C or within the 1 km Study Area of Lime Down C.

Listed Buildings

8.8.141 There are no listed buildings within Lime Down C. Those in closest proximity include a cluster in the village of Alderton to the east of the area as follows:

- Grade II* Church of St Giles List entry number 1,022,362 and four Grade II monuments with the churchyard;
- Grade II The Old Vicarage List entry number 1,363,841;
- Grade II Hughes Farmhouse List entry number 1,022,367;
- Grade II Fosse Lodge at the southern corner of Lime Down C (parcel C10), List entry number 1,198,366;
- Grade II Farleaze Farmhouse to the south of parcel C25 and to the north of C14, List entry number 1,251,985; and

- Grade II Surrendell Farmhouse List entry number 1,198,980; Barn List entry number 1,023,212 and Shelter Barn List entry number 1,283,578 to the south of Lime Down C (parcel C15).

Conservation Area

8.8.142 Alderton Conservation Area is located 185 m to the west of Lime Down C (Field C6). The spire of St Giles Church in Alderton is a visible feature of the landscape.

Ancient Woodlands

8.8.143 There are two Ancients woodlands within the 1 km Study Area of Lime Down C. These include:

- Surrendel Wood- Ancient and Semi-Natural to the southern boundary; and
- Lord's Wood-Ancient Replanted Woodland to the northern boundary.

Ecological Designations

8.8.144 There are no Ecological Designations associated with Lime Down C.

Landscape Character

8.8.145 Lime Down C is situated within the Cotswolds NCA; within the Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A) at the county level and the Hullavington Rolling Lowland (LCA 8) at the local level. To the west adjoins the South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands (LCA 11A) as defined in the Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Lime Down D

8.8.146 Lime Down D lies within the centre of the Study Area immediately north of the Great Western railway line, 640m north of Hullavington and Hullavington Airfield, and south of Bradfield Wood. The area extends along the Gauze Brook towards the village of Corston to the east. The area is situated to the east and west of the Hullavington to Norton Road and the western parcels adjoins the Great Western railway line. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.8.147 There are relatively few residential properties in the vicinity with isolated farms such as Bradfield Manor Farm, West Park Farm and Gorsey Leaze Farm.

8.8.148 The land slopes from an elevation of 100m to the west to 75m to the east and Gauze Brook, a tributary of the River Avon, runs west-to-east through the area giving rise to gently sloping land on either side of the Brook.

8.8.149 The Solar PV area of Lime Down D is 212.5 ha and the area is entirely in agricultural use. Large fields are bounded by hedgerows and mature trees with

little woodland except Bradfield Wood (Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland) to the north of the area.

8.8.150 Buckley Barracks, a British Army site lies approximately 1 km south of Lime Down D. RAF operations on the site ceased in 1992 and was transferred to the British Army and is still in active use as an army training base. Part of Hullavington airfield was used for RAF gliding operations until 2016.

8.8.151 There are several Public Rights of Way located within Lime Down D. These are described fully in the Visual Baseline. In general, footpaths dissect fields and Bridleways form treed corridors on the boundaries of fields.

8.8.152 Landscape designations in and around Lime Down D are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

8.8.153 There are no Scheduled Monuments within Lime Down D or within the 1 km Study Area of Lime Down D.

Conservation Area

8.8.154 There are no Conservations Area in the vicinity of Lime Down D.

Listed Buildings

8.8.155 There are no listed buildings within Lime Down D. Those in closest proximity form a cluster associated with Bradfield Manor Farmhouse to the east of the area as follows:

- Grade I Bradfield Manor Farmhouse, List entry number 1,198,808;
- Grade II Barn in Courtyard to the south east of Bradfield Manor Farmhouse, List entry number 1,023,202;
- Grade II Barn to east of Bradfield Manor Farmhouse, List entry number 1,356,036; and
- Grade II Barn to the southwest of Bradfield Manor Farmhouse, List entry number 1,198,869.

Ancient Woodlands

8.8.156 There are two ancient woodlands within the 1 km Study Area of Lime Down B. These include:

- Bradfield Wood to the northern boundary of Lime Down D, designated as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland; and
- West Park Wood, 228 m to the north east of Lime Down B, designated as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland.

Ecological Designations

8.8.157 There are no Ecological Designations associated with Lime Down D.

Landscape Character

8.8.158 Lime Down D is situated within the Avon Vale NCA; within the Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A) at the county level and the Hullavington Rolling Lowland (LCA 8) at the local level. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]** series.

Lime Down E

8.8.159 Lime Down E is located 500 m to the to the south of Corston and to the south of the village of Rodbourne which is located on higher ground. A white, water tower on the hill forms a prominent feature of the landscape which is visible in many views from the wider landscape. The area extends southwards beyond the Great Western railway line and forms an intrusive feature of the landscape as it runs on an embankment in this location. The area extends towards Stanton St Quintin to the south and is partially enclosed by Seagry Wood to the east and Bincombe Wood to the west. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.8.160 There are no roads within the area itself although it is criss-crossed by bridleways and footpaths. A number of farms located in the vicinity such as Hangar Farm (approx. 160m south west of E18), Haresfield Farm (approx. 180 m south east of E27 and Avil's Farm (approximately 270m south of E32). Buckley Barracks is located approximately 780m west of Lime Down E.

8.8.161 Gabriel's Well, another tributary to the River Avon, is a stream which runs west-east through the Area and forms the base of a distinct valley. Rodbourne sits at the top of the valley slope and Rodbourne Bottom, as its name suggests, sits at the bottom of the valley. The topography in Lime Down E is more complex than Lime Down A-D, which gives rise to smaller scale field pattern and a more intimate landscape character.

8.8.162 The area of Lime Down E is 131ha and the area is also entirely in agricultural use. However, the more intimate pattern of sloping fields enclosed by hedgerows and trees provides quite a different character to the landscape.

8.8.163 Lime Down E contains a significant number of Public Rights of Way comprising four bridleways and nine footpaths which are described in detail in the Visual Baseline.

8.8.164 Landscape designations in and around Lime Down E are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

8.8.165 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Study Area of Lime Down E.

Conservation Area

8.8.166 There are two Conservations Areas associated with Lime Down E. These include:

- Rodbourne Conservation Area is situated approximately 170m (at the nearest measurement) to the north east of Lime Down E; and
- Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area is situated approximately 750m (at the nearest distance) to the south west of Lime Down E.

Listed Buildings

8.8.167 There are no listed buildings within Lime Down E. Those in closest proximity is a cluster within the Rodbourne Conservation to the northeast of the area as follows:

- Grade II* Church of Holy Rood, List entry number 1,363,874;
- Grade II Dower Tower, List entry number 1,022,279;
- Grade II Outbuildings to the north east of the Dower House, List entry number 1,284,642;
- Grade II The Village Cross, List entry number 1,182,242;
- Grade II The Old School, List entry number 1,022,280 and
- Grade II Trinity Farmhouse, List entry number 1,284,644.

8.8.168 In the wider landscape there are a number of isolated listed farm houses. These include:

- Grade II Barn at Kingway Farm, List entry number 1,022,268 to the west of the area;
- Grade II Milestone at NGR ST 9179 8312, List entry number 1,284,671 to the west of the area;
- Grade II Avil's Farmhouse, List entry number 1,022,396 to the south of the area; and
- Grade II Barn at Avil's Farmhouse, List entry number 1,022,397 to the south of the area.

8.8.169 There is also a cluster of Grade II listed buildings within Hullavington Airbase Conservation Area to the south west of Lime Down E.

Ancient Woodlands

8.8.170 There are three ancient woodlands which adjoin boundaries of Lime Down E. These include:

- Bincombe Wood on the north east boundary of the area is classified as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland;
- North Bincombe Wood adjacent to parcels E6, E3 and E1 is classified as Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland; and
- Part of Seagry Wood to the east of the area is classified as Ancient Replanted Woodland.

Ecological Designations

8.8.171 Harries Ground, Rodbourne SSSI is situated to the north of parcel E33.

Landscape Character

8.8.172 Lime Down E is situated within the Avon Vale NCA; within the Malmsbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A) at the county level and the Hullavington Rolling Lowland (LCA 8) at the local level. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]** series.

Cable Route Corridor

8.8.173 The Cable Route Corridor (CRC) connects the Solar PV Sites to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. It includes both the Interconnecting Cables between the Solar PV Sites and Grid Connection Cables connecting the Solar PV Sites to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. The CRC is not located within the CNL

8.8.174 The CRC runs for approximately 22 km from Lime Down D to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation and also connects the Solar PV Sites.

8.8.175 The exact location of the Grid Connection Cables and Interconnecting Cables within the Cable Route Corridor will be determined at the detailed design stage. The CRC runs for approximately 22 km from Lime Down D to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation and also connects the Solar PV Sites. It is 50 m wide along the majority of its length with an increase in width up to 665m at a number of locations including utility, road and rail crossings.

8.8.176 The land within the CRC is predominantly agricultural in use as it intentionally avoids settlements. The landscape is characterised by medium to large agricultural fields, criss-crossed by minor roads, the B4039, the A420, the A4 Bath Road, the B3353 and the M1 and the Great Western Main Line Railway.

8.8.177 Landscape designations within the Cable Route Corridor are described below:

Scheduled Monuments

8.8.178 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Cable Route Corridor Study Area.

Conservation Area

8.8.179 There are no Conservations Areas within the Cable Route Corridor However, the following Conservation Areas are within the Cable Route Study Area:

- Grittleton;
- Sevington;
- Yatton Keynall; and
- Corsham
- Easton.

Listed Buildings

8.8.180 There are a number of listed buildings within the Cable Route Corridor Study Area. The majority of these are clustered with the Conservation Areas or are isolated farmhouses.

Ancient Woodlands

8.8.181 There are no ancient woodlands within the Cable Route Corridor.

Ecological Designations

8.8.182 There are no Ecological Designations within the Cable Route Corridor.

Landscape Character

8.8.183 With reference to the Published Landscape Character Assessments described in Section 8 of this report, the 500m CRC Study Area is situated within the following Landscape Character Areas as summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 8-8: Summary of Landscape Character Assessments

National Level	**Natural England - National Character Area Profiles** Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-1: National and Regional Landscape Character Areas
	NCA Profile: 107 - Cotswolds
	NCA Profile: 117 - Avon Vales
Regional (county) Level	**Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment** Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-1: National and Regional Landscape Character Areas

	LCT 16: Limestone Lowland LCA16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands
Local Level	**Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment** Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-2: Cotswolds National Landscape Local Character Areas
	LCT 11: Dip Slope Lowland LCA 11A: South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands
	LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands LCA 14A: Biddestone Lowland Farmland
	The North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment Refer to Volume 2, Figure 8-5-3: North and West Wiltshire Local Landscape Character Areas
	Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland LCT LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope
	Lowland Limestone (Forest Marble) Farmland LCT LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland
	LCT 10: Limestone Valley LCA 10A: By Brook Limestone Valley
	Lowland River Farmland LCT LCA 11 - Avon Valley Lowland
	The West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment
	LCT A: Limestone Lowland LCA A3 - Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland
	LCT C: Open Clay Vale LCA C2 - Semington Open Clay Vale

8.8.184 For this assessment the National Character Areas are deemed to be at too great a scale to be a useful means of assessing the landscape effects on the CRC.

8.8.185 At the county level, the CRC Study Area is situated wholly within the LCA16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands.

8.8.186 At the local level (as defined by the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment), the CRC Study Area is situated predominantly within LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland, with the western fringes at the northern end of the corridor extending into LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope, the southern end of the

corridor extending into LCA 10A: By Brook Limestone Valley and the eastern fringes to the south of the corridor extending into the LCA 11 - Avon Valley Lowland.

8.8.187 To the very south the CRC Study Area is within LCA A3 - Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland with a very small fringe to the east within LCA C2 - Semington Open Clay Vale as defined by the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment.

8.8.188 A very small part of the CRC Study Area is within the boundary of Cotswold National Landscape (CNL). The majority of the Study Area that falls within the CNL is within LCT 11: Dip Slope Lowland with a very small area to the south within LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands. The CRC is not located within the CNL.

8.8.189 Detailed descriptions of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) are provided in **ES Volume 1: Chapter 8 [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and the published assessments are provided in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-4 Landscape Character Area Descriptions [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.8.190 The land within the CRC Study Area is predominantly agricultural in use as it intentionally avoids settlements and woodlands. The landscape is characterised by medium to large agricultural fields, criss-crossed by minor roads, B4039, the A420, the A4 Bath Road, the B3353 and the M1 and the Great Western Main Line Railway.

Future Landscape Baseline

8.8.191 This section considers changes to the baseline conditions, described above, that might occur in the absence of the Scheme and during the time period over which the Scheme would be in place. Paragraph 5.33 of GLVIA3 states:

"The aim should be to describe the landscape as it is at the time but also to consider what it may be like in the future in the absence of the proposal. This means projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time, accepting that this involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty."

8.8.192 The future baseline scenarios are set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.8.193 A future baseline is also considered within this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices. The future baseline considers factors that will change the current baseline, without the Scheme proceeding. Committed developments within the 5km Study Area for this LVIA are one factor that can influence the future baseline ('committed developments' are those with current planning permission or allocated in adopted development plans). The potential effects of the Scheme

are considered against both the current baseline and the future baseline in this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices.

8.8.194 This section considers changes to the baseline conditions, described above, that might occur in the absence of the Scheme and during the time period over which the Scheme would be in place. The future baseline scenarios are set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1**].

8.8.195 The 'existing baseline' year for assessment is 2025. A future baseline (2044) is also considered within this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices. The future baseline considers factors that will change the current baseline, without the Scheme proceeding. Committed developments within the 5km Study Area for this LVIA are one factor that can influence the future baseline ('committed developments' are those with current planning permission or allocated in adopted development plans). The potential effects of the Scheme are considered against both the current baseline and the future baseline in this LVIA chapter and supporting appendices.

8.8.196 Agricultural policy and land ownership and management will dictate how the land within the Study Areas for the Solar PV Sites and Cable Route Corridor for the Scheme is managed and maintained. With such inherent uncertainties, an assessment of the effects of the Scheme under future climate change scenarios would yield results that are not meaningful. The assessment is therefore undertaken under the assumption that, outside of those committed developments, there will not be any substantive changes in the baseline during the Scheme, and/or that the effects of the Scheme will not change during the operation phase.

Visual Baseline

Visual Amenity

8.8.197 General visual amenity is experienced by people and notably the views that people have and their visual amenity, can be defined as the overall pleasantness or attractiveness of a place and the views they enjoy of their surroundings. Amenity is something considered to benefit a location, contribute to its enjoyment, and thereby increase its value.

8.8.198 The visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors) in the locality of the Solar PV Site differs according to many factors. The visual receptors most susceptible to change are generally likely to include: residents at home (private Viewpoints), people engaged in outdoor recreation (including use of PRoW), visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, travellers on recognised scenic routes (public Viewpoints) and people at their workplace where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of their working life. The visual receptors least susceptible to change include views experienced from places of work where workers and visitors are concentrating on their day-to-day activities,

views experienced by users of rail and main roads travelling at high speed or local roads where the focus is upon the road ahead owing to traffic conditions. For full details of visual susceptibility please refer to the LVIA Methodology as set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

8.8.199 Site visits were undertaken over a number of days, between 31 January and 14 February 2024. The weather was variable with some clear days with good visibility and some cloudy and misty days with poor visibility. Trees were predominantly not in leaf representing a worst-case scenario in terms of the screening afforded by vegetation. A second series of site visits were undertaken in July 2024 and Summer 2025.

8.8.200 The following section outlines visual amenity for the Lime Down Solar PV Sites and identifies Viewpoints included within the LVIA assessment.

Visual Character

8.8.201 The Scheme is visible from the network of minor roads, byways, bridleways and footpaths within the Study Area. Most of the Study Area is relatively flat although there are gently sloping areas predominantly associated with water courses.

8.8.202 The landscape consists of an irregular pattern of fields of varying scales which are enclosed by predominantly low chipped hedgerows with occasional mature trees. Blocks of woodland provide further enclosure in some places. Views from roads, byways and bridleways are generally short distance from the boundaries of the individual field parcels where hedgerows form strong boundaries along these routes. Footpaths tend to follow internal field margins or cross individual fields where views are more open. Field boundary hedgerows tend to limit views from these footpaths where the land is flat, whilst longer distance views are afforded where fields are sloping.

8.8.203 The visual character for Lime Down A to E are described below.

Lime Down A

Visual Amenity

8.8.204 Lime Down A is located to the south of Sherston which sits on high ground to the north of the River Avon Sherston Branch. The river here is in a steep sided valley which then rises to approximately 124 m AOD to the west of Field A1 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3: Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**). The Holy Cross church tower in Sherston is visible from the higher ground at the north west corner of Field A1. The topography then falls southwards towards a small stream near the boundary of Lime Down C.

8.8.205 The majority of Lime Down A is situated between Commonwood Lane to the west and Sherston Road to the East and is dissected north south by Bridleway (BW) SHER 16 between Sherston and Lordswood Farm. Footpath (FP SHER

17) is situated to the south of the area. Fields A11 and A12 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7: Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) are situated to the east of Sherston Road and are bounded by Foxley Road to the north and FP SHER 14 to the west. These two field parcels slope to the north and north east.

8.8.206 There are varying views from all of the surrounding lanes, bridleway and footpaths of Lime Down A. From FP SHER 17 in the south of the area, both Lime Down A and C are visible.

8.8.207 Visual Receptors of Lime Down A are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

Visual relationship to Cotswolds National Landscape

8.8.208 The northern boundary of three field parcels (Fields A1, A11 and A12 (**ES Volume 3, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** adjoin the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape to the south of Sherston. The River Avon forms a distinct west-east valley with steep sided slopes between the village and the Solar PV Site. The lanes of Bustlers Hill and Thompsons Hill climb up the valley side from the village to meet Foxley Road beyond its crest. The topography of the transitional dip slope limits views towards the Solar PV Site from Sherston and the wider National Landscape However, where the valley sides are less steep to the east there are cross valley views to Pinkney Wood and Old Wood and Lime Down A beyond, in views from the urban edge of Sherston.

Public Rights of Way

8.8.209 There are four PRoW located on or in close proximity to Lime Down A as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. These include:

- Bridleway SHER16 runs north to south intersecting Lime Down A from Sherston to the Fosse Way;
- Bridleway SHER14 runs north to south, on the eastern boundary of the area;
- Footpath SHER15 runs east to west running through the centre of the area; and
- Footpath SHER17 runs east to west and is located approximately 64 m south of Lime Down A at its closest point. The Footpath is also situated to the north of Lime Down C.

8.8.210 In the wider landscape Footpath SHER 13 and 11 run broadly east-west between Foxley Road and the Fosse Way to the northeast of the area. The BOAT SHER 37 (the Fosse Way) is to the southeast of the area. BOAT SHER 35 extends south from Commonwood Lane to the south west of the Solar PV Site.

8.8.211 Footpath SHER 26 is situated on higher ground to the north of Lime Down A and follows the urban edge of Sherston.

Highways

8.8.212 There are a number of small lanes which surround and pass through Lime Down A. These include:

- Commonwood Lane to the west of the Solar PV Site – a no through road which connects to BOAT 35;
- Sherston Road runs north-south through the centre of the area;
- Foxley Road adjoins the northern boundary of the area; and
- An unnamed lane provides a link between Sherston Road and Foxley Road through the area.

Cycleways

8.8.213 The Wiltshire Cycleway follows Foxley Road along the northern boundary of Lime Down A before heading southwards on unnamed lanes towards Alderton. The route also follows the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape.

Settlements

8.8.214 Lime Down A is situated to the south of Sherston and to the north west of Norton. Sherston is a village and civil parish about 8 km west of Malmesbury. The parish is bounded to the north by the county boundary with Gloucestershire, and to the southeast by the Fosse Way. The parish includes the hamlets of Easton Town, immediately east of Sherston; Pinkney, further east along the Malmesbury road; The infant River Avon passes Sherston, Easton Town and Pinkney, on its way to Malmesbury. The parish lies within the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8.8.215 Norton is a small settlement about 5.6 km south-west of Malmesbury. The parish includes the hamlets of Foxley and Bremilham (also known as Cowage). The Sherston branch of the Bristol River Avon forms the north boundary of the parish.

Residential Properties

8.8.216 Residential Properties associated with Lime Down A are shown on Figure 8-11-1: Private Receptors Lime Down A . Those in close proximity to Lime Down A include:

- The Stables on Commonwood Lane to the east of Lime Down A;
- Lordswood House accessed from Commonwood Lane to the south of Lime Down A; and
- Lordswood Farm to the southeast of Lime Down A.

Lime Down B

Visual Amenity

8.8.217 Lime Down B is located between Foxley to the north and Norton to the south and extends to the east to meet the Fosse Way, To the east it adjoins Kennelfield Cottage Lane and to the south by Honey Lane. The topography is relatively flat but is dissected by a series of streams/ditches. Which generally flow from the southwest to the northeast towards the River Avon. A small stream/ditch runs north to the south and east of Baker's Gorse to the west of Foxley Manor. Another stream runs west to east through Norton to the south of Honey Lane. This gives rise to some gently sloping topography within the area.

8.8.218 There are views of Lime Down B from the minor roads within the Area, The Fosse Way (BOAT 37) and from FP NORT 1 between Norton and Foxley. Views from a number of footpaths to the west of the Fosse Way are limited as the topography slopes north westwards away from the Solar PV Site. The Fosse Way is a long-distance path which is often lined with vegetation. Due to the topography, there are some longer distance views across the landscape of Lime Down B.

8.8.219 Visual Receptors of Lime Down B are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

Visual relationship to Cotswolds National Landscape

8.8.220 The boundary of the National Landscape follows Foxley Road to the north of Lime Down B. A combination of gently undulating topography associated with intervening watercourses and the River Avon and strong hedgerows limits intervisibility between Lime Down B and the wider Cotswold National Landscape. There are fleeting views towards Lime Down B from Foxley Road where Lime Down B is either screened by intervening vegetation (B6) or at some distance away (B12). From slightly higher ground to the north, near Foxley Grove there are longer distance views beyond intervening vegetation towards Lime Down B.

PRoW

8.8.221 There are four PRoW located within or on the boundary of Lime Down B comprising the Fosse Way BOAT, one bridleway, and two footpaths as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. These include:

- BOAT SHER 37 is the Fosse Way which forms the northwest boundary of Lime Down B;
- Bridleway NORT 11 adjoins the eastern corner of Lime Down and heads northeast to Cowage;

- Footpath NORT 1 runs north -south through the centre of Lime Down B from Foxley in the north to Norton in the south; and
- Footpath NORT 5 runs east -west from Norton to join the Fosse Way to the west.

8.8.222 In the wider landscape to the west of Lime Down B, Footpaths SHER 11, SHER 13, SHER 15 run westwards away from the Solar PV Site and the Fosse Way. To the north, Bridleway NORT 2 heads north from the village of Foxley past Foxley Grove to join the Fosse Way.

Highways

8.8.223 There are a number of small lanes which surround and pass through Lime Down B. These include:

- Foxley Road situated to the north of Lime Down B. It is generally one field away from the boundary;
- Kennelfield Cottage Lane from Norton to Easton Grey cutting diagonally through Lime Down B;
- Honey Lane from Norton to Foxley Green on the south eastern boundary of Lime Down B; and
- Sherston Road, between Sherston and Norton adjoining the southern boundary of Lime Down B (Field B1).

Cycleways

8.8.224 The Wiltshire Cycleway follows Foxley Road along the northern boundary of Lime Down A before heading southwards on unnamed lanes towards Alderton. The route also follows the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape.

Settlements

8.8.225 The small village of Foxley lies to the north of the Solar PV Site with dispersed stone properties including the listed parish church, Foxley House and Foxley Manor Farm. Norton is a small village about 5.6 km southwest of Malmesbury. The parish includes the hamlets of Foxley and Bremilham (also known as Cowage). The Sherston branch of the Bristol River Avon forms the north boundary of the parish. Norton is situated to the south.

Residential Properties

8.8.226 Residential Properties associated with Lime Down B are shown on Figure 8-11-2: Private Receptors Lime Down B. Those in close proximity to Lime Down B include:

- Foxley Manor Farm;
- Garden Cottage;

- 1 and 2 Lime Tree Cottages, Foxley Road;
- Kennel Field Cottage, Foxley Road;
- Honey Lane Cottage, Honey Lane;
- Vine tree Cottage, Honey Lane;
- Fosse Farm;
- Lordswood Cottage; and
- Ladyswood Farm.

Lime Down C

Visual Amenity

8.8.227 Visual amenity within Lime Down C is varied. The eastern part of the Solar PV Site is relatively enclosed by irregular blocks of woodland on either side of the Fosse Way which diagonally crosses the area and connects to a number of footpaths which heads west to join Commonwood Lane and its extending byway. To the east of Common Wood Lane and byway the landscape is more open. The topography here consists of gently rising slopes to either side of an indistinct valley. Fields C1 to C3 (refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) are situated on a north facing slope and are visible from the north. The spire of St Giles Church in Alderton is also a visible feature of the landscape from here.

8.8.228 Fields C6 to C10 are located on flatter higher ground with the railway line cutting though the area. It is tunnelled under the unnamed road to Alderton and has limited visibility in this location. There are no PRoW in this part of Lime Down C and views are limited to the adjoining unnamed road which is also the AONB boundary. Strong hedgerows predominantly screen views although there are occasional views through hedgerow gaps and field entrances.

8.8.229 Visual Receptors of Lime Down C are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Visual relationship to Cotswold National Landscape

8.8.230 The Cotswolds National Landscape boundary adjoins the western edge of Lime Down C at Fields C1, C6, C8 and C10 along an unnamed road to the east of Alderton. Field C6 is located on relatively flat land on a low ridge sloping down to the north and west. Fields C1, C2 and C3 slope north are clearly visible from FP LUCL 35 which runs parallel to these parcels to the north (refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. The topography also slopes down towards LUCK 41 to the west which follows a stream/ditch to Alderton. The rising landform of the transitional dip slope and

strong hedgerows to the intervening field boundaries limit views from these nearby footpaths within the National Landscape.

Public Rights of Way

8.8.231 Several PRoW are located on, adjacent to or are near Lime Down C. These are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and include:

- Byway/BOAT (SHER 35) runs north to south as a continuation of Commonwood Lane, intersecting Lime Down C between Fields C19 and C21. The byway continues into the parish of Luckington and therefore is referenced as LUCK 57, where it follows adjacent to the west and south of Field C12.
- Footpath SHER 17 is situated approximately 80 m north of Fields C20 and C22 and traverses Lord's Wood House;
- Footpath SHER 18/Luck 35 is located within Fields C23 and C20/21 and it extends westwards as LUCK 35 to the north of Fields C1 and C2;
- Footpath HULL 20 is located south of Lime Down C and is approximately 340 m southwest of Field C10;
- Footpath HULL 25, runs along the southern boundary of Fields C25 and C26;
- Footpath HULL 26, intersects Field C24 running north to south and then follows the western boundary of Field C25; and
- LUCK 41, LUCK 42, and LUCK 43 form a triangle to the west of the Solar PV Site which connect to the village of Alderton.

8.8.232 In the wider landscape LUCK45 is situated to the southwest of the area The closest point of proximity between Lime Down C and LUCK 45 is approximately 60 m south of Field C8.

Highways

8.8.233 There are a number of small lanes which surround and pass through Lime Down C. These include:

- The Fosse Way is the primary route diagonally crossing through Lime Down C;
- Unnamed Lane follows the western boundary of Lime Down C and there are two further lanes running west connecting to Alderton;
- Commonwood Lane to the north of the Solar PV Site is a no through road which connects to BOAT 35 as described above;

- Pig Lane adjoins the eastern edge of the Solar PV Site (Field C24) near Lordswood Farm and heads south crossing the Great Western railway line between Fields C13 and C18 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**); and
- Hill Hayers Lane, off Pig Lane runs south across the Great Western railway line near Field C18 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**).

Railway

8.8.234 The Great Western Railway South Wales Main Line runs east to west through Lime Down C.

Cycleway

8.8.235 The Fosse Way Roman Road forms part of a publicised and waymarked cycleway through the county which intersects Lime Down C. The Wiltshire Cycleway follows Foxley Road to the north of Lime Down A before heading southwards on unnamed lanes towards Alderton. The route also follows the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape. The route adjoins Fields C1, C6, C8, C9 and C10 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**).

Settlements

8.8.236 Lime Down C is fairly remote from settlements. In closest proximity are the villages of:

- Alderton, approximately 190 m to the west; and
- Sherston, approximately 2 km to the north.

Residential Properties

8.8.237 Residential Properties associated with Lime Down C are shown on Figure 8-11-3: Private Receptors Lime Down C. Those in close proximity to Lime Down C include:

- Racecourse Barn on PRoW LUCK 35;
- Commonwood Farm to the north of Field C3 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11 Private Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**);
- Lords Wood House to the north of Field C20 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11 Private Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2)**);
- Lords Wood Farm to the north east of the area near Field C22 (and Field A9) (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11 Private Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**);
- 1-4 Farleze Cottages on Pig Lane to the east of the area near Field C25 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11 Private Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**); and

- Farleaze Farm to the south east of the Solar PV Site near Fields C26 and C25 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11 Private Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**).

Lime Down D

Visual Amenity

8.8.238 The Gauze Brook runs though Lime Down D from the southwest to the north east giving rise to gently sloping valley sides. The land rises towards Bradfield Wood to the north where another stream/ditch runs between Fields D9 and D10 (**ES Volume 3, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.3])**. To the south the valley slope is more distinct where Field D18 adjoins a low ridgeline which visually separates Lime Down D from the landscape to the southeast associated with Corston. From this ridgeline there are views to Lime Down D and in the opposite direction there are cross valley long distance views to Lime Down E (Fields E1 to E5). The water tower on high ground at Rodbourne is visible in this view and in some views from footpaths within the Solar PV Site.

8.8.239 Lime Down D is fairly remote from roads and is criss-crossed by a network of footpaths and bridleways. Bradfield Cottages Lane crosses the area to the west between Fields D4, D5 and D6, D7 (refer to **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-1 Study Area [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. The lane is lined with clipped hedgerows which restrict views. The area to the west of this lane is relatively flat with a gentle fall to the southwest towards the railway line.

8.8.240 Visual Receptors of Lime Down D are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Visual relationship to Cotswold National Landscape

8.8.241 Lime Down D is approximately 1.8 km from the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape. Due to a combination of intervening topography, woodland and layering of vegetation, Lime Down D has no visual relationship or intervisibility with the Cotswold National Landscape.

Public Rights of Way

8.8.242 There are several PRoW located within Lime Down D comprising one bridleway and eight footpaths as shown in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. These include:

- Bridleway HULL 7/MALW 51 runs east to west intersecting Field D18 and following along the southern boundary of Field D14 towards the village of Corston;
- Footpath HULL 1/NORT 10 runs from north to south dissecting Lime Down D entering through the northern boundary of Field D4 and continuing along the field boundary between Field D3 and D5;

- Footpath HULL 2 runs adjacent to the northern boundary of Fields D6 and D9, intersecting Field D10 heading northwards along the western side of Bradfield Wood;
- Footpath HULL 4 runs north to south spanning from Bradfield Wood to Bradfield Manor Farm; Footpath HULL5, runs north to south along the eastern edge of Bradfield Wood through Field D11 to Bradfield Manor Farm;
- Footpath HULL6 runs east to west along the Gauze Brook through Fields D13, D16 and D17. A Branch south adjoins Bridleway HULL 7;
- Footpath HULL 7/MALW 51 follows the boundary of Field D15 towards Coston;
- Footpath HULL8, follows a ridgeline to the southeast of Lime Down D adjoining the southern boundary of Field D18 where it adjoins Footpath HULL 7; and
- Footpath MALW 8 continues along the ridgeline from HULL 8 and runs parallel to HULL 7/MALW 51 towards Coston.

8.8.243 In the wider landscape there are a number of PRoW which extend away from Lime Down D. These include:

- Footpath MALW49 to the north east of the area runs from the Gauze Brook and connects to HULL 6; and
- MALW 50 is located north of Field D12 running north to south connecting Field D12 to a byway (MALW46) approximately 640 m north of Field C12 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**).

Highways

8.8.244 There are limited roads within Lime Down D. The only road which runs through the area is:

- Bradfield Cottages Lane from Hullavington in the south to the village of Norton to the north east. Railway The Great Western Railway South Wales Main Line runs east west, to the south of Lime Down D.

Settlements

8.8.245 There are two settlements associated with Lime Down D. These include:

- The village of Norton, approximately 294m to the north west; and
- The village of Hullavington, approximately 992m to the south.

Residential Properties

8.8.246 Residential Properties associated with Lime Down D are shown on Figure 8-11-4: Private Receptors Lime Down D. There are no residential properties within

the core area of Lime Down D. In the wider landscape residential properties include:

- West Park Farm to the north east of the area;
- Bradfield Manor Farm to the south west;
- Bradfield Bungalow to the south west;
- 1 and 2 Bradfield Cottages to the south west; and
- Station Masters House and 1 and 2 Station cottages which are located along the railway line to the south of Lime Down D.

Lime Down E

Visual Amenity

8.8.247 Lime Down E is located on more complex topography than the other Solar PV Sites. Fields E1 to E4 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) are located on rising land which forms a north west facing slope with cross valley views overlooking the village of Corston. The south eastern boundary of these parcels forms a ridgeline and the rest of Lime Down E is not visually associated with Corston. The village of Rodbourne is located on this ridge and a water tower in this elevated location provides a landmark feature which is visible in many views from the wider landscape.

8.8.248 Fields E6 to E18 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) are located on a south eastern slope below Bincombe Wood. The railway line cuts through the rising topography to the west of the railway bridge (to the north of Field E9 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) and sits on a high embankment on the edge of the valley near Rodbourne Bottom to the east.

8.8.249 The topography rises again to the south of Rodbourne Bottom to large arable fields on high ground within Fields E33 and E34 (Figure 8-3-5). The railway embankment is visually prominent in views from a footpath which crosses the valley side to the south of the railway line. The valley sweeps southwards towards Lower Stanton through Fields E19 to E27 (Figure 8-3-5). Fields E28 to E31 (**ES Volume 2, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform [EN010168/APP/6.2]**) are situated on rising land which forms a west facing slope.

8.8.250 The topography and small, scale field pattern provides an intimate visual character which is experienced from the network of footpaths and bridleways within Lime Down E. Blocks of woodland within the landscape provide a sense of enclosure to the area and there are limited roads which gives rise to a strong sense of tranquillity especially away from the railway line.

8.8.251 Visual Receptors of Lime Down E are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Visual relationship to Cotswold National Landscape

8.8.252 Lime Down E is approximately 3.4 km from the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape. Due to a combination of intervening topography, woodland and layering of vegetation, Lime Down E has no visual relationship or intervisibility with the Cotswold National Landscape.

Public Rights of Way

8.8.253 There are ten PRoW located within Lime Down E comprising four bridleways and six footpaths. These are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-13 PRoW Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]**. These include:

- Bridleway MALW 54, connects the A429 and Bincombe Wood running along a north west to south east axis, intersecting Field E1 and following between Fields E1 and E2;
- Bridleway MALW 59, travels along a south west to north east axis following the southern boundary of Fields E18, E17, E15, E14, E13 and E12);
- Bridleway MALW61 runs through the centre of Lime Down E along the western boundaries of Fields E23, E24, E25 and E27;
- Bridleway GSOM9/SEAG23 runs north to south through Seagry Wood and comes into close proximity with Field E34, located approximately 35 m at its closest point;
- Footpath MALW 55 runs along a south west to north east axis approximately 70 m north east of Fields E2, E3, E4 and E5;
- Footpath MALW 60, is on an east to west axis following the railway line, the footpath intersects Field E1 through the western boundary before cutting across the middle of the field to connect with a track to Rodbourne;
- Footpath MALW 62 connects from the main bridleway through the centre of the Solar PV Site heads south west to Lower Stanton Farm adjoining parcels 26 and 27;
- Footpath MALW 63 runs east to west up and over a hill to Rodbourne Bottom and is located approximately 175 m west of Field E12;
- Footpath MALW 64 runs along a similar route between the bridleway (MALW61) to Cleeve End, along this route the footpath is adjacent to the northern boundary of Field E33; and
- Footpath MALW 68 runs along an east to west axis, connecting Pond Hill to an unmarked track which crosses the railway line. The footpath diagonally crosses the slope of Field E8.

8.8.254 There are also a number of PRoW within the wider landscape. These include:

- Footpath MALW 63 connects from the main bridleway through the centre of the and heads eastwards on the valley side to Rodbourne Bottom;
- Footpath MALW65 is further north on lower lying land which follows a stream to Bottom Farm;
- Footpath MALW 53, is to the west of the area and provides a connection between MALW 60 along the railway line and Bridleway MALW 54 and the A429. It located approximately 480 m west of Field E1 and
- To the east there are a number of PRoW which do not connect to Lime Down E. These include Footpath GSOM 11, Footpath GSOM 15, Bridleway GSOM 10 and Bridleway GSOM 9 which connects to SEAG 23 through Seagry Wood.

Highways

8.8.255 The are no roads within the core area of Lime Down E and there are limited roads within the wider area too. These include:

- The A429 main road from Junction 17 of the M4, through Stanton St Quintin and Corston to Malmesbury is situated to the west and north west of the Solar PV Site;
- A minor unnamed Lane runs between Corston to Rodbourne which sits on higher ground to the north east of the area;
- Pound Hill heads south from Rodbourne to Rodbourne Bottom and provides access to Cleve House. It is a no through road; and
- Avil's Lane is a minor road providing access to Avil's Farm from Lower Stanton Farm to the south of Lime Down E. It is also a no through road.

Railway

8.8.256 The Great Western Railway South Wales Main Line runs east to west through Lime Down E. In this location it runs on a high embankment.

Settlements

8.8.257 There are four settlements associated with Lime Down E. These include:

- Rodbourne approximately 263mto the east;
- Rodbourne Bottom, approximately 492m to the north east;
- Stanton St Quintin, approximately 676m to the sothwest; and
- Corston, approximately 875m to the north.

Residential Properties

8.8.258 Residential Properties associated with Lime Down E are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11-5: Private Receptors Lime Down E [EN010168/APP/6.2].** There are no residential properties within the core area of Lime Down E. In the wider landscape residential properties include:

- Glebe Farmhouse to the south west of the Solar PV Site;
- Lower Stanton Farm to the south west of the Solar PV Site;
- Properties on the edge of Buckley Barracks;
- Hanger Farm to the south west;
- Kingsway Barn Farm on A429 near crossing with railway line to the west;
- 1-4 Kingsway Bungalows on A429 near crossing with railway line to the west;
- Properties on Corston Road to the north;
- Properties 6-12 Southside Close, to the south of Corston Road to the north;
- Properties on Rodbourne Road off unnamed lane to the north;
- Plough House off unnamed lane to Rodbourne to the north;
- Properties on the edge of Rodbourne to the north east;
- Pound Hill Cottage to the north east;
- Bottom Farm, Rodbourne Bottom to the east;
- Godwins Farmhouse and Cottage, Rodbourne Bottom to the east;
- Briar Cottage, Rodbourne Bottom;
- Cleeve Hill Cottage to the east;
- Cleeve House (Children's Home) to the east; and
- Avil's Farm to the south.

Cable Route Corridor

Visual Amenity

8.8.259 Visual Receptors within the Cable Route Corridor are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are summarised below. The methodology set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]** has been followed to identify detailed baseline information, which is presented below.

Visual relationship to Cotswold National Landscape

8.8.260 Part of the eastern extent of the Cotswold National Landscape is within the 500m CRC Study Area as it passes between the villages of Grittleton and Yatton Keynell. The CRC itself in not within the CNL.

Public Rights of Way

8.8.261 Numerous PRoW are located within and directly cross the Cable Route Corridor and its 500m Study Area. These typically run east to west across the arable landscape connecting the small rural settlements. The Cable Route Corridor avoids any Recreational Routes or National Trails.

Highways

8.8.262 There are a number of small lanes which surround and pass through the Cable Route Corridor. These are typically local unnamed roads and minor roads.

8.8.263 The Cable Route Corridor also passes across the following A roads and Motorways:

- The M4;
- A420; and
- A4, Bath Road.

Cycleways

8.8.264 The Wiltshire Cycleway (between Malmesbury and Yatton Keynell) follows the western extent of the Cable Route Corridor. Study Area, north of Yatton Keynell The route also follows the boundary of the Cotswold National Landscape.

Settlements

8.8.265 The Cable Route Corridor passes alongside a number of small rural settlements including the villages of Grittleton, Easton Piercy, Yatton Keynell, Biddlestone, Gastard, and Whitley. It also passes the larger settlements of Chippenham, Corsham and Melksham.

Residential Properties

8.8.266 Residential Properties associated with the Cable route Corridor are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-11-6 / 7 and 8: Private Receptors Cable Route Corridor [EN010168/APP/6.2].** All Residential Properties within the Cable Route Study Area have been scoped into the LVIA. A scoping exercise identified those receptors which would have the potential for change in views and these have been assessed in full (refer to **ES Volume 3: Appendix 8-3-4-1 Cable Route Corridor Scoping [EN010168/APP/6.3]**).

LVIA Assessment Material

Zone of Theoretic Visibility

8.8.267 In order to assist with viewpoint selection and to appreciate the potential influence of the Scheme in the wider landscape, ZTV figures have been used to illustrate the area from where it may be theoretically possible to view all, or part, of the Scheme. The ZTV's produced are both Bare Earth (landform only) to illustrate a worst-case scenario (As shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-8 Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)** and **Figure 8-9 Augmented ZTV figures [EN010168/APP/6.2]** which illustrate the effects of landform, built form and vegetation.

8.8.268 The ZTV's provide a starting point in the assessment process and therefore provide a 'worst case' illustration of theoretical visibility and assume that if any of the Scheme is visible it will be shown on the ZTV.

8.8.269 The ZTV's are produced using ArcGIS Pro 3.4.1 software, and the calculations were based on the proposed infrastructure illustrated within **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-1 Indicative Site Layout Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2].** Infrastructure heights were run within the ZTV modelling at the following heights:

- Solar array - 4.5m above ground level;
- BESS Battery Storage Height (including silencers) - 4.5m above ground level; and
- Substation heights:
  - Lime Down A –135kw - 7m;
  - Lime Down B – 135kw - 7m;
  - Lime Down C – 135kw - 7m;
  - Lime Down D – 135kw - 7m;
  - Lime Down D – 400kw - 13m; and
  - Lime Down E – 135kw - 7m.

Viewpoints and Visualisations

8.8.270 A suite of Viewpoints has been identified through desk studies which were verified through fieldwork. Verified Photography was undertaken in Winter 2024 and in summer 2025 which are included within **ES Volume 2 Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].** Consultation has been undertaken with Officers at Wiltshire Council and the Cotswold National Landscape Authority agreeing to the locations of these Viewpoints. Wiltshire Officers requested an additional 3 Viewpoints and the

Cotswold National Landscape officer requested an additional 7 Viewpoints which are included. Additional Verified Photography was undertaken to include all Viewpoints, including those requested by consultees.

8.8.271 Viewpoint selection has followed good practice guidance and in particular paragraphs 6.18 to 6.20 of GLVIA3. The Viewpoints proposed are used to aid the description of effects on both Landscape and Visual resources and have been utilised for visual assessment purposes.

8.8.272 The selection of Viewpoints was made on the basis of the following types of publicly accessible Viewpoints, as follows:

- Representative Viewpoints (representative of views from a particular PRoW);
- Specific Viewpoints (such as key views from a specific visitor attraction);
- Illustrative Viewpoints (chosen to demonstrate a particular effect/specific issue);
- Any important sequential views, for example, along key recreational or transport routes; and
- Any additional viewpoints that have been requested by statutory consultees at via Section 42 Consultation.

8.8.273 For the purposes of this ES submission, all viewpoints have been taken from publicly accessible land during both summer and winter months to ensure a worst-case scenario is assessed and illustrated.

8.8.274 Consultation with the relevant consultees and planning authorities has played an important part in selecting the viewpoints to support the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) process. This consultation process has played a role in gathering specific information about the Sites, the Cable Route Corridor and the associated views. Section 42 Public Consultation also played a role in canvassing feedback from the public on the visibility of the Scheme. This process has been a valuable tool in seeking an understanding and agreement about views and to highlight the local interests and values that may otherwise have been overlooked. This commitment and engagement has been undertaken in a genuinely open and responsive process through a series of workshops and public consultation events as set out in Section 8.2 (Consultation). One of the objectives of the consultation has been to clearly identify those matters of visibility which are important to stakeholders to inform the LVIA process.

Viewpoints

8.8.275 Viewpoints have been identified through desk studies which have then been verified through fieldwork at differing times of the year to understand the

seasonal differences between winter and summer. Locations of the viewpoints have been agreed with Officers at WC and the Cotswolds National Landscape.

8.8.276 There are a total of 67 viewpoints covering the Study Areas for the Sites and the Cable Route Corridor. These viewpoints comprise 57 initial viewpoints selected for the purpose of the assessment and likely to be affected by the Scheme. The locations of the viewpoints have been subject to consultation with the relevant consultees and planning authorities, with the feedback received leading to a total of 10 additional viewpoints being included and photography undertaken. These are identified as Viewpoint Numbers CNL A-G and WC1-3. The viewpoint locations are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-10 Viewpoint Locations [EN010168/APP/6.2]**

8.8.277 and the Verified Photography and Photomontages are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.8.278 The following **Table 8-9** lists the Viewpoint locations used in the LVIA assessment. The table should be read in conjunction with **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-10 Viewpoint Locations** and **Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

Table 8-9: Viewpoint Locations

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Type of Receptor
VP1	Sherston Road	Walkers, Motorists
VP2	Junction of Unnamed Road and FP SHER 17	Walkers, Motorists
VP3	Junction of Foxley Road and FP SHER 14	Walkers, Motorists,
VP4	FP SHER 12	Walkers, Residents
VP5	PF SHER 26	Residents, Walkers
VP6	Unnamed Lane	Walkers; Motorists
VP7	BW SHER 16	Walkers, Horse riders
VP8a	FP SHER 17	Walkers,
VP8b	FP SHER 17	Walkers,
VP9	Commonwood Lane	Walkers, Motorists; Residents
VP10	Honey Lane	Walkers, Motorists; Residents
VP11	Honey Lane	Walkers, Motorists,
VP12	FP NORT 1	Walkers
VP13	Common Lane	Walkers Motorists

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Type of Receptor
VP14	Fosse Way near FP SHER 13	Walkers, Horse riders, Cyclists
VP15	Fosse Way near FP SHER 15	Walkers; Horse riders; Cyclists
VP16	Unnamed Lane–	Walkers, Motorists, Residents
VP17	FP WT|NORT|5	Walkers
VP18	Foxley Road	Walkers, Motorists, Residents
VP19	FP HULL 23	Walkers,
VP20	Pig Lane	Walkers, Motorists,
VP21	FP HULL 25 and HULL 26	Walkers,
VP22	Fosse Way and Hull26	Walkers, Motorists Cyclists
VP23	Fosse Way	Walkers, Motorists, Cyclists
VP24	Fosse Way and BOAT LUCK 57	Walkers, Motorists Horse riders
VP25	Fosse Way and Unnamed Lane near Fosse Lodge	Walkers, Motorists
VP26	Unnamed lane	Walkers; Motorists
VP27	BOAT LUCK 57 and FP SHER 18	Walkers; Horse Riders
VP28	BOAT LUCK 57	Walkers; Horse Riders
VP29	Pig Lane and FP WT|HULL|26/2	Walkers, Motorists and Residents
VP30	FP WT|LUCK|35	Walkers and Residents
VP31	FP WT|LUCK|35	Walkers
VP32	FP WT|LUCK|41	Walkers
VP33	FP WT|LUCK|45	Walkers
VP34	FP WT|HULL|20	Walkers
VP35	Junction of Bradfield Cottages Lane and FP HULL 2	Walkers; Motorists
VP36	FP NORT 4	Walkers; Motorists
VP37	FP NORT 10	Walkers
VP38	FP HULL 4 near Bradfield Wood	Walkers
VP39	FP HULL 4 near Bradfield Manor	Walkers, Residents
VP40	FP HULL 6	Walkers
VP41	FP MALW 8	Walkers

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Type of Receptor
VP42	Track to BW HULL 7	Walkers; Horse riders
VP43	FP HULL 6	Walkers
VP44	Unnamed Lane	Walkers, Motorists
VP45	FP WT|NORT|10	Walkers
VP46	FP WT|MALW|49	Walkers
VP47	FP MALW 55	Walkers,
VP48	Track over Railway line	Walkers; Horse riders; Users of trains
VP49	Junction of track and BW MALW 59	Walkers; Horse riders
VP50	BW MALW 59	Walkers, Horse riders
VP51	FP SSTQ 5	Walkers
VP52	BW MALW 61	Walkers, Horse riders
VP53	FP MALW 64	Walkers
VP54	Junction of FP GSOM 15 and FP GSOM 11	Walkers
VP55	FP MALW 63	Walkers
VP56	Bridleway WT|MALW|47	Walkers and Horse riders
VP57	FP MALW 52	Walkers
VP CNL A	Footpath WT|LUCK|46	Walkers
VP CNL B	Footpath WT|SHER|19	Walkers
VP CNL C	Footpath SHER 15	Walkers
VP CNL D	Bridleway WT|NORT|2	Walkers and Horse riders
VP CNL E	Footpath WT|SHER|10	Walkers
VP CNL F	Footpath WT|SHER|13	Walkers
VP CNL G	Alderton Road	Walkers, Motorists
VP WC1	Church Road, Sherston, just south of New Barn.	Walkers, Motorists
VP WC2	Bridleway HULL18	Walkers and Horse riders
VP WC3	Bridleway MALW54 and footpath MALW53	Walkers and Horse riders

Photomontages

8.8.279 A series of photomontages have been produced to show the effects of the Scheme at locations where significant effects were considered likely to occur. The selection of Viewpoints for photomontages at Accurate Visual

Representation (AVR) Level 3 were agreed with the Landscape Officer representatives for WC and the CNL.

8.8.280 With reference to the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance on Visual Representation of Development Proposals (REF 8-22) an AVR Level 3 photomontage is a static or moving image that shows the location of a proposed development as accurately as possible; it may also illustrate the degree to which the development will be visible, its detailed form or the proposed use of materials. They are fully rendered images, usually photo-realistic with texture, shading and reflections as appropriate.

8.8.281 For viewpoints from where Photomontages have been produced, visualisations have been produced at Year 1 Winter (to demonstrate the worst-case scenario) and at Year 15 Summer (to demonstrate the screening effects of the Embedded Mitigation).

8.8.282 A total of 32 AVR level 3 montages have been produced using summer and winter photography as illustrated in **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-14 Baseline Photography and Photomontages [EN010168/APP/6.2].** These include the 10 additional Viewpoints which were agreed with the Landscape Officer representatives for WC and CNLB, as set out below within **Table 8-10.**

Table 8-10 AVR 3 Photomontage Locations

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Reason for inclusion	Nearest Site
VP3	Junction of Foxley Road and FP SHER 14	Representative view from Foxley Road and footpath on the edge of the CNL to Site A	A
VP4	FP SHER 12	Representative view from Footpath SHER 12 within the CNL across Site A	A
VP 6	Unnamed Lane	View from lane on boundary of the CNL on the edge of Sheston and LD Site A	A
VP9	Commonwood Lane	Representative view from Commonwood Lane Part of publicised walk - Sherston Walk 2 with views to LD Site A	A
VP13	Common Lane	Representative view from country lane between Norton and Fosse Way with views over LD Site B	B
VP14	Fosse Way near FP SHER 13	Representative view from south from Fosse Way-Roman Road and cycle route	B
VP17	FP WT|NORT|5	Representative view from footpath between Norton and the Fosse	B

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Reason for inclusion	Nearest Site
		Way - part of the White Walls Way	
VP18	Foxley Road	Rural road on edge of CNL and representative of Grade II Listed Foxley Manor near LD Site B	B
VP25	Fosse Way and Unnamed Lane near Fosse Lodge	Representative view from the edge of CNL and setting of Grade II Listed Fosse Lodge with views over LD Site C	C
VP26	Unnamed lane	Representative view from the edge of CNL showing relationship of Aderton Church and LD Site C	C
VP27	BOAT LUCK 57 and FP SHER 18	Representative view from Byway which extends south from Commonwood Lane and is part of Sherston Walk 2 with 360 degree views to LD Site C	C
VP30	FP WT|LUCK|35	From footpath within CNL showing relationship of Grade II* Listed Church at Alderton and LD Site C	C
VP31	FP WT|LUCK|35	From footpath near edge of CNL showing relationship of Grade II* Listed Church at Alderton and LD Site C	C
VP34	FP WT|HULL|20	Views north from footpath on higher ground near Surrendel Wood to LD Site C	C
VP36	FP NORT 4	Representative view from footpath looking south over wider landscape of LD Site D	D
VP38	FP HULL 4 near Bradfield Wood	Representative view from footpath through Bradfield Wood, part of Hullavington Walk 8 with views south over LD Site D	D
VP41	FP MALW 8	Representative cross valley views over the Gauze Brook and LD Site D looking north towards West Park Farm	D
VP46	FP WT|MALW|49	Representative view from footpath near West Park Farm looking over the Gauze Brook valley and LD Site D	D
VP47	FP MALW 55	Representative of views from footpath connecting from Rodbourne Road to LD Site E	E

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Reason for inclusion	Nearest Site
VP53	FP MALW 64	Representative of cross valley views over Gauze Brook and LD Site D looking north towards West Park Farm	E
VP55	FP MALW 63	Representative cross valley view northwards from footpath to Rodbourne Bottom to LD Site E	E
VP56	Bridleway MALW|47	Representative view from Bridleway to the northeast of Corston towards LD Site E	E
VP CNL A	Footpath WT|LUCK|46	View from Footpath within the CNL looking north across intervening hedgerows.	C
VP CNL B	Footpath WT|SHER|19	View from Footpath within the CNL looking south and east.	A and C
VP CNL C	Footpath SHER 15	From Footpath with A11 looking north towards Sherston and it's Grade I Listed church within the CNL.	A
VP CNL D	Bridleway WT|NORT|2	From footpath on high ground near Foxley Grove wood within CNL looking south.	B
VP CNL E	Footpath WT|SHER|10	From Footpath near New Barn within the CNL looking south.	A and B
VP CNL F	Footpath WT|SHER|13	From Footpath near the Fosse Way looking north towards the CNL.	B
VP CNL G	Alderton Road	Specific view from a gateway on Alderton Road on the edge of the CNL.	C
VP WC1	Church Road, Sherston, just south of New Barn.	On boundary of CNL. VP location is at slightly higher elevation than VP9 at circa 124m AOD. Assess potential visibility of the rising land to southeast approaching Fosse Way / Lime Down C to the south, from this viewpoint.	A
VP WC2	Bridleway HULL18	View from Bridleway to west of Hullavington. Potential for Lime Down C areas to be viewed in combination with Existing Solar PV development at Hill Hayes Lane, Hullavington (N/13/01495/FUL) which lies circa 0.6km to northeast of VPL.	C

Viewpoint Reference Number	Receptor Represented by the Viewpoint	Reason for inclusion	Nearest Site
VP WC3	Bridleway MALW54 and footpath MALW53	View from PRoW near Corston VPL circa 0.3km south & 2.5km east of CNL.	E

8.9 Embedded Mitigation Measures

8.9.1 Embedded Mitigation is taken into account during the construction, operation (Year 1 and Year 15) and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. Measures are embedded within the design of the Scheme at the outset and depend on the preliminary findings of the LVIA process. The measures are iterative and essentially look to modify the scale and layout of the Scheme to raise the bar of acceptability in terms of planning policy compliance. These measures aim to balance the need for the Scheme to be viable with measures such as landscaping that minimise adverse effects and further the wider landscape purposes.

8.9.2 The LVIA assessment process has identified the need for mitigation to avoid and reduce to a minimum any significant adverse landscape and visual impacts identified.

8.9.3 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where practicable offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects are described. The LVIA takes the following approach to mitigation and what is required in the process of assessment of both the landscape and visual effects. Mitigation measures are considered to fall into the categories of:

- Avoidance Measures;
- Embedded Mitigation Measures; and
- Enhancement Measures.

Avoidance Measures

8.9.4 Avoidance measures are incorporated into the design of the scheme in order to reduce development impacts and control any negative effects on the landscape, especially on sensitive receptors such as the Cotswolds National Landscape - refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-6: Assessment of the Special Qualities of Cotswold National Landscape [EN010168/APP/6.3**]. These measures include:

- Avoiding development adjacent to the National Landscape where it would affect its setting; and

- Avoiding development where it would be visually intrusive and affect the character and visual experience of the landscape.

8.9.5 Throughout the iterative design process appropriate multipurpose avoidance and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the development of the layout. These mitigation measures have been embedded into the Scheme design and have looked to modify the scale and layout of the Scheme or introduce appropriate interventions in order to reduce likely significant adverse effects to ensure compliance with planning policy and particularly with regarding the CNL.

8.9.6 These measures include the removal of panels within the setting of the CNL in Sites A, B and C where there is a strong visual relationship between the CNL and the Scheme. This includes:

- **Site A**: The northern part of A1, A11 and A12;
- **Site B**: B12; and
- **Site C**: C1, C6, C8, part of C9 and the majority of C10.

8.9.7 The removal of panels identified above which are on the edge of the CNL have provided opportunities for positive enhancement measures to further the purposes of CNL.

8.9.8 Panels in C2, C3 and C4 which are not on the boundary of the CNL, but where significant visual effects on receptors within the CNL were recorded at PEIR were subsequently removed from the Scheme following Statutory Consultation.

Embedded Mitigation - General Offsets / Buffers

8.9.9 The following buffers outlined in **Table 8-9** below, have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to protect the landscape fabric of the Sites. Infrastructure associated with the Scheme is located outside of the buffers listed below with the exception of internal access tracks where exclusion from the buffers is unavoidable.

8.9.10 Buffers listed below have been used to create a set of design parameters in which above-ground infrastructure has been located. The distance listed below are a minimum set distance which have been agreed across disciplines and have been tested throughout the design process.

8.9.11 There may be occasions where buffer distances are greater due to site specific requirements for example if a PRoW is located on elevated ground with a high level of visibility.

Table 8-11: Embedded Mitigation: General Offsets / Buffers

Criteria where Buffer Applied	Buffer Size
Ecological Buffers	
All hedgerows and woodland	15m
A ditch or watercourse of any kind	8m
At least one of: Signs of Otter or abundant evidence of Water Vole in the ditch or Watercourse Outlier badger setts	10m
Individual Trees and groups of trees	10m (unless Arboriculture surveys indicate greater Root Protection Area (RPA) is required)
Ancient Woodland	15m
Some minor watercourses (depending on Ecological Value)	15m
Ponds (with no Great Crested Newts)	10m
At least one of: Major watercourses Main badger setts	30m
Ponds containing Great Crested Newts	50m
Bat roosts	To be specified following survey information and detailed within the ES where required.
Schedule 1 bird nests (e.g. Barn Owl, hobby)	To be specified following survey information and detailed within the ES where required.
Other Buffers	
Curtilage of Residential Properties	50m
PRoW (Public Footpath, Bridleway)	15m
Services	6m minimum
Scheme Boundary	5m
Internal offset from fence to panel	4m minimum

Embedded Mitigation- Landscape Design Parameters

8.9.12 Embedded mitigation has been developed through the iterative design process and integrated or embedded into the project design, standard construction and operational management practices.

8.9.13 These ‘embedded mitigation’ measures are secured via the DCO (for example, by specifying that each Work number can only be located on the area shown on

the **Works Plans [EN010168/APP/2.3]**) or as part of the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.9.14 Details of the strategic approach that has been adopted for the design of the Scheme have been informed by the strategies and guidelines for the relevant Landscape Character Areas as described in Section 8.8 of this report, including:

- Statements of Environmental Opportunities for NCA Profile: 107- Cotswolds and NCA Profile: 117- Avon Vales as defined by Natural England;
- Broad Management Objectives for LCT 16: Limestone Lowland LCA (16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands) as defined by the Wilshire Landscape Character Assessment;
- Management guidelines and strategy actions for LCA 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland as defined in the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment; and
- Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for LCT 14 Cornbrash Lowlands (LCT 11 Dip Slope Lowland) and LCA 14B West Malmesbury Lowland Farmland (LCA 11A South and Mid Cotswolds Lowlands) as defined in the Cotswold Landscape Character Assessment.

8.9.15 The approach to mitigation has also been informed by Wiltshire's Nature Recovery Strategy (still in draft at time of submission) and the Cotswold Nature Recovery Plan in conjunction with liaison with the project Ecologist and consultation with officers at WC and the CNLB.

8.9.16 The embedded mitigation measures, which would be secured through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), are set out in **Table 8-12** below.

Table 8-12 Embedded Mitigation: Landscape Design Parameters

Consideration	Embedded Mitigation	Outcome
Planting Strategy	The approach to mitigation has been to reinforce the existing hedgerows to provide greater enclosure to the site and provide screening of the infrastructure. Embedded landscape mitigation provides reinforcement to host landscape fabric, strengthening and reinforcing existing landscape elements of the site in accordance with LCA aims and guidelines.	The new planting will provide a more varied landscape in terms of management and vegetation. Overall enhancement and strengthening of the Local Character Area with new planting and grassland reversion, where appropriate.
Existing Vegetation	Retention of existing woodland/scrub and hedgerow cover (other than where required for access). This vegetation	Reinforcement of existing woodland/scrub and hedgerow cover with new planting. The addition of new hedgerow trees or secondary

Consideration	Embedded Mitigation	Outcome
	provides a strong visual framework and potentially screens or substantially filters views at ground level towards the Scheme. Existing hedgerows are to be allowed to grow out and will be managed to a height of 4.5m. Hedgerow trees will be encouraged to grow out to add further thickening and growth to field boundaries. All hedgerows bordering the CNL within Site C (including hedgerow SH3) are to be maintained to a height of c1.5m (or as existing if greater) to maintain open views of the landscape within the setting of the CNL.	hedgerows as appropriate planted along the length of existing hedges. This new planting provides long term screening, structural benefits to the landscape and wider Green Infrastructure and habitat connectivity benefits.
Riparian Corridors	Existing water corridors have been identified, and new riparian planting has been proposed to enhance these features as they pass through the Sites.	The careful use of scattered tree and hedge planting adjacent to watercourses will reinforce the riparian character in these areas of the landscape.
Lighting	Lighting is not required within the Solar Arrays for the operational phase. Motion sensing security lighting will be provided within substations and within the BESS to be used only for maintenance and security purposes. Temporary site lighting during construction will be required to enable safe working during construction and decommissioning during hours of darkness and will be designed as far as reasonably practicable to minimise potential for light spillage outside the Sites and Cable Route Corridor, particularly towards houses, traffic and ecological habitats. Standard good practice measures would be employed to minimise light spill, including glare during construction, operation and decommissioning. There will be no lighting on PV perimeter fencing.	New planting along the boundary of substations and energy storage areas to filter their presence in the landscape and provide softening and screening to any potential light spill.

Consideration	Embedded Mitigation	Outcome
Location	The location of the solar panels set back from the site boundary.	The careful use of scattered tree and hedge planting to avoid undue impacts on the open character of the area.
New Planting and Green Infrastructure	Use of Green Infrastructure publications, policy and recognised guidance at the baseline stage to establish a full understanding of the vegetation characteristics of the receiving landscape This has included the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation Draft, March 2025 and Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan (October 2021. Proximity to local ecological designations and sensitive ecological receptors has been considered and appropriate buffers incorporated into the Scheme where required.	Measures to enhance the landscape framework in keeping with landscape character are explored to soften and to continue to provide the 'filtering' effect of vegetation that is characteristic of the local landscape.
New Planting and Inherent Visual Amenity	Scheme allows for 15m to fence line from existing hedgerows allowing space for new woodland, shelterbelts or grassland margins to be established and to allow for the thickening and growth of existing vegetation.	New planting within the Sites to provide screening and habitat connectivity, particularly where transport routes and footpaths and bridleways cross the site.
New Planting and Landscape Character	Use of landscape character publications, policy and recognised guidance at the baseline stage to establish a full understanding of the important landscape characteristics of the receiving landscape.	The approach to mitigation has been to reinforce the existing hedgerows to provide greater enclosure to the Site and provide screening of the infrastructure. Proposed woodland planting would not be effective in all locations, but some areas have been proposed to ensure the long-term presence of woodland where it is in accordance with landscape character.
New Planting and Recreational Users	Retention of existing woodland/scrub and hedgerow cover along recreational routes. Public Rights of Way (PRoW) would be buffered with 15m to proposed fence lines to allow for establishment of existing hedgerows or woodland cover to each side. Proximity to major watercourses would allow 30m set off distance to the outer edge of the solar panels.	New planting would screen certain views for users of the PRoWs, the bridleway network, and local roads. New native hedgerow planting to field boundaries with hedgerow trees added to further screen views. Where PRoW cross the Sites, space has been given (15m each side) to retain openness and allow for creation of landscaped corridors.

Consideration	Embedded Mitigation	Outcome
New Planting and Time Depth	The retention of existing woodland/scrub and hedgerow cover that helps provide local distinctiveness and cement the intrinsic landscape character. Panels would have a minimum off set of 15m from all existing hedgerows. Proximity to existing woodland has been considered with a 20m set off distance to the outer edge of infrastructure incorporated into the design of the Scheme.	New planting to reflect landscape character and policy expectations using a palette of native tree and shrub species that are appropriate to the location. Faster growing species would be used to provide quicker screening/filtering effects. Grassland reversion around settlements to respect historic integrity of former environs and introduce a less intensively managed context. Potential for grazing around settlement edges and across the Scheme.
New Planting and Wider Visual Amenity	Identification of key visual receptors and key views at the baseline stage. Proximity of residential properties with 50m (min) from boundary curtilage to outer edge of solar panels to allow marginal areas of vegetation to establish fully as screening.	The establishment of new planting along the margins of the Scheme to increase the robustness, elevation and efficacy of the planting as screening becomes more effective in the integration with the surrounding landscape.

Enhancement Measures

8.9.17 In order to 'further the purpose' of the Cotswolds National Landscape to conserve and enhance its natural beauty, as required by LURA 2023 and detailed in Section 8.3, the Scheme also includes positive enhancement measures which have been informed by the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan, the Cotswolds Nature Recovery Plan and the 'special qualities' of the National Landscape - those aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. These measures are incorporated into the Indicative Masterplans: **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4: Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.9.18 Consultation with the Cotswold National Landscape Board to further the purpose of the national landscape was undertaken. The detailed proposals have been considered further as the design evolved, and enhancement measures have been incorporated into the Landscape and Ecological Masterplan (LEMP) for the DCO Application. (ref to **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4: Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2]**).

Specific Management Objectives

8.9.19 In response to further consultation with the Cotswolds National Landscape Board, specific management objectives have been included within the LEMP to both maintain and enhance landscape character on the edge of the CNL. This includes:

- The inclusion of wildflower meadow verges on the edge of set aside land in A11, A12 and C10 to provide attractive buffers in views from public roads; and
- Maintaining all hedgerows at their current height of c1.5m (or as existing if greater) bordering the CNL within Site C (including the northern boundary of C1(hedgerow SH3) to maintain open views of the landscape within the setting of the CNL.

8.9.20 A height of c1.5m (or as existing if greater) has been utilised within the visualisations for hedgerows bordering the CNL within Site C (including hedgerow number SH3), to conform with the management requirements as set out within the OLEMP.

Embedded Mitigation within the CRC

8.9.21 The CRC has been refined in response to environment constraints throughout the landscape-led design process to avoid impacts on sensitive receptors.

8.9.22 The landscape effects of the CRC primarily relate to the features of the landscape which contribute to its character such as built form, trees and woodlands and linear features which cross the landscape such as watercourses hedgerows and stone walls.

8.9.23 It is inevitable that the CRC would cross some of these linear landscape features which would result in changes to these features. The works would require removal of short sections of hedgerows. However, any necessary hedgerow removal would be replaced and include gapping up of adjacent hedgerows as defined in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.21]**.

Arboricultural Protection

8.9.24 With reference to the Arboricultural Assessment in **ES Volume 1 Chapter 10: Arboriculture [EN010168/APP/6.1]**, the Scheme has been designed, as far as practicable, to avoid and reduce impacts and effects on Arboriculture by embedding mitigation measures into the design process. In addition, how the Scheme is constructed, operated and maintained and decommissioned would be controlled in order to manage and minimise potential environmental effects (required as a result of legislative requirements and/or standard sectoral practices).

8.9.25 Particular protection measures include:

- If required, tree removal along the CRC would preferentially target trees of lower quality over those of higher quality. Veteran trees would not be removed in the CRC. The order of priority for tree removal would be as follows: Category U, C, B and lastly Category A trees – secured in the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) [EN010168/APP/7.12];**
- CRC design work has been undertaken in order to retain, avoid and fully protect identified veteran trees to provide sufficient space to allow for open cut trenching around veteran tree buffer zones ensuring impacts to veteran trees are avoided – secured in the **Works Plan [EN010168/APP/2.3]**;
- Retained trees along the CRC will also be protected with tree protection fencing for the duration of works as appropriate in sections of the CRC – secured in the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12].**

Phase Specific Embedded Mitigation Measures

8.9.26 Assessment is based on the construction of the array and associated infrastructure including the proposed Substations and BESS Area. There are also works in connection with the onsite substations, Cable Route Corridor and in connection with electrical cabling and works to the existing National Grid substation site to facilitate connection of the Scheme to the National Grid. Other works would be undertaken in connection with fencing, gates, boundary treatment and other means of enclosure; works for the provision of security and monitoring measures such as CCTV. There would also be landscape and biodiversity mitigation works, including planting. There would also be the laying down of internal tracks and earthworks, SuDs Ponds and general drainage and irrigation infrastructure. The assessment has been undertaken in winter to assess a worst-case scenario at this construction phase.

8.9.27 Embedded Mitigation measures are aimed at reducing the construction effects, in particular the siting, design, and layout of the construction activities.

Embedded Construction Mitigation Measures

8.9.28 The following construction phase control documents are included as embedded mitigation measures:

- **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12];**
- **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18];**
- **Outline Ecological Protection and Mitigation Strategy, [EN010168/APP/7.19];**
- **Outline Soil Resources Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.15];**

- **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), [EN010168/APP/7.22]; and**
- **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Access Routes Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.17].**

Embedded Operation Mitigation Measures

8.9.29 **Operation Year 1**: Assessment is based on the presence of the solar panel areas and associated infrastructure including the energy storage, substations and Cable Route Corridor being operational and has been undertaken in winter to assess a worst-case scenario. Embedded Mitigation addresses measures to reduce the operational effects, in particular the siting, design and layout of the solar panel areas and associated infrastructure including energy storage, substation, and Cable Route Corridor. Embedded Mitigation measures such as planting have also been taken into account at this stage, although the fact that any planting would be immature at Year 1 has also been factored into the assessment. Temporary changes to hedgerow management (secured through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**) within the site to reduce views of the Scheme has also been considered at this stage.

8.9.30 **Operation Year 15**: Assessment is based on the solar panel areas and associated infrastructure including the energy storage and substations being operational at the time and assessed in summer with vegetation in leaf, offering maximum screening potential.

8.9.31 The assessment of the effects of the Embedded Mitigation (proposed planting) has assumed a uniform rate of growth is allowed for trees, shelterbelts, and woodland mitigation planting of 0.4m every 1 year. At Year 15 this will result in new trees, shelterbelts, and woodland plantings having reached a minimum height of 7.5m. A uniform growth rate is allowed for new hedgerows of 0.4m every 1 year. This would result in hedgerows being able to be maintained at a height of 4.5m by Year 15. It is expected that alongside the regular maintenance of equipment, infrastructure such as panels and batteries will require replacement. It is not expected that an extensive replacement of all components will be required across the entirety of the Scheme during one period; instead, the programme for replacement of equipment across the Scheme should is anticipated to be staged to maintain the electrical export to the National Grid. The replacement activity would be considerably less intensive than during construction, with any environmental effects identified being appropriately mitigated with similar measures to those identified for the construction of the Scheme. Whilst Solar PV Panels typically have a lifespan of up to 40 years or more, and it has been assumed that Solar PV Panels will be replaced once during the lifetime of the Scheme. The Solar PV Panels are anticipated to be replaced over a 24 month period. The BESS could be replaced up to five times

during the operational phase. Details of replacement are set out in more detail within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3. The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.9.32 Embedded Mitigation would also include management and maintenance of the planting (secured through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**). The Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan [EN010168/APP/7.22] would control the management of traffic associated with the Scheme during operation.

Landscape and Visual Avoidance Areas

8.9.33 As well as standard offsets / buffers identified within **Table 8-12** above that have been applied across the Scheme, the following **Table 8-13** identifies those areas which were avoided to reduce Landscape and Visual Impacts.

Table 8-13 Embedded Landscape and Visual Avoidance Areas

Field / Location of avoidance area	LVIA Description / reasoning for avoidance
A1 (northern part) A11 A12	To protect the setting of the Cotswold National Landscape.
B2 B3 B4 B5	To protect Fosse Way by avoiding infrastructure on both sides and views from the White Walls Way -Footpath WT|NORT|5
B12	To protect below ground archaeology and to protect the setting of the Cotswold National Landscape.
C1 C6 C8 C9 (part of)	To protect the setting of the Cotswold National Landscape.
C2 C3 C4	Removed from Scheme due to the identification of significant visual effects on receptors within the CNL.
C20	To reduce identified effects on TP089 BOAT WT|SHER|35
C24 C25 C27 C28	To protect Fosse Way by avoiding infrastructure on both sides.
D9 D10	To protect Bradfield Wood and to provide ecological enhancements along the watercourse
E8	To protect Rodbourne Conservation Area, heritage assets and cross valley views from the south

Field / Location of avoidance area	LVIA Description / reasoning for avoidance
E9	To protect cross valley views from the south
E10	To protect existing young woodland

Proposed Planting

8.9.34 The following planting typologies have been proposed across the scheme to provide visual mitigation and introduce landscape features which are characteristic of the landscape setting that links existing habitat. Proposed planting typologies are illustrated within **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4 Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and within the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]** and include:

- Green corridor & Woodland Planting;
- Enhanced Riparian Native planting;
- Hedgerow Reinforcement & Reinforced roadside planting;
- Proposed Hedgerows; and
- Proposed Ponds and Wader Scrapes.

8.9.35 Each of the above Planting Typologies has been sub divided to provide specific Planting Reference Types as set out within the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]** and below within **Table 8-14.**

Table 8-14 Planting Typologies

Planting Typology	Type
Green Corridor & Woodland Planting	Proposed Native Woodland Belt Proposed Native Woodland Block Proposed Scrub and Tree Planting (On Bund)
Enhanced Riparian Native Planting	Proposed Riparian Corridor
Hedgerow Reinforcement & Reinforced Road side Vegetation	Hedgerow Reinforcement Proposed Linear Tree Planting
Proposed Hedgerows	Proposed Native Hedgerow with Trees
Proposed Ponds and Wader Scrapes	Indicative Pond Locations Ghost Pond Locations
Groundcover	Existing Vegetation to be Retained and Enhanced Proposed Grassland Creation (Beneath Panels)

Planting Typology	Type
	Proposed Tussock Grassland Margins
	Proposed Damp Grassland
	Proposed Ground Nesting Bird Mitigation – Set Aside
	Proposed Diverse Wildflower Meadow
	Proposed Low Density Scrub

8.9.36 A uniform rate of growth is allowed for trees, shelterbelts, and woodland mitigation planting of 0.4m every 1 year. At Year 15 this will result in new trees, shelterbelts, and woodland plantings having reached a minimum height of 7.5m. A uniform growth rate is allowed for new hedgerows of 0.4m every 1 year. This would result in hedgerows being able to be maintained at a height of 4.5m by Year 15. It is expected that alongside the regular maintenance of equipment, infrastructure such as panels and batteries will require replacement. It is not expected that an extensive replacement of all components will be required across the entirety of the Scheme during one period; instead, the programme for replacement of equipment across the Scheme should is anticipated to be staged to maintain the electrical export to the National Grid. The replacement activity would be considerably less intensive than during construction, with any environmental effects identified being appropriately mitigated with similar measures to those identified for the construction of the Scheme. Whilst Solar PV Panels typically have a lifespan of up to 40 years or more, and it has been assumed that Solar PV Panels will be replaced once during the lifetime of the Scheme. The Solar PV Panels are anticipated to be replaced over a 24 month period. The BESS could be replaced up to five times during the operational phase. Details of replacement are set out in more detail within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.9.37 The Scheme would deliver the following landscape enhancements set out in **Table 8-15** below:

Table 8-15 Landscape Enhancements

Planting Typology	Area/Length/Number
Green Corridor & Woodland Planting	Area
Lime Down A	0.82 ha
Lime Down B	0.32 ha
Lime Down C	2.34 ha
Lime Down D	3.51 ha
Lime Down E	4.46 ha
Enhanced Riparian Native Planting	Area
Lime Down A	0

Planting Typology	Area/Length/Number
Lime Down B	0
Lime Down C	2.33 ha
Lime Down D	3.56 ha
Lime Down E	1.89 ha
Hedgerow Reinforcement & Reinforced Roadside Vegetation	Length
Lime Down A	10.18 km
Lime Down B	3.94 km
Lime Down C	15.47 km
Lime Down D	15.75 km
Lime Down E	9.58 km
Proposed Hedgerows	Length
Lime Down A	1.79 km
Lime Down B	1.7 km
Lime Down C	3.79 km
Lime Down D	4.82km
Lime Down E	4.13km
Proposed Ponds and Wader Scrapes	Number
Lime Down A	0
Lime Down B	1
Lime Down C	11
Lime Down D	2
Lime Down E	0
Groundcover	Area
Lime Down A	89.09 ha
Lime Down B	78.03 ha
Lime Down C	232.92 ha
Lime Down D	186.64 ha
Lime Down E	116.12 ha

Table 8-16 Total Landscape Enhancements

Planting Typology	Area/Length/Number
Green Corridor & Woodland Planting	11.45ha
Enhanced Riparian Native Planting	7.78 ha

Planting Typology	Area/Length/Number
Hedgerow Reinforcement & Reinforced Roadside Vegetation	54.92km
Proposed Hedgerows	16.23km
Proposed Ponds and Wader Scrapes	14
Groundcover	702.8 ha

Embedded Decommissioning Mitigation Measures

8.9.38 Assessment is based on similar principles to the assessment for the construction phase, but with the Scheme being no longer operational. The Scheme is assessed in winter and assumes retention of existing vegetation and builds upon the embedded mitigation that has established as the future baseline. The **Outline Decommissioning Statement [EN010168/APP/7.14]** sets out the requirements for the Decommissioning.

8.9.39 At decommissioning other than the buried cabling, all infrastructure would be removed with agricultural fields returned back to agriculture. Alternatively, the cables can be removed by opening up the ground at regular intervals and pulling the cable through to the extraction point, leaving the ducting and jointing bays in place, avoiding the need to open up the entire length of the cable route. The reinforced landscape however would be retained. As infrastructure is removed, there would be an overall benefit to the character of the area with landscape mitigation retained providing long term benefit towards legacy landscape.

Functionality

8.9.40 The design parameters of the Scheme have maintained some degree of design flexibility using Rochdale Envelope principles to allow the latest technology to be utilised when the Scheme is constructed. The parameters assessed in the EIA are set out **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. The key design elements and the flexibility required for the Scheme that are relevant to the LVIA process within this environmental balance have included the following considerations:

PV Panels (fixed and tracker)

8.9.41 Flexibility for either tracker or fixed panels has been built into the EIA. The tracking solar PV modules would be aligned in north-south rows, and the fixed solar panels would be aligned in east-west rows. The maximum height of the highest part of the tracking solar PV modules and its greatest inclination would be 4.5m. The maximum height of the highest part of the solar PV modules when horizontal will be 2.5m. The maximum height of the highest part of the fixed solar PV modules will be 4.5m. Foundations are most likely to be galvanised

steel poles driven into the ground. These will either be piles rammed into a pre-drilled hole, or a pillar attaching to a steel ground screw.

Conversion Units

8.9.42 Conversion Units consisting of standalone transformers, inverters, and switchgear, or integrated containerised conversion units have been considered. The DCO is retaining the flexibility to consider both options prior to construction of the Scheme due to anticipated technical advances. It is assumed that these different options would take up broadly the same footprint so have been assessed as boxes that could contain either option.

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

8.9.43 The installation of the energy storage has been selected based on locations where a combination of existing screening and capacity for planting mitigation can reduce visual impacts. The BESS is shown on the **Works Plans [EN010168/APP/2.3]** and are set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3. The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

Topic Overlaps

8.9.44 The layout of the solar panel areas within the Sites has been informed by a series of design parameters that have been discussed and agreed within the Technical Consultant Team and through stakeholder consultation and engagement to ensure consistency of approach is implemented across the Scheme and in this ES, in particular **ES Volume 1, Chapter 09. Ecology and Biodiversity** and **Chapter 12: Cultural Heritage [EN010168/APP/6.1].** Parameters such as offset distances were informed by discussions over functionality and need and the balance with the key environmental constraints.

8.9.45 The design parameters that are relevant to the landscape and visual mitigation matters are set out in **Table 8-12** and **Table 8-13.** Once applied, the remaining site area was designated the “developable area” for the solar array, inverters, substation, and access roads. The design includes security fencing placed along the perimeter boundary of the Sites. Areas between the fencing and the developable area were then made available for ecology and landscape mitigation or enhancement.

8.9.46 The Embedded Mitigation (landscape) has been co-ordinated with other relevant disciplines, such as Cultural Heritage and Ecology. With Ecology, the aim was to determine the key embedded and parameters and agree offsets to improve the value of the landscape and reflect appropriate local and regional aims and objectives for ecology and biodiversity. The **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]** sets out a framework for the establishment of the planting on site for the duration of the Scheme; together with the management and monitoring of the landscape and ecological mitigation and enhancement of

habitats on which this framework is based. The **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]** is secured by a requirement in the **draft DCO [EN010168/APP/3.1]**.

8.9.47 The Embedded Mitigation also took into account the responses to Statutory Consultation with Local Authorities, and this feedback is set out within the **Consultation Report [EN010168/APP/5.1]**. This approach ensured that the feedback was considered in the visual assessment and incorporated into the evolving proposals so that any relevant and appropriate mitigation would be designed into the Scheme.

8.10 Assessment of Impacts and Effects

8.10.1 This section describes the landscape effects at the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme. The construction, operational, and decommissioning effects, are considered separately and the likely significant effects set out where positive (beneficial), neutral or negative (adverse) effects are likely to arise from the Scheme. Effects deemed as moderate or greater are considered to be “significant effects”, and can be either beneficial, neutral or adverse in nature.

8.10.2 A step-by-step approach has been undertaken to make judgements of significance, combining judgements about the nature of the receptor, summarised as its sensitivity, and the nature of the effect, summarised as its magnitude. The approach then clearly distinguishes between what are considered to be the significant and non-significant effects. This approach also distinguishes between the assessment of landscape effects and the assessment of visual effects by taking each receptor in turn. A full detailed LVIA methodology is set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.10.3 Due to the disassociated nature of the Scheme, the overall assessment of the Scheme is based upon the findings associated with each of the individual Sites. In assessing the Scheme, professional judgment is applied alongside reference to the suite of landscape and visual figures and desktop and site-based assessment. In reaching the overall assessment of effects associated with the Scheme the cumulative effects of each of the Sites and Cable Route Corridor are assessed and combined to reach an overall conclusion on where likely significant effects might occur as a result of the Scheme.

8.10.4 Taking into account the embedded mitigation measures the potential for the Scheme to generate effects was assessed using the methodology set out in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3]**. In the sections below, associated impacts and effects during the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases of the scheme are discussed. These assessments are based on the Illustrative Layout Plans **ES**

Volume 2, Figure 3-1 Indicative Site Layout Plan and **Figure 3-4 Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2]**.

Identification of Landscape Receptors

8.10.5 All Landscape Receptors within the 5Km Outer Study Area are scoped into the Assessment. All Landscape Receptors within the 5km Study Area are illustrated on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-6 Landscape Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.10.6 All landscape receptors have been considered collectively for the Sites and Study Areas, due to the interconnected relationship of landscape. It is recognised that Landscape effects upon LCT's and LCA's located on the peripheries of the Outer 5km Study Area are limited due to distance and lack of interaction with landform associated with the Scheme.

8.10.7 Landscape receptors include:

- The Landscape Fabric of the Lime Down Dolar Sites A-E (landscape fabric being the individual tangible elements or features of the landscape, such as landform, woodland, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, for example which can usually be described and quantified); and
- The landscape character of the area (informed by all relevant landscape character assessments). This includes:

National Character Areas as defined by Natural England and shown on Volume 2: Figure 8-5-1: National and regional Landscape Character Areas:

- NCA Profile: 107 - Cotswolds (NE 420); and
- NCA Profile: 117- Avon Vales (NE 522).

Regional Character Areas as defined in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment and shown on Volume 2: Figure 8-5-1: National and regional Landscape Character Areas:

- LCA 16A - Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands.

Local Landscape Character Areas as defined in the North and West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment and shown on **ES Volume 2: Figure 8-5-3**: **Landscape Character Areas (Local) [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

- North Wiltshire LCA 8: Hullavington Rolling Lowland;
- North Wiltshire LCA 7: Sherston Dipslope Lowland (to the north and west); and
- North Wiltshire LCA 6: Upper Avon Valley (to the north).

Identification of Visual Receptors

8.10.8 A combination of desktop and field study was used to identify Visual Receptors within the Study Areas. This identified all visual receptors within the Wider 2km Study Area, **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-2 Scoping LVIA Receptor Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** sets out all of the Visual Receptors on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].** Each receptor is given its own individual project specific code so as to differentiate it from other receptors of the same name, for example, there may be more than one Mill Farm or Station Road.

8.10.9 Once these Visual Receptors had been identified, a Scoping Exercise was undertaken to identify those receptors where effects, either adverse, neutral or beneficial were considered likely to occur. This process was undertaken through a combination of desktop study using digital constraints mapping (including review of **ES Volume 2 Figure 8-2 Aerial Photography, Figure 8-3 Scheme Landform, Figure 8-8 Bare Earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), Figure 8-9 Augmented ZTV, Figure 8-5 Landscape Character Areas [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and on-site field assessment.

8.10.10 Following this Scoping Exercise, a number of receptors were Scoped Out of the LVIA on the base that the Scheme would not be visible.

8.10.11 All of the remaining receptors were then Scoped into the LVIA. Appendix 8-2 Scoping LVIA Receptor Sheets sets out all of the receptors that were Scoped into the LVIA.

8.10.12 All receptors Scoped into the LVIA then underwent an initial assessment to identify if any potential effects were likely. If through this initial assessment effects of any magnitude were deemed not likely, then the receptor was not carried forward into further assessment within the LVIA. **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** contains the initial assessment sheets and rationale for those receptors not carried forward.

8.10.13 Where effects (of any magnitude) were considered likely then receptors were carried forward to further assessment within the LVIA where an identification and evaluation of likely significant effects has been made. Those receptors carried forward for further assessment within the LVIA are set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

8.10.14 Summary Tables are contained within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3-3 LVIA Visual Assessment Summary Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** that sets out the findings of the LVIA, including identifying Significant Effects.

8.10.15 The following section sets out the conclusions of this assessment.

Significant Landscape Effects

8.10.16 Significant effects have been identified to receptors set out with **Table 8-17** below as shown in bold. Please refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for details on the Landscape Assessment including identification of non-significant effects.

Table 8-17 Significant Landscape Effects

Landscape Receptor	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	Decommissioning
Landscape Fabric	Moderate / Minor Neutral	Moderate / Minor Neutral	**Moderate Beneficial (Significant)**	**Moderate Beneficial (Significant)**
Local Study Area (1km)	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse

8.10.17 These Significant Effects on Landscape Fabric and the Local Study Area are described below.

Landscape Fabric

8.10.18 As noted above, the Landscape Fabric is the individual tangible elements or features of the landscape, such as landform, woodland, hedges, tree cover, vegetation for example, which can be described and quantified. Locally prior to the establishment of the Embedded Mitigation planting, there would be an immediate change to the character of the area as it changes from an area of arable farmland to solar infrastructure. No Significant effects have been recorded during construction and Year 1 as Embedded Mitigation measures have been included within the design of the Scheme to protect the landscape fabric of the existing landscape features within the Scheme. Although the effect of mitigation planting would be limited initially, taking time to become fully established.

Operation Year 15

8.10.19 Moderate Beneficial effects have been identified for the Scheme at Operation Year 15 and decommissioning phases on Landscape Fabric, reflecting that planting will have become established in this timescale.

8.10.20 The Scheme would result in the following benefits to Landscape Fabric as shown in **Table 8-18.**

Table 8-18 Measurements of Mitigation Measures across the Scheme

Broad Category Type	Subcategory Type	Area / Length / Number
Proposed Ground Cover	Existing Vegetation to be Retained and Enhanced	24.04
	Proposed Grassland Creation (Beneath Panels)	452.44
	Proposed Tussock Grassland Margins	64.48
	Proposed Damp Grassland	18.53
	Proposed Ground Nesting Bird Mitigation - Set Aside	63.29
	Proposed Diverse Wildflower Meadow	66.08
	Proposed Low Density Scrub	13.95
Total:		702.80 ha
Green Corridor and Woodland Planting	Proposed Native Woodland Belt	7.07
	Proposed Native Woodland Block	3.76
	Proposed Scrub and Tree Planting (On Bund)	0.62
Total:		11.45 ha
Enhanced Native Riparian Planting	Proposed Riparian Corridor	7.78
Total:		7.78 ha
Hedgerow Reinforcement and Roadside Reinforcement	Hedgerow Reinforcement	45.63
	Proposed Linear Tree Planting	9.31
Total:		54.94 km
Proposed Hedgerows	Proposed Native Hedgerow with Trees	15.49
Total:		15.49 km
Reintroduction of Historic Ponds and New Ponds	Indicative New Pond Locations	1
	Ghost Pond Locations	13
Total:		14

8.10.21 Embedded Mitigation measures have been included within the design of the Scheme to protect and enhance the landscape fabric of the site. This includes

various buffers to offset the development from existing landscape features on site to ensure their protection and permanence.

8.10.22 The **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** sets out how these Embedded Mitigation measures are to be secured. Details of species and density for each typology is described within the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]**. The Outline LEMP prescribes how the mitigation measures are to be implemented and managed during the operation stage of the Scheme to ensure the effectiveness and certainty in achieving the objectives of the mitigation strategy.

8.10.23 The proposed planting as set out in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]** would lead to various Biodiversity Net Gains (BNG) as outlined in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [EN010168/APP/7.8].**

8.10.24 The substantial provision of new planting combined with the minimal losses of existing planting to accommodate the Scheme are the driver behind the beneficial effects associated with the Landscape Fabric of the Scheme.

8.10.25 By Year 15 Embedded Mitigation planting would be established and adding to the Green Infrastructure across all of the Lime Down Sites. As outlined above, the new planting would be providing extensive habitat and biodiversity benefits and making positive contribution to BNG. The embedded landscape mitigation provides reinforcement to the host landscape fabric of each site, strengthening and reinforcing existing landscape elements in accordance with the aims and guidelines of the Landscape Character Assessments, as well as Wiltshire's Nature Recovery Strategy and the Cotswold Nature Recovery Plan.

Decommissioning

8.10.26 At decommissioning other than the buried cabling, all infrastructure would be removed with agricultural fields returned to agriculture. The reinforced landscape however would be retained as there is an expectation that at Year 60 that there would be an equivalent of current countryside policies in place to ensure the protection of hedgerows, woodland, trees etc. Therefore, as infrastructure is removed, there would be an overall benefit to the character of the area with landscape mitigation retained providing long term benefit towards Legacy Landscape.

8.10.27 Legacy Landscape is where, because of the development, the landscape would be left in a better condition than current day. This improvement is established as a consequence of the landscape proposals resulting in greater species variety, greater age depth, enhanced structure, resilience to pest and disease and reinforcement of local landscape character across the Sites.

1km Local Study Area

8.10.28 Although the Scheme comprises a series of independent areas of land or Sites, they are set within an extensive agricultural landscape. With large areas of land

between each of the Sites, each is set apart by their associated features such as robust hedgerows, woodland and tree cover, intervening settlements and road infrastructure. These independent areas of land provide more scope for the Scheme to be offset from all key receptors such as settlement edges, individual residential properties, PRoW and transport routes which further assist with its integration and dispersion across the landscape than if the site were one composite whole.

8.10.29 The discrete areas of land in the Scheme are placed so far apart that the Scheme would not be perceived in its entirety, and the solar panels are distributed 'in and amongst' the landscape features to assimilate them into the landscape. The provision of a solar scheme with discrete areas of land can therefore offer a more favourable approach compared to having a single large site, as it allows for a distributed and less obtrusive deployment of the solar panels. The presence of the intervening landscape also provides scope for areas of mitigation and the ability to build upon the connectivity of green infrastructure and ecology and nature conservation and retain the existing landscape pattern.

8.10.30 The Scheme has been subject to a detailed and sensitive iterative design process. This has taken account of the context and features of the land within the Order limits, nearby sensitive receptors and assets, information emerging from environmental surveys, feedback from stakeholders, and opportunities and constraints in order to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise the energy generation capacity of the Scheme, with the avoidance and mitigation of impacts, and provision of environmental and other enhancements, where practicable.

8.10.31 In relation to the Cotswold National Landscape, where Sites A, B and C are within its setting, infrastructure has been set back from its boundary to avoid impacts and provide opportunities for positive enhancement which have been informed by the Cotswold Nature recovery strategy and align with the objectives of the Management Plan.

Construction

8.10.32 Whilst under construction, the proposals would provide new landscape features that fit the key characteristics of the host character areas, whilst ensuring the array is well integrated into its context. However, locally prior to the establishment of the Embedded Mitigation, there would be an immediate change to the character of the Sites themselves and their immediate surroundings as they change from an area of arable farmland to solar infrastructure. As the upper sections of the array are constructed including the Substations, infrastructure associated with the Scheme would become more apparent within the local landscape. The infrastructure would become visible above the boundary hedgerows and local vegetation but limited to locations within the Sites themselves and the immediate context, predominantly from the

local road and PRoW network as those adjacent sections of array are constructed within the surrounding fields.

8.10.33 However, given separation and screening provided by the structure of the existing local landscape combined with the low-level nature of the proposals, this would not affect the integrity of the landscape character of the wider area. The field boundaries and the associated tree cover including adjacent woodlands would remain intact and help with visual layering of vegetation across the landscape and the integration of the Scheme within the landscape as it is constructed. Within the 1km Local Study Area, there would be an appreciation of the ongoing construction activities associated with the Scheme and locally prior to the establishment of the Embedded Mitigation, there would be an immediate change to the character of the site and its immediate setting as it changes from an area of arable farmland to solar infrastructure. However, these effects would be limited to the site itself and its immediate setting.

Year 1

8.10.34 The proposals would provide new landscape features that fit the key characteristics of the character area, whilst ensuring the array is well integrated into its context. Overall, the landscape proposals would help to link habitats and strengthen the overall character locally and maintain a sense of place. Important opportunities to bolster the local vegetation cover, buffering and connecting existing fragmented vegetation, would create a more resilient and biodiverse landscape.

8.10.35 At Year 1, the impacts of the proposed mitigation planting (including hedgerow reinforcement, new hedgerows and reinforced roadside planting) would be limited. The character of the Sites themselves and their immediate surroundings would be adversely affected, with the land now presenting as a large-scale solar scheme. Although new vegetation would be immature, existing hedgerows would have begun to grow out at Year 1 and the varied grassland areas will have become established, starting to create valuable habitats across all the Sites. Overall, this will help to link habitats and strengthen the overall character locally and maintain a sense of place. The landscape scheme provides opportunities to bolster the local vegetation cover, buffering and connecting existing fragmented vegetation, helping to create a more resilient and biodiverse landscape.

Year 15

8.10.36 By Year 15, the embedded landscape mitigation would strengthen and reinforce the landscape character of the Local Study Area, allowing the scheme to become absorbed into the receiving countryside. The Scheme provides reinforcement to the host landscape fabric of the site, strengthening and reinforcing existing landscape elements in accordance with LCA aims and guidelines. As new vegetation matures it would begin to provide enclosure to

the individual Sites, screening and providing containment to the Scheme allowing it to become more absorbed into the receiving landscape. However, given the scale of the proposals, there would be an appreciation of the Scheme within its immediate surroundings which would be notably different from the character of the surrounding arable countryside.

8.10.37 The scale of the planting across the site would lead to considerable beneficial effects in the increased level of vegetation cover locally, the linking and enhancement of existing natural features and the biodiversity benefits that this will bring, creating a stronger, more resilient framework within the receiving landscape. The Scheme provides reinforcement to the host landscape fabric of the site, strengthening and reinforcing of existing landscape elements in accordance with the site specific LCA aims and guidelines. Embedded landscape mitigation would strengthen and reinforce the landscape character of the Local Study Area, allowing the scheme to become absorbed into the receiving countryside.

8.10.38 As new vegetation matures it would begin to provide screening and containment to the Scheme allowing it to become absorbed into the receiving landscape. Where visible from within the wider landscape, the new planting would reinforce the well layered landscape with a backdrop of wooded vegetation in places on the horizon. Both new and existing vegetation would have established and begun to mature, creating a much stronger structure to the landscape locally, retaining and enhancing the overall character of the area.

Decommissioning

8.10.39 At decommissioning, other than the buried cabling, all infrastructure would be removed. Although an adverse effect will be experienced during the process of decommissioning, once decommissioning is completed, the adverse effect would be ceased. The reinforced landscape would have ability to absorb short term decommissioning activities. At decommissioning, agricultural fields would be returned back to agriculture. As infrastructure is removed, there would be an overall benefit to the character of the area with landscape mitigation retained providing long term benefit towards the legacy landscape.

Post Decommissioning (Legacy Landscape)

8.10.40 Following decommissioning, the site would benefit from the significantly enhanced tree and hedgerow planting that has been carried out and has matured to create a much stronger and robust landscape, retaining, and enhancing the overall character and providing considerable biodiversity benefits over the years. Due to the development, the landscape would be left in a better condition than current day. This improvement is established as a consequence of the landscape proposals resulting in greater species variety, greater age depth, enhanced structure, resilience to pest and disease and reinforcement of

local landscape character across the Sites, as well positive enhancements within the setting of the CNL.

Significant Visual Effects

8.10.41 Significant visual effects have been identified to receptors set out within **Tables Table 8-19** and **Table 8-20** below as shown in bold. Please refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 LVIA Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for details on Visual Assessment including identification of non-significant effects. Visual Receptors are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 8-7 Visual Receptors [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

Table 8-19 Significant Visual Effects: Private Receptors

Visual Receptor - Private	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
Grain Store Barn, Farleaze RG020	C	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse
Widley's Farm, Sherston RI014	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
The Stables & Caravan Stables, Commonwood Lane, Sherston R1015 & 16	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate/ Minor Neutral	No Effect
Commonwood Farm, Sherston RI017	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Fosse Lodge, Grittleton RI024	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate/ Minor Neutral	No Effect
Lord's Wood Farm, Lordswood RI037	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
North Lodge, Norton RI061	B	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	No Effect
Honey Lane, Cottage, Norton RI063	B	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect

Visual Receptor - Private	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
Bradfield Manor, Hullavington RI068	D	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate/ Minor Neutral	No Effect

Table 8-20 Significant Visual Effects: Public Receptors

Visual Receptor - Public	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
WT|NORT|1 TP037	B	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|SHER|35 TP089	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate/ Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|SHER|18 TP091	C	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|LUCK|57 TP092	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate / Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|GRIT|32 WT|HULL|20 TP093 TP100	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse
WT|SHER|17 TP095	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|SHER|16 TP097	A	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|25 TP099	C	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|HULL|26#1 TP101	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate/ Minor Neutral	No Effect

Visual Receptor - Public	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
WT|HULL|23 TP108	C	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|NORT|10 TP116	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|1 TP121	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|2 TP128	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|6 TP155	D	**Major / Moderate Significant**	**Major / Moderate Significant**	Moderate / Minor Neutral	No effect
WT|HULL|4 TP130	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|5 TP131	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|8 TP158	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|7 TP159	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse
WT|MALW|52 TP165	D	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
WT|MALW|60 TP167	E	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**

Visual Receptor - Public	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
WT|MALW|59 TP168	E	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	No Effect
WT|MALW|54 TP169	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate/ Minor Adverse	Moderate/ Minor Adverse
WT|SSTQ|5 TP170	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|MALW|62 TP172	E	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate / Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|MALW|55 TP174	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
WT|MALW|64 TP178	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	Minor Neutral
WT|MALW|63 TP181	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect

8.10.42 Where significant long-term effects on public receptors remain at Year 15, this is primarily because mitigation is not proposed as it would not be appropriate to long-term landscape character and the legacy landscape. E.g.: where footpaths diagonally cross fields, new hedgerows to screen views of infrastructure would not be consistent with the regular pattern of fields which is characteristic of the existing landscape. Other instances of significant long-term visual effects on Public Receptors relate to the local topography where there are views from higher ground to infrastructure which cannot be fully alleviated by mitigation. In effect the temporary harm is accepted in favour of the benefits of the long-term legacy landscape.

Table 8-21 Significant Visual Effects: Transport Receptors

Visual Receptor - Transport	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
A429 Kingway Bridge North to Chippenhan Road, Corston A429 Kingway Bridge TR007	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Alderton Road, Luckington TR038	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Ford Road and Widleys Road Junction East C93 to Bottom of Bustlers Hill, Sherston TR043	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Honey Lane Northwest Towards Easton Grey Plain, Norton TR060	B	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Norton Road North West to Honey Lane, Norton TR061	D	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Norton Road, Hullavington TR062	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Commonwood Lane TR143	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Fosse Way TR145	C	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	No Effect

Visual Receptor - Transport	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De-commissioning
Road Junction at Southfields South East to Y Junction, Sherston TR154	A	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Neutral	No Effect
Down Road, Hullavington TR198	D	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	No Effect
Honey Lane TR202	B	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Rodbourne Track North Crossing Over Railway towards Village from Lower Stanton S, Rodbourne TR245	E	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	Minor Adverse	No Effect

Cumulative Site Visual Effects

8.10.43 Refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.3 LVIA Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for details on Visual Assessment.

8.10.44 GLVIA3 defines types of cumulative visual effect as either: Combined (in the same view) or Sequential, (different developments revealed in succession as a series of sequential views.) GLVIA 3 Table 7.1 regarding Cumulative visual effects states:

"*Sequential: Occurs when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see the same or different developments. Sequential effects may be assessed for travel along regularly used routes such as major roads or popular paths*"

Combined Effects

8.10.45 The following table sets out the combined effects of the Site (Scheme Effects) on Visual Receptors who would experience significant effects. No combined effects on Private Receptors were recorded.

Table 8-22 Cumulative Site Effects: Combined

Visual Receptor	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	De commissioning
Public Receptors					
WT|SHER|16 TP097	A C	**Major/ Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Major/ Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**
WT|SHER|17 TP095	A C	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	Minor Neutral	No effect
WT|HULL|8 TP158	D E	**Major/ Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Major/ Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**
WT|MALW|52 TP165	D E	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
Transport Receptors					
Fosse Way TR145	C D	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse

Sequential Effects

8.10.46 Given GLVIA3's referral to major roads, it is important to note that the Department for Transport classifies Major Roads to include motorways and all class 'A' roads. These roads usually have high traffic flows and are often the main arteries to major destinations. Minor roads comprise 'B' and 'C' classified roads in addition to unclassified roads. Major roads locally to the Scheme include the M4 and A42 associated with the PV Sites A-E, and the A420, and A4 (Bath Road) associated with the Cable Route Corridor. All other roads locally are classified as Minor. The focus of the Sequential Assessment should therefore be undertaken upon these Major Roads. However, none of these roads are expected to give rise for any opportunity for Sequential Visibility.

8.10.47 GLVIA3 also suggests that popular paths should also be included within Sequential assessments. Popular paths are those typically considered those to be promoted or recognised in some way such as National Trails, Recreational Routes, long distance trails or locally promoted walks.

8.10.48 The following Recreational Routes pass through the Scheme:

- The Macmillan Way;
- The White Walls Way (Stage 3);
- Sherston Walk 2; and
- The Fosse Way.

8.10.49 These routes all utilise a combination of PRoW and Public Highway, and as such are made up of lots of individual sections of various footpaths, bridleways, roads etc. as identified below within **Table 8-23.**

Table 8-23 Sequential Visual Effects

Rec Route	Individual Section	Description
The Macmillan Way	TP060 FP WT|LUCK|39 TP061 FP WT|LUCK|38 TP064 TP WT|LUCK|32 TP063 BW WT|LUCK|54 TR118 Brook End, Luckington	The route passes to the west of Site C on high ground to the east of Luckington. There are views towards the Site from open areas where the water tower is just discernible in C6 beyond intervening vegetation.
The White Walls Way (Stage 3)	TR043 at the top of Bustlers Hill, TR156 lane north, off Foxley Road past Pinkney Wood TP029 BW and FP WT|SHER|14 TP027 FP WT|SHER|15 TP109 FP WT|NORT|5 TR060 Honey Lane Northwest TR061 Norton Road North West to Honey Lane TP122 FP WT|NORT|4	The route starts in Sherston crossing the River Avon (Sherston Branch) and heads south up Thompson Hill to join the road along the northern boundary of Site A (1) on the edge of the CNL. From here it heads northeast on a permissive path towards Old Wood and Pinkney Wood. It then turns south along the road to cross Foxley Road to join Bridleway WT|SHER|14 along the eastern boundary of Site A (12). The route passes through Lady's Wood farm and crosses the Fosse Way onto rising land along Footpath WT|NORT|5 towards Norton. To the south of the village, it joins Footpath WT|NORT|4 through Maidford Clump towards Kings Heath.
Sherston Walk 2	TR143 Commonwood Lane TP089 BOAT WT|SHER|35 TP091 Footpath WT|SHER|18 TP077 Footpath WT|LUCK|35 TR040	The Route heads south from Sherston crossing the River Avon (Sherston Branch) and heads up Thompson Hill to join Commonwood Lane. It continues south on TP089 BOAT WT|SHER|35 where it meets the boundary of Site C (C19 and C21). It then heads west along Footpath WT|LUCK|35 to join Alderton to Sherston Rd where it heads north along the boundary of the CNL back to Sherston.
Fosse Way	TR145 Fosse Way TP033 BOAT WT|SHER|37	The Fosse Way runs diagonally through the Scheme adjacent to Sites B and C

Rec Route	Individual Section	Description
The Macmillan Way	TP060 FP WT|LUCK|39 TP061 FP WT|LUCK|38 TP064 TP WT|LUCK|32 TP063 BW WT|LUCK|54 TR118 Brook End, Luckington	The route passes to the west of Site C on high ground to the east of Luckington. There are views towards the Site from open areas where the water tower is just discernible in C6 beyond intervening vegetation.
The White Walls Way (Stage 3)	TR043 at the top of Bustlers Hill, TR156 lane north, off Foxley Road past Pinkney Wood TP029 BW and FP WT|SHER|14 TP027 FP WT|SHER|15 TP109 FP WT|NORT|5 TR060 Honey Lane Northwest TR061 Norton Road North West to Honey Lane TP122 FP WT|NORT|4	The route starts in Sherston crossing the River Avon (Sherston Branch) and heads south up Thompson Hill to join the road along the northern boundary of Site A (1) on the edge of the CNL. From here it heads northeast on a permissive path towards Old Wood and Pinkney Wood. It then turns south along the road to cross Foxley Road to join Bridleway WT|SHER|14 along the eastern boundary of Site A (12). The route passes through Lady's Wood farm and crosses the Fosse Way onto rising land along Footpath WT|NORT|5 towards Norton. To the south of the village, it joins Footpath WT|NORT|4 through Maidford Clump towards Kings Heath.
Sherston Walk 2	TR143 Commonwood Lane TP089 BOAT WT|SHER|35 TP091 Footpath WT|SHER|18 TP077 Footpath WT|LUCK|35 TR040	The Route heads south from Sherston crossing the River Avon (Sherston Branch) and heads up Thompson Hill to join Commonwood Lane. It continues south on TP089 BOAT WT|SHER|35 where it meets the boundary of Site C (C19 and C21). It then heads west along Footpath WT|LUCK|35 to join Alderton to Sherston Rd where it heads north along the boundary of the CNL back to Sherston.
	TP036 BOAT WT|EGRE|1	as a very distinct straight route. Most of the route is a local road with the central and northern sections designated as a byway.

8.10.50 Although the Scheme comprises a series of independent areas of land or Sites, they are set within an extensive agricultural landscape. With large areas of land between each of the Sites, each is set apart by their associated features such as robust hedgerows, woodland and tree cover, intervening settlements and road infrastructure. These independent areas of land provide more scope for the Scheme to be offset from all key receptors such as settlement edges, individual residential properties, PRoW and transport routes which further assist with its integration and dispersion across the landscape than if the Site were one composite whole.

8.10.51 Whilst there would be an appreciation of an overall increase in solar infrastructure as users of these routes move through the landscape, the discrete areas of land in the Scheme are placed so far apart that the Scheme would not be perceived in its entirety and the solar panels are distributed 'in and amongst' the landscape features helping to assimilate them into the landscape.

8.10.52 The topography of the rolling Hullavington Lowlands greatly increases the sense of separation between the individual sites and there are limited places where more than one site is visible at the same time.

8.10.53 Sequential Effects for users of these Recreational Routes are not considered to be any greater than those effects identified for the individual sections as set out within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.3 ES LVIA Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

8.10.54 As per **Table 8-19:** Significant Visual Effects of Private Receptors above, it is anticipated that the Scheme would not result in significant effects post Year 15 due to screening effects of proposed mitigation and therefore it is considered there is no requirement for an RVAA from any properties based on the RVIA methodology set out within the LVIA Methodology contained within **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-1 LVIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

Assessment of Effects on the Cable Route Corridor

8.10.55 In assessing the effects of the Cable Route Corridor (CRC) on the Landscape resource and visual amenity of the area within the 500m Cable Route Corridor (as defined in **Section 8.5** of this report) the following aspects have been considered:

- The existing landscape and visual baseline scenario within the defined 500m CRC Study Area, as set out in **Section 8.8** and the nature of change.
- The effects upon landscape and visual receptors arising as a result of the installation of the Cable and the significance associated with the identified effects, based on the sensitivity of these receptors to change and the magnitude of any change that will likely occur. It also defines the significance of the effect and whether an effect is beneficial, adverse, or neutral.
- Embedded mitigation proposals established in response to the installation of the Cable and the identified receptors as set out in **Section 8.9** of this report.

8.10.56 This assessment should be read in conjunction with the following Chapters:

- **Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity [EN010168/APP/6.1]**
- **Chapter 10: Arboriculture [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.10.57 This assessment should be read in conjunction with the following figures:

- **Figure 8-1: Study Area (figures 6,7,8) [EN010168/APP/6.2]; and**
- **Figure 8-6: Landscape Receptors (figures 6,7,8) [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

The Cable Route Corridor

8.10.58 The Cable Route Corridor connects the Solar PV Sites to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. It includes both the Interconnecting Cables between the Solar PV Sites and the Grid Connection Cables connecting the Solar PV Sites to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation.

8.10.59 The CRC runs for approximately 22 km from Lime Down D to the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation and also connects the Solar PV Sites.

8.10.60 Full details of the works associated with the CRC are included in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Scheme [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. In summary the CRC includes works to:

- Interconnecting Cables between the Solar PV Sites; and
- Grid Connection Cables between the 400 kV Substation in Lime Down Site D and the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation.

8.10.61 The works include laying of electrical cables, access, and temporary construction laydown areas for electrical cables.

8.10.62 The Landscape and Visual Effects associated with Interconnecting Cables between the Solar PV Sites and the section of the 400kV grid connection cable route, within the 1 km Local Study are included in the assessment of effects within the 1 km Study Area as set out above.

8.10.63 This Assessment focuses on the main grid connection cable outside of the 1km Local Study Area in Lime Down Site D and the Existing National Grid Melksham Substation. This would be connected via a single 400 kV circuit comprised of three buried cables, fibre optic cable, and low voltage control cable.

8.10.64 The routing of the cables within the CRC requires design flexibility. The working area for installation of the Interconnecting Cables is anticipated to be a 25 m wide corridor. This has been widened in places to accommodate required operations (such as the crossing of watercourses, roads, utilities etc.) and narrowed in others, for example to minimise removal of hedgerows.

8.10.65 The width and spacing of the cable trenches varies depending on environmental constraints, engineering requirements, or if crossing third party apparatus (e.g. railway lines). Crossings would be carried out via a combination of open cut trenching and Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), with the latter used if needed to avoid and reduce adverse environmental effects.

8.10.66 **Indicative cable trench dimensions**: The open cut cable trench would be approximately 1 to 7 m wide. This includes separation distances where multiple

cables are running in parallel. To accommodate this, trench depth would be up to 2 m deep (and a minimum of 1.2 m depth in fields returned to agriculture during the operation of the Scheme).

8.10.67 **Indicative working width**: The Scheme allows for necessary spatial flexibility in the routing of the Interconnecting Cables. The working area for installation of the Interconnecting Cables is anticipated to be a 25 m wide corridor. This has been widened in places to accommodate required operations (such as the crossing of watercourses, roads, utilities etc.) and narrowed in others, for example to minimise removal of hedgerows.

8.10.68 The working width includes the trench, soil, and spoil storage, working area and haul road with passing places where required. As is typical for cable installation projects, the haul road would be up to a maximum of 7 m wide and would run directly on the subsoil surface with temporary track matting used where required. Where passing places are incorporated into the haul road these would be up to 12 m wide.

8.10.69 **Fencing:** The working width for the Interconnecting Cables would be demarcated by temporary (heras style) fencing where required.

8.10.70 **Horizontal Directional Drilling**: requires a 25 m x 25 m launch /receptor pit working area.

Landscape Receptors within the CRC Study Area

8.10.71 The process of identifying visual receptors within the 0.5km CRC Study Area (as defined in Section 8.5 of this report) has been the same as that described in Section 8.10 for Landscape Receptors of the Scheme above.

8.10.72 For the assessment of landscape effects within the CRC Study Area, the National Character Areas are deemed to be at too great a scale to be a useful means of assessing the landscape effects on the CRC Study Area.

8.10.73 At the county level, the CRC Study Area is situated wholly within the LCA16A: Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands.

8.10.74 At the local level (as defined by the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment), the CRC Study Area is situated predominantly within LCA 8 - Hullavington Rolling Lowland, with the western fringes at the northern end of the corridor extending into LCA 7 - Sherston Dip Slope, the southern end of the corridor extending into LCA 10A: By Brook Limestone Valley and the eastern fringes to the south of the corridor extending into the LCA 11 - Avon Valley Lowland.

8.10.75 To the very south the CRC Study Area is within LCA A3 - Broughton Gifford Limestone Lowland with a very small fringe to the east within LCA C2 - Semington Open Clay Vale as defined by the West Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment.

8.10.76 A very small part of the CRC Study Area is within the boundary of Cotswold National Landscape (CNL). The majority of the Study Area that falls within the CNL is within LCT 11: Dip Slope Lowland with a very small area to the south within LCT14: Cornbrash Lowlands. The CRC is not located within the CNL.

8.10.77 Detailed descriptions of the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas in Section 8 of this report and the published assessments are provided in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.4: Landscape Character Area Descriptions [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

Visual Receptors within the CRC Study Area

8.10.78 The process of identifying visual receptors within the 0.5km CRC Study Area (as defined in Section 8.5 of this report) has been the same as that described in Section 8.10 for Visual Receptors of the Scheme above: Identification of Visual Receptors. They also include: Private, Public and Transport Receptors. A list of all the receptors identified is provided in **ES Volume 2, Appendix 8-3-4: Landscape Assessment Sheets - Cable Route Corridor [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.10.79 Once these receptors had been identified through desktop and fieldwork, a Scoping Exercise was undertaken to identify those receptors where effects, either adverse, neutral or beneficial were considered likely to occur. Refer to **ES Volume 2, Appendix 8-3-4: Landscape Assessment Sheets - Cable Route Corridor [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.10.80 Those receptors which were included have been taken forward to Assessment.

Landscape Effects of CRC

8.10.81 Refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for the full assessment of landscape effects of the proposals within the CRC Study Area. The summary of landscape effects within the CRC Study area are shown in **Table 8-24** below:

Table 8-24 Summary of Landscape effects within CRC Study Area

CRC: Summary of Landscape Effects			
Significance of Effect			
Construction	**Operation – Year 1**	**Operation – Year 15**	**Decommissioning**
Minor / Negligible Adverse	Minor / Negligible Adverse	Negligible Neutral	Negligible Neutral

8.10.82 All effects on the landscape would be short term, temporary in nature and are confined to the area within the CRC itself and not the wider 500m Study Area.

8.10.83 All cables would be underground with no new overhead lines or associated poles required. Runs of overhead lines between components or to connect underground cables are not proposed.

8.10.84 Where the cable is proposed to cross open farmland, excavations and trenching would take place to allow the cable to be placed in situ. Where the cable is proposed to pass through substantial landscape features (such as woodland), the cable would use trenchless techniques to pass underneath with no permanent above ground structures proposed. This is proposed to reduce the effects on ecology and landscape as well as visual receptors.

8.10.85 During the construction phase there are temporary construction compounds which would be removed following laying of the relevant section of cable. Overall, it is considered that any disturbance associated with the laying of the cable would be minimal, short term (as the cable works will progress along the route) and would be akin to the typical process involved in the laying of utility cables and not likely to result in significant effects.

8.10.86 For the construction phase, there would be the intervention of digging the trenches along the length of the CRC as the cable is installed. However, the effects of this would not be above that typically associated with utility installation of this nature and would be limited to a short-term duration.

8.10.87 There is a need for trenchless construction techniques at a number of locations across the CRC, however, this depends on the results of the ground investigations and the final detailed design. As such the exact number of and locations themselves would be determined at detailed design stage. At certain crossing locations such as main roads (including the M4, the A420, the A4 and the Great Western Main Railway Line) and watercourses such as the Pudding Brook and the Gauze Brook, Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) is proposed.

8.10.88 The extent of the designated work area is dependent on the voltage of the cables where the number of circuits will affect the width of cable trenches required. The width and spacing of the cable trenches may also differ depending on environmental constraints, engineering requirements or if crossing third party apparatus. In addition to the trenches, land will be required in the corridor for access and soil and cable ‘lay down’. Construction compounds along this route will also be required. Any existing overhead power lines will be retained, and no new overhead lines will be required.

8.10.89 The CRC has been designed where practicable, to avoid natural landscape features such as trees, hedgerows, ditches, woodland. Where crossing such features becomes unavoidable, the construction would utilise HDD to ensure these features are protected. Where HDD is not possible, any loss of natural features such as trees, hedgerows and woodland would be mitigated in full and

in line with the species and composition of vegetation loss. Where practicable and appropriate such replacements should improve the baseline scenario and include gapping up of adjacent hedgerows for instance as defined in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18].**

Construction

8.10.90 In terms of construction activities, each work area will be excavated to expose all utilities present and to co-ordinate and prepare the area for installation of the proposed ducts / pipes. Some locations may require shuttering along the trench. The works would be temporary, and activities will be planned and co-ordinated before commencement in each work area. Welfare facilities will be provided at each designated work area including canteen, toilets and a drying room, but these would be temporary buildings to be removed at the end of the construction phase.

8.10.91 The exact location of the ducts / pipes and working areas would be confined to designated locations to ensure operations are controlled are precisely associated with each working area.

8.10.92 Given the above, the construction phase of the Cable Route Corridor would have a **Very Low** level of change on the character of the landscapes within the Study Area of the Cable Route Corridor and associated effects on the landscape are considered to result in **Minor / Negligible Adverse (Not Significant)** landscape effects.

Operation Year 1

8.10.93 For the operation stage, all the cables will be underground, and no new overhead lines will be required. Following installation of the ducts / pipes each designated location will be backfilled and the ground re-instated to match the existing conditions.

8.10.94 Any loss of natural features such as trees, hedgerows and woodland would be mitigated in full and in line with the species and composition of vegetation loss. Where practicable and appropriate such replacements should improve the baseline scenario and include gapping up of adjacent hedgerows for instance as defined in the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18].**

8.10.95 One section of the CRC (to the southern side of Bridleway WT|GRIT|22) will require the removal of a dry-stone wall. Following construction, this would be rebuilt.

8.10.96 Although mitigation measures would be implemented immediately, proposed tree and hedgerow planting would have a limited effect initially. The level of change on the character of the landscapes within the Study Area of the CRC would remain **Very Low** and the associated effects on the landscape of the CRC during the operation stage Year 1 is considered to result in **Minor / Negligible Adverse (Not Significant)** landscape effects.

Operation Year 15

8.10.97 As replacement planting and gapping up of adjacent hedgerows matures, the effects on the landscape will reduce and become neutral in nature. Replanting with appropriate native species should improve the baseline scenario and the level of change on the landscape would be Very Low. Given the above, the operational phase of the Cable Route Corridor at Year 15 is considered to result in **Negligible Neutral (Not Significant)** landscape effects.

Decommissioning

8.10.98 For the decommissioning phase, following backfilling and ground reinstatement at the end of the construction phase, the ducts / pipes at each location would remain in situ and not be removed. Alternatively, the cables can be removed by opening up the ground at regular interval and pulling the cable through to the extraction point, leaving the ducting and jointing bays in place, avoiding the need to open up the entire length of the cable route. Following installation, the land is returned to its original use, and this would remain throughout and beyond the decommissioning phase. Given the above, the decommissioning phase of the Cable Route Corridor is considered to result in **Minor/ Negligible Neutral (Not Significant)** landscape effects.

Visual Effects of CRC

8.10.99 Refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3-4 LVIA Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for the full assessment of visual effects of the proposals within the CRC Study Area. The Assessment of receptors where Significant Visual effects were recorded are provided in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.3.4.3.1 Assessment Sheets of Private Receptors for Cable Route Corridor (Significant) and Appendix.3.4.3.2 Assessment Sheets of Public Receptors for Cable Route Corridor (Significant) [EN010168/APP/6.3]** are summarised below in **Table 8-25.** No significant effects were recorded for Transport receptors.

Table 8-25 Summary of Significant Visual Effects within CRC Study Area

Summary of Significant Visual Effects within CRC Study Area				
Significance of Effect				
Visual Receptor - Private	**Construction**	**Operation Year 1**	**Operation Year 15**	**De-commissioning**
Private Receptors				
Foscote RS022	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect

Summary of Significant Visual Effects within CRC Study Area				
Significance of Effect				
Visual Receptor - Private	**Construction**	**Operation Year 1**	**Operation Year 15**	**De-commissioning**
Easton RS024	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Westlands Farm, Whitley RG064	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Thingley RG087	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Parkview, Boyds Farm, Gastard RI136	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Drumcovitt, Boyds Farm, Gastard RI137	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Public receptors				
WT|GRIT|20 TP096	**Major / Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Bridleway WT|MELW|87A TP305	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Footpath WT|CORM|30 TP272	**Moderate (significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Footpath WT|MELW|85 TP311	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Footpath WT|BIDD|17 TP362	**Moderate (significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Footpath WT|CROM|3 TP373	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect
Footpath WT|CORM|9 TP376	**Moderate (Significant)**	No Effect	No Effect	No Effect

8.10.100 As shown above Moderate Significant effects were recorded for six Private Receptors and six Public Receptors during the construction Phase, along with one Major / Moderate Adverse effect for one public receptor. These receptors are in close proximity to both the CRC and Temporary Construction Compounds which would cause a noticeable change in views and visual amenity. As noted above these effects would be restricted to the construction phase and there would be no further effects on these receptors. None of these receptors are within the CNL.

8.10.101 For all other receptors, during the construction phase, there would be an appreciation of the digging and the presence of small-scale machinery along the length of the Cable Route Corridor as the cable is installed. However, this would not be above that typically associated with utility installation of this nature and would be limited to a short-term duration. During this time the installation would appear as standard ground level construction practices alongside an existing busy highway route or across open countryside.

8.10.102 All the cables will be underground, and no new overhead lines will be required giving rise to limited visual intrusion above ground. Below ground however, there is a need for trenchless construction techniques at a number of locations across the Cable Route Corridor, however, this will depend on the results of the ground investigations and the final detailed design. As such the number of and locations themselves would be determined at detailed design stage. At certain crossing locations such as main roads and watercourses such as the Pudding Brook and the Gauze Brook Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) is proposed.

8.10.103 The extent of the designated work area is dependent on the voltage of the cables where the number of circuits will affect the width of cable trenches required. The width and spacing of the cable trenches may differ depending on environmental constraints, engineering requirements or if crossing third party apparatus. In addition to the trenches, land will be required in the corridor for access and soil and cable ‘lay down’. Construction compounds along the Cable Route Corridor will also be required. Any existing overhead power lines will be retained.

8.10.104 In terms of visible construction features, a full barrier / Heras fencing and signage will be installed around each designated work area. Each work area will then be excavated to expose all utilities present and to co-ordinate and prepare the area for installation of the proposed ducts / pipes. Any lighting required for safety purposes would be directed to avoid light spill into surrounding areas. Welfare facilities will be provided at each designated work area including canteen, toilets and a drying room and then these will be removed. Please refer to the **Outline CEMP [EN010168/APP/7.12]** which sets out how these mitigation measures would be secured.

8.10.105 The cable would be microsited within the CRC to ensure operations are controlled and the visual intrusion of each working area is kept to a minimum.

Given the above, the construction phase of the Cable Route Corridor is considered to result in Negligible Adverse (Not Significant) visual effects.

8.10.106 For the operation stage, following installation of the ducts / pipes each designated location will be backfilled and the ground re-instated to match the existing conditions leaving limited visible trace of the construction works. Given the above, the operation stage of the Cable Route Corridor is considered to result in Negligible Neutral (Not Significant) visual effects.

8.10.107 For the decommissioning phase, following backfilling and ground reinstatement, the ducts / pipes at each location would remain in situ and not be removed. Alternatively, the cables can be removed by opening up the ground at regular intervals and pulling the cable through to the extraction point, leaving the ducting and jointing bays in place, avoiding the need to open up the entire length of the cable route. Following installation, the land is returned to its original use and this would remain through the decommissioning phase with limited visible trace. Given the above, the decommissioning phase of the Cable Route Corridor is considered to result in Negligible Neutral (Not Significant) visual effects.

Assessment of Effects of Abnormal Loads

8.10.108 The construction traffic associated with the Scheme will be subject to measures and procedures defined within a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) [EN010168/APP/7.22] which information such as the routes that construction traffic must take and the measures that will be implemented to reduce the effect of the construction phase on the local highway network.

8.10.109 Construction traffic and Site access is discussed further in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010168/APP/6.1].**

8.10.110 The HGV routes to the Solar PV Sites that are identified in the **Outline CTMP [EN010168/APP/7.22]** represent the most suitable direct route to the relevant access from the strategic road network (M4). There are four routes including:

- **Lime Down A**: M4 Junction 18 → A46 → B4040 → B4039 → Unnamed Road west of Grittleton → Alderton Road → Fosse Way → Unnamed Road between Fosse Way and Sherston;
- **Lime Down B and C**: M4 Junction 18 → A46 → B040 → B4039 → Alderton Road → Fosse Way;
- **Lime Down D:** M4 Junction 17 → A429 → Unnamed Road east of Hullavington → Bradfield Cottages; and
- **Lime Down E:** M4 Junction 17 → A429.

8.10.111 The construction traffic associated with the Scheme will be subject to measures and procedures defined within a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).

8.10.112 There are a number of works required including widening and passing bays to accommodate the AILs which have been assessed for any landscape and visual effects in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.3.5: Abnormal Indivisible Loads - Non Significant [EN010168/APP/6.3].** There are three small sections on the route where works to trees are required. This includes cutting back or trimming of hedgerow rather than removing/loss and the effect on Landscape and Visual Receptors would be temporary and would be Negligible (Not Significant) as shown in **Table 8-26** below:

Table 8-26 Summary of Abnormal Indivisible Loads

Assessment Summary of Abnormal Indivisible Loads		
Location	**Description**	**Landscape and Visual Effects**
A46 Bath Road / B4040 junction, Old Sodbury	Temporary minor road widening at the junction, temporary removal of give-way and no-entry signage, and trimming of existing hedge/tree branches.	Vegetation removal includes cutting back or trimming hedgerow rather than removing/loss and the effect on Landscape and Visual Receptors would be temporary and would be Negligible (Not Significant)
B4093 At the Salutation Inn, Castle Coomb	Temporary minor road widening at the junction, and trimming of existing hedge/tree branches. These works are required to allow the abnormal load vehicle to turn at the junction safely.	Vegetation removal includes cutting back or trimming hedgerow rather than removing/loss and the effect on Landscape and Visual Receptors would be temporary and would be Negligible (Not Significant)
Fosse Way/Alderton Road, North of Grittleton	Temporary minor road widening at the bend, temporary removal of chevron signage, and trimming of existing hedge and other vegetation.	Vegetation removal includes cutting back or trimming hedgerow rather than removing/loss and the effect on Landscape and Visual Receptors would be temporary and would be Negligible (Not Significant)

Assessment of Effects on the Cotswold National Landscape

8.10.113 **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.6: LVIA Assessment of the Special Qualities of Cotswold National Landscape [EN010168/APP/6.3]** provides a standalone assessment of the Lime Down Scheme on the Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL) and its Special Qualities. The CNL is a nationally designated Landscape, protected by national and local policy. The Special Qualities are defined as "*those aspects of the area's natural beauty which make the area distinctive, and which are considered valuable, especially at a national scale. They are the key*

attributes on which the priorities for its conservation, enhancement and management are based. They bring out the essence of the National Landscape as an evocative description of the area rather than as a statistical account." These special qualities support the reason for designation.

8.10.114 The NPPF at paragraph 189 states: "*the scale and extent of development within [National Landscapes] should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.*"

8.10.115 It has been agreed with Statutory Consultees that Sites A, B and C of the Lime Down Scheme are within the setting of the CNL. The CNL Board (in its position statement - Development in the setting of the Cotswolds AONB), considers the setting of the Cotswolds AONB/ National Landscape to be "*the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting materials or design can be considered to have an impact, positive or negative, on the landscape, scenic beauty and special qualities of the Cotswolds AONB*".

8.10.116 The position Statement clarifies this further stating: "*The surroundings of the Cotswolds AONB are also important to its landscape character and quality. There are views out of the AONB and across back into land within the AONB and views towards or into it from surrounding areas, all of which can be very significant. Development proposals that affect views into and out of the AONB need to be carefully assessed to ensure that they conserve and enhance the natural beauty and landscape character of the AONB*".

8.10.117 As such, the assessment of effects on the CNL focuses on Sites A-C of the Lime Down Scheme. It considers the effects of the surrounding landscape character and quality of the landscape within the CNL and in visual terms it considers the effects of the development on views to and from the CNL. The assessment of landscape and visual effects on the CNL presented in Section 2 of Appendix 8-6 has been extracted from this Landscape and Visual Chapter.

8.10.118 Section 3 of Appendix 8-6 provides an assessment of effects on the 14 Special Qualities (SQs) of the CNL. As there is no standard approach available on how to assess the impacts of infrastructure development on the Special Qualities in National Landscapes, the approach taken has been to link the SQs to the vision and specific 'outcomes' and policies of the Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan (CNLMP). The Assessment references the findings of other ES chapters where relevant and evaluates the extent to which, if at all, each SQ is likely to be affected by the Scheme. As there cannot be any direct physical effects on the CNL, because the Scheme is not within the CNL itself, the assessment presents the predicted visual effects on each relevant Special Quality whilst having regard to the character of the landscape.

8.10.119 Section 3 of Appendix 8-6 concludes by setting out how the Scheme contributes to furthering the purpose of the AONB designation, as required by Section 245 of the LURA Act which strengthens section 85 of the CRoW Act's 'duty of regard' and seeks positive outcomes for the natural beauty, in its holistic sense. For this, reference is made to the mitigation measures embedded in the Scheme.

Landscape Assessment

8.10.120 The Landscape Assessment sets out the landscape baseline for the CNL and Sites A-C within its setting, with reference to both the published Cotswolds National Landscape Character Assessment and the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment. This notes that landscape is a continuum, and the North Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment overlaps with the CNL up to the County boundary within the CNL. Although named differently, the boundaries of the Landscape Types and Character Areas within both assessments are generally contiguous with the majority of the Scheme within the transitional landscape of the Dip slope between the High Wold to the west and the lowlands to the east.

8.10.121 There is no physical overlap between the Scheme and the CNL, and consequently the Scheme causes no direct impacts on the CNL. The landscape assessment recorded Moderate Significant Beneficial effects on the Landscape Fabric of the Site and Moderate adverse effects within the 1 km Local Study Area of the Scheme (see **Table 8-29** Significant Landscape Effects in Section 8 of this report). These beneficial effects to the Landscape Fabric of the Lime Down Sites are derived from the extensive mitigation measures embedded in the Scheme which includes protection of the existing features of the Site and new planting, including trees, hedgerows and woodland, as well as improvements to watercourses and the extensive change in land use to grassland under solar panels and the conversion to grassland meadows on the edge of the CNL as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4 Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and described in Section 2.3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.6: Assessment of Effects on the Cotswolds National Landscape and it's Special Qualities [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.10.122 The avoidance measures set out in section 2.3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.6: Assessment of Effects on the Cotswolds National Landscape and it's Special Qualities [EN010168/APP/6.3]** to prevent harm to the CNL also provide opportunities for positive enhancement within the setting of the CNL. These measures contribute to the substantial increase in vegetation across the scheme.

8.10.123 The significant adverse landscape effects within the 1 km local study area are primarily related to the change in land use from agriculture to the solar farm. This change does not directly affect the CNL as the buffer to the development provided by the avoidance measures and layers of proposed mitigation planting

contains the development away from the edge of the CNL. As such, the development would be barely discernible from within the CNL. Harm to the CNL itself would be minimal, (lasting as long as it takes for the planting to become appropriately established) with beneficial landscape effects within the setting of the CNL having effect in the long term, including as a legacy following decommissioning of the Scheme, which would further the purposes of the designation.

The Visual Assessment

Private Receptors

8.10.124 The assessment effects on identified Private Receptors scoped into the assessment of effects on the CNL, i.e. those residential properties which have a visual relationship with the CNL include Widley's Farm, Sherston (RI014) and Fosse Lodge (RI024), Grittleton which are both Grade II Listed buildings with a high sensitivity to visual change.

8.10.125 Widley's Farm is located on higher ground on the edge of the CNL and would have views over Site A to the southeast during construction and operation. Fosse Lodge is located at the junction of the Fosse Way and Alderton Road within the CNL and has a visual relationship with Site C where construction and Year 1 operations would be partially visible in the distance.

8.10.126 Although the magnitude of change in both cases is assessed as Low, this gives rise to Moderate Adverse effects when combined with their High Sensitivity. In both cases the infrastructure would be seen at distance across intervening landscape features. Once embedded mitigation matures, the magnitude of change would reduce to Very Low and the effects at Year 15 would reduce to Moderate / Minor Adverse and non-significant.

Public Receptors

8.10.127 The assessment effects on identified Public Receptors scoped into the assessment of effects on the CNL, i.e. PRoWs which have a visual relationship with the CNL (including views to and from the CNL) identified one Footpath WT|NORT|1 (TP037) associated with the CNL as having Major/Moderate Adverse effects during Construction and Year 1. This footpath connects from Foxley Road on the edge of the CNL to Honey Lane to the southwest. Although not in the CNL itself there is a visual relationship between the footpath and the CNL at its northern end.

8.10.128 Although the assessment identifies Major/Moderate Adverse effects on the footpath during Construction, these effects are as a result of the development on the southwestern end of the Footpath, close to Honey Lane. There is no infrastructure proposed in B12 and there would be no change in views to and from the CNL from the footpath at its northern end. As such there are no significant effects on Public Receptors associated with the Scheme and the

CNL. This is predominantly as a result of the measures incorporated into the Scheme to avoid harm to the CNL.

Transport Receptors

8.10.129 The assessment of effects on identified Private Receptors scoped into the assessment of effects on the CNL, i.e. Roads which have a visual relationship with the CNL (including views to and from the CNL) identified Significant effects on five Transport Receptors associated with the CNL during Construction and Year 1. These include:

- Alderton Road, Luckington (TR038) which follows the CNL boundary to Site C;
- Ford Road and Widleys Road Junction East C93 to Bottom of Bustlers Hill, Sherston (TR043) which follows the CNL boundary to Site A;
- Commonwood Lane (TR143) which is not within the CNL;
- Fosse Way (TR145) within the CNL to the south of the of Site C and adjacent to Site C not within the CNL; and
- Road Junction at Southfields Southeast to Y Junction, Sherston (TR154) which provides an approach road to Sherston joining the CNL at its northern end.

8.10.130 The assessment identifies Moderate Adverse effects on all the above Transport Receptors during the Construction and Operation Phase 1. Construction effects would be temporary in nature and at the start of the Operation phase infrastructure would be visible to varying degrees as mitigation planting would have a limited effect initially. However, once mitigation planting matures the magnitude of change would reduce to Very Low and the effects at Year 15 would reduce to Minor and Neutral in nature, with no effects identified during decommissioning. As such, there would be no significant long-term effects on the CNL.

Assessment on the Special Qualities of the CNL

8.10.131 The Assessment on the Special Qualities of the CNL found there would be no significant effects on the Special Qualities of the CNL. A summary of the effects on the Special Qualities of the CNL scoped into the assessment is shown in **Table 8-27** below:

Table 8-27 Summary of Effects on the CNL's Special Qualities

Special Quality	Conclusion of Assessment
1 - The distinctive limestone geology and	The Special Quality remains wholly unaffected in both the short and long term. The integrity and perception of the

the use of local stone in buildings	CNL's geological and building-stone distinctiveness are fully preserved.
3 - The High Wolds	The High Wold and High Wold Dip-Slope would retain their defining openness, large-scale landform, and perceptual "big sky" quality.
4 - River valleys and headwaters	The Special Quality of the CNL's river valleys and headwaters would be wholly preserved. Although positive enhancement of these features are proposed within the Scheme, these benefits are downstream of the CNL and would not benefit the CNL itself.
5 - Dry-stone walls and field patterns	The defining enclosure patterns and dry-stone walling of the CNL are unaffected.
6 – Biodiversity and nature recovery.	The delivery of approximately 119.7 hectares of flower-rich neutral grassland (as defined in the BNG assessment) represents a beneficial effect on Special Quality 6.
9 - Tranquillity	Tranquillity remains intact for the CNL, with only negligible–minor localised change persisting at a few viewpoints within the setting of the CNL. Long term effect: Negligible–Minor adverse (localised).
10 - Dark skies	It is recognised that it is not possible for the Scheme to further this purpose. However, the Scheme has been designed to ensure that the CNL's dark skies remain entirely intact.
11 - Distinctive settlements	There would be some Negligible neutral indirect effects on a small number of settlement-edge receptors and there would be no direct effects on the distinctive settlements within the CNL.
12 - An accessible landscape	The qualities of quiet recreation routes within the CNL remain intact, with no influence on users' enjoyment and experience. The Scheme proposes 12.8km of new permissive paths which aid this Special Quality.
13: Archaeology and historic associations	Whilst the Scheme has sought to enhance the SQs of the CNL, some qualities are not capable of being enhanced. However, effects on these qualities can be avoided/minimised. The archaeological and historic associations of the CNL remain preserved in their physical form and experiential setting. Long term effect would be Minor Adverse / Negligible (localised), with the lower end of the range applying once mitigation is mature.
14 - Cultural associations and traditions	The cultural associations and traditions of the CNL remain wholly intact and unaffected.

Positive contributions to further the purpose of the AONB designation

8.10.132 With each Special Quality assessment positive outcomes of the scheme were identified where relevant. This was based on the embedded mitigation measures described in section 2.3 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.6: Assessment of Effects on the Cotswolds National Landscape and it's**

Special Qualities [EN010168/APP/6.3], including avoidance measures on the edge of the CNL; general offsets to protect landscape features; extensive new tree, hedgerow and meadow planting informed by the CNL's Nature Recovery Plan and specific measures to improve the character of the landscape and maintain views on the edge of the CNL. These measures are incorporated into the Indicative Masterplans: **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4: Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are secured through the **Outline LEMP [EN010168/APP/7.18]).**

8.10.133 In accordance with the duty to 'seek to further' the purpose of the CNL, the positive benefits of the Scheme within Lime Down Site A-C within the setting of the CNL are set out **Table 8-28** below:

Table 8-28 Mitigation Quantities within setting of the CNL

Mitigation Quantities within setting of the CNL (Lime Down Sites A-C)						
CNL Broad Habitats	**LEMP Typologies**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**CNL total**	**units**
Grassland and Scrub	Existing Vegetation to be Retained and Enhanced	0.37	10.41	3.94	14.71	Ha
	Proposed Grassland Creation (Beneath Panels)	45.34	37.33	130.37	213.05	Ha
	Proposed Tussock Grassland Margins	6.36	9.42	19.83	35.61	Ha
	Proposed Damp Grassland	0	0	2.41	2.41	Ha
	Proposed Diverse Wildflower Meadow	13.65	17.60	29.08	60.33	Ha
	Proposed Low Density Scrub	0.08	0.25	10.32	10.65	Ha
		65.80	**75.00**	**195.95**	**336.76**	Ha
Cropland	Proposed Ground Nesting Bird Mitigation - Set Aside	23.29	3.03	36.97	63.29	Ha
		23.29	**3.03**	**36.97**	**63.29**	Ha

Mitigation Quantities within setting of the CNL (Lime Down Sites A-C)						
Woodland and Trees	Proposed Native Woodland Belt	0.82	0.32	1.26	2.39	Ha
	Proposed Native Woodland Block	0	0	1.09	1.09	Ha
		0.82	**0.32**	**2.34**	**3.48**	Ha
Rivers and Wetland	Proposed Riparian Corridor	0	0	2.33	2.33	Ha
		0	**0**	**2.33**	**2.33**	Ha
Hedgerow Reinforcement	Existing Hedge to be Reinforced / Gapped Up with Native Tree Planting	8592.08	3709.06	11431.87	23733.01	M
	Proposed Linear Tree Planting	1589.70	226.99	4043.65	5860.34	M
	Proposed Native Hedgerow with Trees	1790.72	1701.70	3786.99	7279.40	M
		11972.49	**5637.75**	**19262.51**	**7279.40**	M

8.10.134 The landscape and visual effects of the Scheme on the CNL and its Special Qualities have been mitigated throughout the landscape led, iterative design process and has been informed by the Cotswold Nature Recovery Plan in conjunction with liaison with the project Ecologist and consultation with officers at the CNL and WC. Embedded mitigation includes:

- Avoidance - Avoidance measures to avoid harm to the CNL through the use of significant buffers to the CNL boundary where Sites A, B and C are within its setting and to maintain views to and from the CNL such as Alderton and Sherston Church;
- Protection – Buffers and offsets have been embedded into the design of the Scheme to protect the existing landscape fabric of the Sites within the setting of the CNL (and throughout the wider Scheme);
- Retention and Enhancement - Retention and enhancement of the existing landscape framework to gap up existing hedgerows and provide new tree lines to increase age and species diversity. The embedded mitigation also includes new planting to both mitigate the visual effects of the Scheme and provide landscape benefits, This includes the re-establishment of historic hedgerows within the setting of the CNL, new areas of native woodland, trees, scrub and

grassland, new planting within riparian corridors to enhance rivers and wetland, as well the restoration of dry-stone walls and creation of new ponds; and

- Positive Enhancements – Positive enhancements to further the purpose of the CNL are incorporated into the Scheme, particularly within avoidance areas. This includes:
  - The creation of wildflower meadows on the edge of the CNL within the northern part of A1, C1, C6, C8, the southwestern part of C9 and B12.
  - The creation of wildflower meadow verges on the edge of set aside land in A11, A12 and C10 to provide attractive buffers in views from public roads on the edge of the CNL; and
  - Maintaining hedgerows at their current height of c1.5m (or as existing if greater) bordering the CNL within Site C (including the northern boundary of C1 to maintain open views of the landscape within the setting of the CNL.

8.10.135 As a result of the above mitigation embedded within the Scheme and shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 3-4: Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan [EN010168/APP/6.2],** Moderate Significant Beneficial effects on the Landscape Fabric of the Site have been recorded within the setting of the CNL.

8.10.136 Although significant landscape effects have been recorded within the 1 km Local Study Area of the Lime Down Sites, these effects are primarily related to the change in land use from agriculture to the solar infrastructure. This change does not directly affect the CNL as the buffers to the development provided by the avoidance measures and layers of proposed mitigation planting would contain the development away from the edge of the CNL. As such, the development would be barely discernible from within the CNL.

8.10.137 The Visual assessment of effects recorded some short term Moderate Adverse effects during Construction and Operation Year 1 on some receptors which have a visual relationship with the CNL (including views to and from the CNL). However, once mitigation planting matures the magnitude of change would reduce to Very Low and the effects at Year 15 would reduce to Minor and Neutral in nature, with no effects identified during decommissioning. As such, there would be no significant long-term visual effects on the CNL.

8.10.138 The assessment of effects on the Special Qualities of the CNL scoped out 3 SQs as there is no association with the Site. The assessment has found that there are no direct effects on the remaining SQs. There are some Minor/ Negligible short-term effects on a small number of visual receptors within the setting of the CNL which effect SQ7 -Tranquillity and SQ13 Archaeology and historic associations. However, these effects are mitigated by Year 15 when proposed vegetation has matured. The assessment also found that there would be beneficial effects on SQ

6 – Biodiversity and nature recovery as a result of the delivery of approximately 119.7 hectares of flower-rich neutral grassland (as defined in the BNG assessment) and SQ 12 - An accessible landscape as a result of the delivery of approximately 12.8km of new permissive paths within the setting of the CNL. The remaining SQs would remain entirely intact.

8.10.139 As set out above the Scheme has avoided harm to the CNL, maintained views to and from the CNL, protected the features of the landscape within the setting of the CNL, retained and enhanced the character of the landscape through the proposed embedded mitigation and provided positive enhancements to further the purpose of the CNL.

8.10.140 In conclusion, this standalone assessment of effects on the CNL and its Special Qualities has found that there are no significant direct effects on the CNL or its Special Qualities. Harm to the CNL itself would be minimal with beneficial landscape effects within the setting of the CNL in the long term which would further the purposes of the designation.

8.11 Additional Mitigation and Residual Effects

8.11.1 Mitigation for LVIA involves planting throughout the Sites which is embedded into the Scheme and secured in the design, meaning additional mitigation is not available. No additional mitigation measures for the Scheme are proposed.

8.11.2 The Residual Effects are therefore as set out in **Section 8.10.**

8.12 Long-term Effects and Conclusions

8.12.1 This section summarises the long-term significant effects of the Scheme on the Landscape Resource and Visual Amenity following the establishment of embedded mitigation.

8.12.2 Following the implementation of the appropriate site-specific mitigation measures identified during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases, the long-term effects on the following receptors are determined to be Significant.

8.12.3 Refer to **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3]** for details on Landscape Assessment.

8.12.4 Identified significant long term landscape effects are set out within **Table 8-29** below:

Table 8-29 Significant Long Term Landscape Effects

Landscape Receptor	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	Decommissioning
Landscape Fabric	Moderate / Minor Neutral	Moderate / Minor Neutral	**Moderate Beneficial (Significant)**	**Moderate Beneficial (Significant)**

8.12.5 Refer to **ES Volume 2, Appendix 8-3-2-2-2/3/4** for details of the Visual Assessment Sheets for of Private, Public and Transport receptors **[EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

8.12.6 Identified significant residual visual effects are set out within **Table 8-30** below:

Table 8-30 Significant Long Term Visual Effects

Visual Receptor	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	Decommissioning
WT|SHER|18 TP091	C	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|SHER|16 TP097	A	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|23 TP108	C	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|NORT|10 TP116	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|1 TP121	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|2 TP128	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|4 TP130	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**

Visual Receptor	Nearest Site	Construction	Operation Year 1	Operation Year 15	Decommissioning
WT|HULL|5 TP131	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|HULL|8 TP158	D	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**
WT|MALW|60 TP167	E	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Major / Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**	**Moderate Adverse Significant**

8.13 Cumulative Effects Assessment

8.13.1 There are two main types of cumulative effects in EIA. These relate to how multiple projects or multiple impacts from a single project combine to affect the environment. These are described below:

- Inter-project cumulative effects occur when the impacts of one development interact with the impacts of other developments. It involves the interaction of impacts from different projects, potentially leading to a combined effect that is more significant than the sum of individual impacts.
- in combination effects, happen when different environmental impacts from the same project combine to affect a receptor. (e.g. a residential property is affected by both noise and air quality impacts).

8.13.2 In Combination effects of the Scheme are assessed within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21: Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1]**. Whilst this assessment has acknowledged the findings of other ES Chapters as set in Section 8.7 Cross Topic Effects, they are not explicitly addressed in this assessment.

Inter-Project Cumulative Effects

8.13.3 A cumulative assessment has been undertaken, assessing both the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the Scheme and other proposed and committed plans and projects refer to Section 4 of **Volume 3, Appendix 8.3.2.2: Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3].** The Cumulative Developments assessment considers the effects resulting from the Scheme in combination with the effects resulting from other similar developments, these being other renewable projects.

8.13.4 This assessment has been made with reference to the methodology and guidance set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: EIA Methodology [EN010168/APP/6.1]** and the shortlist of cumulative plans and projects identified in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 21-1 Long List of Cumulative Developments [EN010168/APP/6.3]**.

8.13.5 For individual receptors, this cumulative effect assessment identifies where the assessed effects of the Lime Down Scheme could interact with effects arising from other plans and/or projects on a spatial and/or temporal basis.

8.13.6 Plans and projects identified from **Appendix 21-1 Long List of Cumulative Developments [EN010168/APP/6.3]** of the ES which have the potential to result in cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual are set out in **Table 8-31** and considered below. The remaining plans and projects were reviewed in relation to Landscape and Visual receptors identified in this assessment and no further potential for cumulative effects are identified.

8.13.7 The cumulative effects are assessed as a combined set of effects of the Lime Down Scheme and 'Cumulative Developments' reaching an overall conclusion on where likely significant effects might occur.

Cumulative Study Area

8.13.8 In agreement with Wiltshire Council, the Study Area for the Cumulative Assessment has been extended to 10km to consider the wider cumulative effects of solar development on the landscape. This is referred to as the 10km Cumulative Study Area and encompasses additional landscape character areas that have not been previously considered as they were beyond the 5km Study Area for the Lime Down Scheme.

Included Cumulative Development Sites

8.13.9 The following Cumulative Developments Sites (CD Sites) have been identified from the Short List as set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 21. Cumulative and In-Combination Effects [EN010168/APP/6.1].** The following CD Sites set out in **Table 8-31** below are included in the Landscape and Visual Cumulative Assessment.

Table 8-31 Included Cumulative Development Sites

ID	App Reference	Description	Distance from Scheme	Included within Assessment of Cumulative Effects
129	PL/2022/09253	Installation of underground cable. (Enso Energy) on land adjacent to Melksham National Grid Substation, Melksham	0m from Cable route Corridor 14.98km from Solar Sites	YES Cable Route Corridor
207	19/10628/FUL	10MW Battery Storage Facility at Yatton Keynell,	0.22 km from Cable Route Corridor 6.56km from Solar Sites	YES Cable Route Corridor and 10km Study Area
208	PL/2021/07610	20MW battery storage facility at Yatton Keynell	0.22 km from Cable Route Corridor 6.56km from Solar Sites	YES Cable Route Corridor and 10km Study Area
218	20/08618/FUL	Solar farm comprising ground mounted solar PV panels with a generating capacity of up to 49.9MW on land west of A429 (Crudwell Road), North of Malmesbury,	1.13 km from Cable Route Corridor 5.62km from Solar Sites	YES Approved (23/08/2023) – Within 10km

ID	App Reference	Description	Distance from Scheme	Included within Assessment of Cumulative Effects
221	PL/2021/06100	Land to the south of the M4 at Leigh Delamere, to the west of Leigh Delamere Motorway Services, Chippenham. Approved	0.48 km from Cable Route Corridor 3.57km from Solar Sites	YES – within 5km Outer Study Area
229	PL/2022/01695	EIA Screening Opinion for a proposed 20MW Solar Farm development northwest of Corston	1.54km from Cable Route Corridor 1.56km from Solar Sites	YES- within 2km Study Area
231	20/03528/FUL	Renewable energy scheme on land Near Minety Substation, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX	5.3km from Cable Route Corridor 8.87km from Solar Sites	YES beyond 5km Outer Study Area but within 10km
234	20/05893/SCO	EIA screening/scoping opinion for installation of a solar farm with a 49.9 output including battery storage units on land at Bishoper Farm,	1.13km from Cable Route Corridor 5.62km from Solar Sites	YES beyond 5km Outer Study Area but within 10km
237	PL/2022/00664	Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility. The use of the site would change from agricultural to energy infrastructure. On land off Pond Lane, Minety	6.42km from Cable Route Corridor 9.29km from Solar Sites	YES Approved on Appeal Within 10km
240	PL/2022/05504	Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) together with associated ancillary infrastructure, equipment and access arrangements. On land at Stonehill, Minety, Wiltshire.,	5.8km from Cable Route Corridor 9.35km from Solar Sites	YES Approved on Appeal Within 10km
241	PL/2022/02824	Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility and ancillary development. On land at Somerford Farm, Brinkworth	6.94km from Cable Route Corridor 8.98km from Solar Sites	YES Approved on Appeal Within 10km
242	PL/2024/03276	Proposed development of a grid connection cable route for the approved Milou battery energy storage	5.86km from Cable Route Corridor	YES Approved on Appeal

ID	App Reference	Description	Distance from Scheme	Included within Assessment of Cumulative Effects
		system. On land to the south of the National Grid Minety substation, Minety	9.11km from Solar Sites	Within 10km Outer Study Area
243	PL/2023/08481	Solar farm of up to 40MW at land at Red Barn, East of Kington St Michael, Chippenham. Approved 31/01/2025	2.53km from Cable Route Corridor 2.53km from Solar Sites	YES- within 5km Study Area
346	PL/2024/09410	Construction and operation of a solar farm together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure on Land East of Battens Farm, Allington, Chippenham	0.02km from Cable Route Corridor 6.05km from Solar Sites	YES Within Cable Route Corridor, and beyond 5km Outer Study Area but within 10km

8.13.10 In summary, there are 13 Cumulative Development Sites (CD Sites) which have been included in the Assessment. This Includes:

- No CD Sites with the 1km Local Study Area;
- One CD Site within the 2km Wider Study Area (CD Site 229) at EIA Screening Stage;
- Two CD Sites within the 5km Outer Study Area (CD Sites 221and 243 approved); and
- Ten CD Sites within the 10km Cumulative Study Area. These include:
  - CD Sites 218, 237, 240, 241 and 242 which have been granted planning permission (5 total).
  - CD Sites 207 and 208, both Battery Storage facilities near Yatton Keynell and are also within the Cable Route Corridor (2 total).
  - CD Sites 231, 234 (at EIA Screening Stage), and 346 are CD Sites within planning system (3 total).

8.13.11 In addition to this there are 2 Battery storage schemes within the Cable Route Corridor (CD Sites 207 and 208) and a development for Installation of underground cable at Melksham Substation (CD Site 129).

Landscape Baseline

8.13.12 There are 9 existing Solar Schemes which are considered within the baseline cumulative assessment. These are shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 21-2 Location of Cumulative Solar Infrastructure [EN010168/APP/6.2]** and are listed below:

- Hullavington Solar Farm within 1 km Local Study Area;
- Rodbourne Rail Solar Farm, within the 2km Wider Study Area;
- Draycot Cerne, Sutton Benger within the 5km Outer Study Area; and
- Six existing solar schemes within the 5-10km Cumulative Study Area including:
  - A cluster of 3 solar farms at Long Newnton Airfield, Newton Dairy Farm, and Upper Marsh Farm, near Brokenborough, to the north of Malmesbury and the Lime Down Scheme;
  - The solar farm on land at MOD Lyneham to the southeast of the Lime Down Scheme;
  - Castle Coombe Circuit Solar Farm to the southwest of the Lime Down Scheme; and
  - The solar PV Farm on land at Battens Farm, to the northwest of Allington also to the southwest of the Lime Down Scheme.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

8.13.13 **Table 8-32** below provides a summary of the Cumulative Landscape Effects of the Scheme in combination with the identified Cumulative Development Site which are assessed in Section 4 of **ES Volume 3: Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

Table 8-32: Assessment of Cumulative Scheme Effects

Assessment of Cumulative Development Effects				
The following are the cumulative effects associated with the Scheme and those Cumulative Development Sites identified for inclusion within the Assessment of Cumulative Effects. **The following represents a worse case assessment in that it is based upon all of the included Cumulative Developments to have been built out.**				
Receptor	**Significance of Effect**			
	Construction	**Operation – Year 1**	**Operation – Year 15**	**Decommissioning**

Assessment of Cumulative Development Effects				
Landscape Fabric	Cumulative Developments are located outside of the Site and would not impact upon the Landscape Fabric. No potential Effects identified at any point of Assessment – Construction Phase, Operation Phase (Year 1 & Year 15) or Decommissioning Phase.			
1km Local Study Area	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	**Moderate Adverse (Significant)**	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
2km Wider Study Area	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
5km Outer Study Area	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Moderate / Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse
10km Cumulative Study Area	Minor Adverse	Minor Adverse	Negligible Adverse	Negligible Adverse

Cumulative Effects within the 1km Local Study Area

8.13.14 Significant effects are recorded within 1km Local Study Area during Construction and Year 1. However, there are no cumulative development sites within the 1km Study Area and the significant effects are derived solely from the Lime Down Scheme. The Scheme effects included consideration of the existing Hullavington Solar Farm within 1 km Local Study Area as part of the baseline.

Cumulative Effects within the 2km Wider Study Area

8.13.15 No significant effects are recorded within the 2km Wider Study Area. There is only one CD Site within the 2km Wider Study Area. CD Site 229 is situated to southwest of Lawn Farm, to the northeast of Corston and south of Malmsbury. The Site straddles the boundary of the 2km Wider Study Area.

8.13.16 The development relates to an EIA Screening Opinion in relation to a proposed development of a 20MW solar farm and associated development at Lawn Farm. The Site area is 29ha and the Scheme proposes 3m (h) panels, inverters and a substation as well as fencing and CCTV.

8.13.17 The Site is situated on low lying land, directly east of the A429 and extends east across Grange Lane. The red line boundary of the Site includes three fields with a buffer of approximately 20m to external hedgerows. The Site is situated directly to the north of the existing Rodbourne Rail Solar Farm. There are no further details of the scheme currently.

8.13.18 The Lime Down Scheme (which has been assessed against the baseline situation and includes the existing Hullavington Solar Farm within 1 km Local

Study Area and Rodbourne Rail Solar Farm, within the 2km Wider Study Area) and CD Site 229 in combination would lead to an intensification of energy infrastructure locally, however, from within the wider area, both the Scheme and CD Site 229 would be absorbed by the rolling nature of the landscape which limits intervisibility. This will maintain the perception of the rural landscape as it can be readily absorbed into its location with limited appreciation from within the surrounding arable countryside. Due to the existing containment, effects on the character of the wider area would be very limited and not wide ranging.

8.13.19 Although it is recognised that there will be some localised effects on Landscape Character during construction phase, Operation Phase (Year 1 & Year 15) or Decommissioning Phase, the additional effects of CD Site 229 on the Landscape Character of the Hullavington Lowland within the 2km Wider Study of the Scheme will not differ in any significant way.

Cumulative Effects within the 5km Outer Study Area

8.13.20 No significant effects are recorded within the 5km Outer Study Area. There are two CD Sites within the 5km Outer Study Area (CD Sites 221 and 243)

8.13.21 CD Site 221 is an application for EIA screening/scoping opinion for installation of a solar farm with a 49.9 MW output for a temporary period of 40 years, including battery storage units, associated infrastructure, permanent grid connection hub and environmental enhancements. There is no further information about the scheme at this time.

8.13.22 CD Site 243 (Red Barn Solar Farm) is an application for Development of a solar farm of up to 40MW ac of export capacity, comprising the installation of solar photovoltaic panels, associated infrastructure and associated works including grid connection. The Scheme was granted consent in January 2025 and full details of the scheme are available.

8.13.23 Both Sites are located to the South of the M4 motorway. CD Site 221 is located directly to the south of the M4, close to the Cable Route Corridor at a distance of approximately 3.7km from Lime Down Solar Site C and CD Site 243 (Red Barn Solar Farm) is located approximately 600m (at the closest point) from the M4 near Junction 17, It straddles the A350 road to Chippenham and extends west towards the village of Kingston St Michael. It is 3.27 km from Lime Down E).

8.13.24 The M4 follows the general grain of the Dip-Slope and is a strong physical and visual barrier within the landscape. The intervening landscape between the M4 and the Lime Down Scheme contains numerous large woodlands, predominantly on high ground, including Sevington Covert, Leigh Delamere Wood, Stanton Park Wood and numerous woodlands along Scotland Hill which connect to Seagry Wood to the east of Lime Down Site E. These woodlands in conjunction with strong hedgerows and hedgerow tress provide enclosure to the

mixed arable and pastural landscape. The intervening topography is characteristic of the Hullavington Lowland with watercourses running west to east through the dipslope towards the River Avon. These water courses give rise to the undulating topography characterised by enclosed valleys, steeply sloping in places, and low ridges where woodland predominates.

8.13.25 These characteristic features of the landscape, as well as the M4 provide a strong sense of separation between the Scheme and the Cumulative Development Sites identified within the 5km Outer Study Area.

8.13.26 The Lime Down Scheme (which has been assessed against the baseline situation and includes the existing Hullavington Solar Farm within 1 km Local Study Area; Rodbourne Rail Solar Farm, within the 2km Wider Study Area; and Draycot Cerne, Sutton Benger within the 5km Outer Study Area) and CD Sites 221 and 243 in combination would lead to an intensification of energy infrastructure locally,

8.13.27 It is anticipated that each individual CD Site would be required to meet the policy position of delivering at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and as such as a consequence of the construction of these additional developments there should be an overall increase in BNG across the wider area by at least 10%.

8.13.28 From within the 5km Outer Study Area the Scheme and the Cumulative Development Sites identified within the 5km Outer Study Area. would be well screened and readily absorbed into the rolling landscape with little to no appreciation from within the surrounding arable countryside.

8.13.29 Despite the intensification of solar schemes across the area, the receiving landscape has the ability to accommodate the Scheme and the CD Sites without resulting in any overall increase in the Significance of Effects

Cumulative Effects within the 10km Cumulative Study Area

8.13.30 No significant effects are recorded within the 5km Outer Study Area. There are ten Cumulative Developments Sites (CD Sites) within the 10km Cumulative Study Area of the Scheme. These are shown on Volume 3: Figure 8-15-5 and include:

- CD Sites 218, 237, 240, 241 and 242 which have been granted permission (5 total).
- CD Sites 207 and 208, both Battery Storage facilities near Yatton Keynell and are also within the Cable Route Corridor.
- CD Sites 231, 234, and 346 are within planning system.

8.13.31 There are also 6 existing solar schemes within the 10km Cumulative Study area (in addition to the three existing solar farms at Hullavington, within the 1km

Local Study Area; Rodbourne Rail Solar Farm, within the 2 km Study Area and Lake Farm, Sutton Benger, within the 5km Study Area) which have not been considered previously as the assessment on Lime Down focused on the 5km Study Area. These existing solar schemes are shown on Volume 3: Figure 8-15-1 and include:

- A cluster of 3 solar farms at Long Newnton Airfield, Newton Dairy Farm, and Upper Marsh Farm, near Brokenborough, to the north of Malmesbury;
- The solar farm on land at MOD Lyneham to the southeast of the Lime Down Scheme;
- Castle Coombe Circuit Solar Farm to the southwest of the Lime Down Scheme; and
- The solar PV Farm on land at Battens Farm, to the northwest of Allington also to the southwest of the Lime Down Scheme.

8.13.32 As such, there is a total of 19 renewable schemes within the 10km Cumulative Study Area as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 21-1 Location of Short List Cumulative Developments [EN010168/APP/6.2].**

8.13.33 The Cumulative Assessment of the 10 km Cumulative Study Area is found in Section 4.8 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets [EN010168/APP/6.3].**

8.13.34 The overall Sensitivity of the 10km Study Area has been assessed as High to Medium which reflects the gradual change is landscape value from west to east. The Cotswold National Landscape which occupies most of the western part of the 10km Study Area is of High National Value as a consequence of its designation. Due its High value and High susceptibility to change, there are no renewable schemes within the Cotswold National Landscape (within the 10km Study Area). This means that the 19 renewable schemes within the 10km Cumulative Study Area are to the eastern side of the Study Area.

8.13.35 From within the 10km Cumulative Study Area, the Scheme and the Cumulative Development Sites identified within this Study Area would be well screened and readily absorbed into the rolling landscape with little to no appreciation from within the surrounding arable countryside.

8.13.36 Despite the intensification of solar schemes across the area, the receiving landscape has the ability to accommodate the Scheme and the CD Sites without resulting in any overall increase in the Significance of Effects

Cumulative Visual Effects

8.13.37 The Cumulative Visual Effects have been assessed within the Assessment of Effects on Visual Receptors, including Private, Public and Transport receptors in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8-3 Landscape and Visual Assessment Sheets**

[EN010168/APP/6.3]. No visual relationship was recorded between any of the identified Cumulative Development Sites and visual receptors. As such there are no significant cumulative visual effects.

8.14 References

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