THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

The Droves Solar Farm

Appendix 6.8: Amenity and Recreation Assessment (Tracked)

Prepared by: LDA Design
Date: October 2026
PINS reference: EN0110013
Document reference: APP/6.4.1 (Revision 1)
APFP Regulation Reg 5(2)(a)
Planning Act 2008
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009



8.0 Appendix 6.8 Amenity and Recreation Assessment

8.1. Introduction

8.1.1. Amenity and Recreation Assessment (ARA) relates to the disturbance of users of recreational resources comprising Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOAT)), permissive footpaths, permitted access land, cycle routes, outside public recreational facilities, open access land, common land, nature reserves, public open space and water bodies used for recreation.

8.1.2. Disturbance, or in EIA terms effects, to these resources may arise from:

- Physical changes (e.g. diversions), and changes to views, intrusion from noise, dust and other emissions, traffic movements to users of these resources; and/or
- The numbers of people using these resources as a result of the Scheme through displacement (e.g. users favouring certain resources over others because of the impact of the Scheme.

8.1.3. This preliminary ARA considers the potential effects to the recreational amenity of outdoor recreational resources that may be affected by the Scheme. The ARA has also sought to identify and unlock potential opportunities in relation to amenity and recreation as part of the design and masterplanning process, both within the Scheme and study area (3km radius of the Scheme) such as permissive paths or connecting missing links within the wider network.

~~8.1.3.~~8.1.4. This document has been updated at Deadline 5 to consider the Precision Approach Radar (PAR) Mitigation (as detailed in **ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [APP/6.1.3]** and the **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.5]**) in the assessment of landscape and visual impacts on the relevant receptors. The document references have not been updated from the original submission. Please refer to the **Guide to the Application [APP/1.3.7]** for the list of current versions of documents.

8.2. Methodology

Overview

8.2.1. There is no established methodological guidance for ARA, therefore the methodology deployed is informed by relevant legislation and policy; and previous approaches to ARA undertaken by LDA Design. The approach

follows that of the LVIA **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2]** and has been tested at several Development Consent Order (DCO) examinations including for Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station and Mallard Pass Solar Farm DCO.

8.2.2. This ARA considers all PRoW shown upon Norfolk County Council Electronic Working Copy Definitive Map [Ref 6-20].

8.2.3. The ARA identifies the sensitivity of the amenity and recreational resources that may be affected by the Scheme, the potential magnitude of change to them and assess the likely resultant impact. It is notable that potential effects upon a singular route would likely vary along its length, depending on the receptors proximity to different elements of the Scheme.

8.2.4. The experience of amenity and recreation involves a number of factors and the ARA borrows and builds on findings from other technical disciplines to inform its assessment. It does not seek to replicate those assessments and cross reference to the relevant assessments are made where appropriate. It is also why findings of the ARA may differ from those assessed in the other technical assessments despite relating to the same receptor.

8.2.5. The principal determinant of recreational amenity is character and visual and the ARA utilises the same methodology and study area used in **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2]**, of which this assessment is appended to.

8.2.6. Reference to other chapters in the Environmental Statement (ES) should be made including:

- Landscape and Visual (Chapter 6) **[/APP/6.2]**
- Ecology and Biodiversity (Chapter 7) **[/APP/6.2]**
- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology (Chapter 8) **[/APP/6.2]**
- Transport and Access (Chapter 9) **[/APP/6.2]**
- Noise and Vibration (Chapter 10) **[/APP/6.2]**
- Human Health (Chapter 15) **[/APP/6.2]**; and
- OEM (specifically the Glint and Glare section) (Chapter 16) **[/APP/6.2]**.

Study area

8.2.7. A study area of 3km has been used for the purposes of this ARA. This matches the study area used for the LVIA **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2]** and is shown on **ES Figure 6.8: Amenity and Recreation Facilities [APP/6.3]**.

Consultation

8.2.8. Details of consultation are included within ES Appendix 6.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP/6.4].

8.2.9. A scope for this ARA was set out within the scoping submission and implemented within both the PEIR and this ES.

8.2.10. The ARA authors consulted with both Breckland and West Norfolk and Kings Lynn local planning authorities ('LPA') to agree the broad scope of the ARA within the PEIR and ES. Consultation was undertaken through a combination of email exchanges and online meetings. An online Microsoft Teams meeting was held with West Norfolk and Kings Lynn LPA on 20 January 2025.

8.2.11. Consultation was also sent to Norfolk County Council. No consultation response has been received from Norfolk County Council to date.

Site Visits

8.2.12. Site visits to inform this ARA were undertaken in May and November 2024 as well as January, June and July 2025.

8.3. Baseline Conditions

8.3.1. The followings section provides an overview summary of the ARA resource within the Order limits and 3km radius ARA study area which has been identified based principally on findings of the LVIA **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2]** of where the Scheme would be visible from and also other studies listed previously in terms of where impacts are identified and should be read in conjunction with **ES Figure 6.8: Amenity and Recreation Facilities [APP/6.3]** which illustrates these spatially.

8.3.2. Only amenity and recreation resources scoped into the ES are included below. The remaining amenity and recreation resources situated within the study area that are not included below have been scoped out of this assessment.

8.3.3. In overview, the recreational resources scoped into this assessment comprise a variety of local restricted byways, footpaths, the Nar Valley Way long distance trail, the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path National Trail. Other

local recreational resources include the Castle Acre Circular Walk and publicly accessible areas of Castle Acre Priory and Castle Acre Castle.

8.3.4. The amenity of these routes generally comprises rolling agricultural countryside characterised by agricultural fields, native woodland and hedgerows, and settlement in the form of farmsteads, villages and small towns. The presence of development and infrastructure such as scattered wind turbines, overhead transmission lines and highways infrastructure associated with the A47 and A1065 are visible from the PRoW network in certain locations.

8.3.5. Other recreational resources within the study area that would not be significantly affected by the Scheme have been scoped out of the assessment as listed in the Scoping Opinion Report and reflected in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [APP/6.2]**.

8.3.6. **Table 7** below details ARA resources within the Order limits that are scoped into this assessment.

Table 7: ARA Resources within the Order limits

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Reference and Route	Location within Order limits	Approximate Length within Order limits	Total Approximate Length
Restricted Byway	South Acre/RB7	Within the north of the Site, connecting South Acre Road to Fincham Drove.	0.86km	0.89km
Restricted Byway	NK/South Acre/RB6	Diagonally through the centre from southwest to northeast	2.86km	2.87km
Restricted Byway	NK/South Acre/RB1	Running north to south towards the centre	2.16km	2.77km

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Reference and Route	Location within Order limits	Approximate Length within Order limits	Total Approximate Length
Restricted Byway	NK/South Acre/RB2	Along a section of the northern boundary	2.40km	2.43km
Restricted Byway	NK/South Acre/RB5	Running north-south from the boundary to the northwest	0.33km	0.33km
Footpath	NK/Sporle with Palgrave/FP 11	To the northeastern edge	0.45km	0.85km
The Castle Acre Circular Walk	Locally promoted walking route	Along a section of the northwestern boundary and further north of the Site	1.86km	9.79km
Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path National Trail	Nationally promoted walking route	To the northeastern edge of the Site and extending northwards and eastwards throughout the study area and beyond.	824m	Peddars Way 79 km Norfolk Coast Path 135 km 208km combined

8.3.7. The amenity experience of these routes varies according to location, topography and vegetation, both between each route and along individual routes. The baseline amenity for each resource is detailed within **Table 9** below.

8.3.8. In addition to the amenity resource within the Order limits, a number of recreational resources lie outside the Order limits within the study area. As with routes within the Order limits the amenity of these routes varies considerably dependent on location, topography and vegetation, but is generally comprises of rolling agricultural landscape punctuated by woodland

blocks, hedgerows and settlement. To the north of the Site, there is a tight network of local PRoW interconnected with regional and national routes such as the Nar Valley Way and Peddars Way which cross the ARA study area. Castle Acre Priory and Castle Acre Castle are standalone amenity and recreational resources associated with Castle Acre Village, situated to the north-east. A number of the aforementioned PRoW referenced above are also connected to these amenity and recreational resources, which likely encourages access to them from the wider study area.

8.3.9. **Table 8** below details ARA resources within the wider study area that are scoped into this assessment. Only ARA resources within the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), as outlined within the LVIA, are scoped in as these are where effects to the ARA may occur as a result of the Scheme.

Table 8: Other ARA Resources within wider Study area and ZVI of the Scheme

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Reference	Location within study area	Total Length	Approximate
Restricted Byway	NK/West Acre/RB7	To the north west, just south of West Acre	1.1km	
Restricted Byway	NK/Swaffham/ RB1	Adjacent to the Order limits, to the south west	0.24km	
Restricted Byway	NK/Narborough /RB7a	To the south west, leading out of Narborough	2.8km	
Restricted Byway	NK/Narford/RB 1	To the west, through plantation woodland west of Narborough	1.7km	
Footpath	Castle Acre FP3	To the north east of the Site, on the south eastern edge of Castle Acre	0.6km	
Footpath	Castle Acre FP4	To the north east of the Site, heading south	0.48km	

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Reference	Location within study area	Total Length	Approximate
		east out of Castle Acre		
Footpath	Castle Acre FP12	To the north east of the Site, on the western edge of South Acre	0.76km	
Bridleway	Castle Acre BR11	To the north of the Site, west of Castle Acre	0.45km	
Footpath	Castle Acre FP15	To the north of the Site, heading north out of Castle Acre. Follows the alignment of the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path	2.6km	
Restricted Byway	NK/Swaffham/ RB2	Just south west of the Order limits	1.23km	
Restricted Byway	NK/Swaffham/ RB55	Heading east-west from the south eastern tip of the Order limits	1.66km	
Bridleway	NK/Sporle with Palgrave/BR2	Just north east of the Order limits	1.54km	
Bridleway	NK/South Acre BR8	Just north east of the Order limits	0.17km	
Bridleway	NK/Sporle with Palgrave/BR5	Heading east-west, just east of the Order limits	1.98km	
The Nar Valley Way	The Nar Valley Way	Through the north of the study area, roughly east-west	55km	
Castle Acre Priory and permissive routes within	Various	Accessible heritage asset situated within Castle Acre	Various	

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Reference	Location within study area	Total Length	Approximate
Castle Acre Castle and PRoW within	Various	Accessible heritage asset situated within Castle Acre	Various	

8.4. Embedded Mitigation and Enhancement

8.4.1. The extensive embedded mitigation measures incorporated within the Scheme are outlined in Section 6.7 of **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [APP/6.2]**, the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]** and supporting appendices**; Appendix 1 - Green Infrastructure Strategy Plans [APP/7.11]** and **Appendix 2 – Advanced Planting Plan [APP/7.11].**

8.5. Additional Mitigation

8.5.1. Mitigation involves planting throughout the Site 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.

8.6. Potential Effects

8.6.1. Potential effects to the amenity and recreation resource include:

- Physical changes to resources (e.g. changes to a PRoW through diversions or temporary closures) No permanent closures are proposed
- Changes to the experience people have when using recreational resources due to perceptual or actual changes to views, noise, air quality or traffic movements in construction, operation and decommissioning; and
- Changes to the experience people have when using recreational resources due to changes in the numbers of people using them and changes in user's behaviour.

8.6.2. Most effects are likely to arise due to perceptual or actual changes during construction as a result of the construction activities such as operation of plant and movement of materials. Effects would also occur during operation

but are likely to be visual (i.e. potential views of the Scheme) with little to no impact as a result of noise and air quality factors. Decommissioning effects are likely to be similar to those of construction.

8.6.3. Physical effects (e.g. the extinguishment or permanent diversion of PRoW) to the Amenity and Recreational (A&R) resource will not occur as no extinguishment or permanent diversions are proposed. Temporary closures or diversions may be required for a very limited time period during construction to establish internal access tracks within the Order limits where they cross PRoW but will be limited in extent and duration (it is likely to take just a few days to construct an access track across an existing PRoW). Based on the indicative layouts assessed as part of **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [APP/6.2]**, a total of 5 crossing points (associated with access to Fields 27, 30, 31, 34,16, 9, 12, 13, 11 and 14) for internal access tracks across existing PRoW are needed. These diversions will be managed in accordance with the measures set out in the **outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP/7.6]**, and **outline Decommissioning Strategy (oDS) [APP/7.10]**, such as providing clear signage to recreational users and banksmen to manage plant movements and crossing where appropriate.

8.6.4. Effects as a result of an increase in the number of users (potentially attracted by the new permissive paths) will also not have any notable effect, either as a result of displacement to other A&R resources in the area or as an increase in numbers to the existing A&R resource given the existing recreational resource principally comprises local resources. There are two routes designated on a regional or national level, including the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path, and the Nar Valley Way.

8.6.5. During construction, the magnitude of change to the A&R resource within the Site is likely to be greatest given the proximity of these routes to construction. The greatest construction and decommissioning effects would be in close proximity to the Customer Substation and National Grid Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure – given that there would be an increase in noise, dust particulates and vibration and increases in the scale of adverse effects on visual amenity along these routes. It should be noted however that these effects would be temporary, and construction and decommissioning phases would take place on a phased basis (within the presumed two year

programme) meaning it is unlikely that all routes would be affected at the same time.

8.6.6. For operation, effects would again be greatest for those routes within the Site, particularly in close proximity to the Customer Substation and National Grid Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure. Within the central and western Site areas, Solar PV Arrays would be partially visible from the PRoW and Droves within the Site, through gaps in vegetation and along unvegetated stretches. The PAR Mitigation would also be partially visible within the central and western Site areas through gaps in vegetation and along unvegetated stretches of Petticoat Drove (NK South Acre RB1), Castle Acre Circular Walk (within the Site), PRoW South Acre RB2 and PRoW South Acre RB5. Over time, visibility would lessen through the management of as existing vegetation and introduction of new woodland belts, hedgerows and hedgerow trees; with hedgerows managed at a height of approximately 3m. Existing and proposed vegetation would temper impacts and predominantly screen direct views of the Solar PV Arrays, ~~and~~ BESS areas and PAR Mitigation from nearby PRoW. In some areas within the Site, there would be a change in character and visual amenity of some routes primarily due to the proposed planting of new hedgerow and trees to mitigate potentially significant adverse visual effects of nearby development areas with the Scheme. These changes relate to the visual amenity for users of PRoW South Acre RB2, resulting in the loss of open, medium-distance views southwards across adjacent enclosed agricultural fields, to a more visually enclosed route with views focussed in an east-west orientation, along the extent PRoW. Visibility of the Scheme would be at its greatest until the various mitigation planting measures have matured in the long term. The mitigation planting proposals along the droves and PRoW is intended to create an enclosed feel and character along the routes, to reflect its previous historic landscape character.

8.6.7. **Table 9** below provides a detailed description of the A&R resource baseline and the potential impact on it as a result of construction, decommissioning and operation of the Scheme.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
Within the DCO Order limits						
South Acre/RB7	This is a newly designated PRoW (designated in April 2025) that runs north-south, connecting South Acre Road to Fincham Drove, running past the western edge of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. The PRoW is partly vegetated, with a hedgerow running alongside its western edge. There is a pylon situated adjacent to the PRoW with associated overhead lines passing above.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Filtered views to the west of the PRoW, comprising views of construction and decommissioning activities, as well as filtered views of Solar PV Arrays during the operation phase, in the short and medium term. Construction and decommissioning activities would be partially visible and audible, with some potential impacts from dust and noise along this route. With regard to access, this PRoW	**Medium-Low**	**Major-Moderate** (significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase. **Adverse**	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Planting of new hedgerows and hedgerow trees along stretches of PRoW currently unvegetated

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			would need to be crossed to facilitate internal field access between field 35 and north of field 33, during construction, decommissioning and operation. This may result in temporary diversions and/or managed access. In the short, medium and long term there would be views of Grid Connection Infrastructure which would increase the scale of effect over the length of the PRoW. Visibility of Solar PV Arrays within the Scheme would			and strengthening / gapping up of existing hedgerows. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
			gradually reduce over time as the new infill hedgerow planting and trees mature, therefore providing more substantial visual screening along the PRoW. Views of the Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain in the long term due to proximity and their height.			
NK/South Acre/RB6 (also part of Fincham Drove)	This PRoW runs diagonally through the centre of the Site, from southwest to northeast. A largely vegetated route which generally encloses views for users. New hedgerow	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	The greatest scale of effects upon users of this route would be associated with those in close proximity to the proposed substations and Grid Connection	**Medium-Low** (Medium scale/ wide extent)	**Major-Moderate** (significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	planting along this route has been identified during fieldwork. Baseline viewpoint photography illustrates newly planted hedgerow within winter viewpoint Photopanel 2 **Figure 6.10 (PP1-16 and PPa-g): Winter Photograph Panels [APP/6.3]**. This new hedgerow planting forms part of the future baseline and would have grown and established by operation phase year 1, at the growth rates detailed within the Assumptions and Limitations section of the LVIA. Short and		Infrastructure areas; which would be visible above existing hedgerow aligning the stretches of this PRoW. Direct visibility of the proposed substations would lead to potentially large scale visual effects upon users of this PRoW until mitigation such as woodland, hedgerow and tree planting has matured. The remaining stretches of the route aligning proposed Solar PV Array development would experience medium to small scale		**Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase **Adverse**	PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Planting of new woodland belt to the east of the PRoW, within field 27, adjacent to Substations. • Planting of scrub to the south of the PRoW, along the northern edge of field 27. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	medium term visual effects reflect this assumption within the assessment section of this **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2].**		effects in the short and medium term due to the existing hedgerow and trees aligning the PRoW. In the short term there would be filtered views of construction and decommissioning activities. Construction and decommissioning activity would be audible in close proximity to this PRoW. Filtered views from the PRoW would be of the Solar PV Arrays in the short and medium term, through hedgerow gaps aligning the PRoW in			the Scheme and PRoW. • New permissive path connecting to the centre of the PRoW, and heading southwards to connect to other PRoW around Swaffham Plashes and proposed off site permissive routes associated with High Grove Solar Farm

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			the central and western Site area. Construction would also be audible adjacent to the larger elements of the scheme. With regard to access, this PRoW would be need to be crossed to facilitate internal field access, during construction, decommissioning and operation. This may result in temporary diversions and/or managed access. Glimpsed views would be possible of Solar PV Arrays in adjacent fields at points of access to fields. In the			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			short and medium term, there would be adverse impacts resulting from the substations situated within Field 27 and also the Grid Connection Infrastructure which crosses above this PRoW. In the long term, mitigation planting would have established and matured. As a result, any adverse visual and audible impacts from the Solar PV Arrays, BESS and substations would			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			have reduced. The most adverse impacts upon this route would be within the northern area of the Site, in close proximity to larger elements of the Scheme. Visibility of Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain in the long term due to their scale. Within the central and western Site area, there is likely to be little change to the character and recreational amenity of this route, in the long term.			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
NK/South Acre/RB1 (also part of Petticoat Drove)	This route runs north to south through the centre of the Site, connecting to Fincham Drove. This route is generally visually well enclosed by mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees. There are some gaps in existing hedgerows on the eastern edge of the PRoW which allow long distance views out north-eastwards, with views comprising woodland and existing overhead transmission lines that punctuate the skyline. The agricultural fields are visible in the foreground, with	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Solar PV Arrays and PAR Mitigation would be predominantly screened by hedgerow from eastward views along Petticoat Drove, between Keepers Cottage and Fincham Drove. Through breaks in hedgerow, during construction~~,~~ ~~decommissioning~~ and~~,~~ short and medium term operation, ~~of~~ the proposed Solar PV Arrays and PAR Mitigation would be visible in the foreground, offset	**Medium-Low**	**Major-Moderate** (Significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase. **Adverse**	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	aligning vegetation also visible to the north as topography slopes away from the field of the view. To the north of the Order limits, landform slopes northwards into the Nar Valley. Views back towards the Site, from this PRoW are limited from the north of the Order limits due to the wooded context and falling landform.		from the PRoW. Construction and decommissioning activity would be audible in close proximity to this PRoW. In the long term, the gapping up of hedgerows along Petticoat Drove, which forms part of the mitigation proposals, would restrict views outwards from this PRoW. The established hedgerow and management regimes would largely restrict views of the PRoW from this route.			• New permissive path at the southern end connecting to West Acre Road.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			With regard to access, this PRoW would need to be crossed to facilitate internal field access, during construction, decommissioning and operation. This may result in temporary diversions and/or managed access. Glimpsed views would be possible of Solar PV Arrays in adjacent fields at points of access to fields. There would also be potential glimpsed views of the PAR Mitigation where			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			situated alongside this PRoW.			
NK/South Acre/RB2	This PRoW runs along a section of the Order limits, in the north of the Site. There are short distance direct views southwards, of Field 4, from this PRoW. Views to the south are generally contained to within the immediate Field(s), with mature hedgerow and hedgerow trees serving to contain intervisibility beyond. This PRoW is well vegetated to the north but open to the	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	There would be direct views from this PRoW, of construction and, decommissioning activity as well as views of the Scheme during short and medium term operation. Views during construction would be primarily associated with the construction and installation of ~~of new~~ Solar PV Arrays to the south of the PRoW, within the adjacent Field(s) and PAR	**Medium-Low**	**Major-Moderate** (Significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase. **Adverse**	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • New hedgerow planting with hedgerow trees along

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	south, allowing direct views into the Site .		Mitigation within Field 4. The Scheme would be set back from the PRoW. In the short and medium term during the operation phase, the full height of the PAR Mitigation would only be visible where situated within Field 4 amongst the Solar PV Arrays. The ~~proposed~~ Solar PV Arrays, fencing and margins would be visible from this PRoW, beyond Field 4. This is due to the absence of mature hedgerow to the south			lengths of PRoW to enclose views along route and screen the Scheme. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			of this stretch of the PRoW. In the medium term, the Scheme would remain visible as the new mitigation hedgerow planting is establishing within the Site. Existing vegetation along the other boundaries of Field 4 will be retained and would still serve to screen views beyond the Field, to the east and south. In the long term, new hedgerow planting, offset from the PRoW to the south, would have matured and be fully			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			established alongside this PRoW. This would result in enclosed views, with any potential views of the Scheme to the south limited and screened within a short distance of the PRoW. There would be visibility towards the larger elements in the north-eastern Site area where this PRoW joins South Acre RB6 at Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There would be adverse effects during construction and decommissioning associated with visual			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			amenity and noise, due to the Schemes proximity to this PRoW. Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain partially visible in the long term at the eastern end of this PRoW.			
The Castle Acre Circular Walk	This route is predominantly to the north of the Site and comprises a circuit passing through Castle Acre. The route runs partly adjacent to the of the Order limits. The internal Site area, such as Field 4 and 12, is only visible from the	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Effects along this route varies depending on its locality within the study area. There would be adverse effects on visual amenity within middle to long distance views from Castle Acre. There would be views	**Medium-Low**	**Moderate** (Not Significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Slight** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	southern stretch of the route, where it runs along South Acre / RB2. The eastern and western lengths of the route along Petticoat Drove and West Acre RB7 are outside of the Order limits. From these stretches of route , there is limited visibility into the Site. There are medium to longer distance views from this route within Castle Acre, specifically along Priory Road.		towards new Grid Connection Infrastructure. There would be adverse effects upon visual amenity along PRoW South Acre / RB2 (within the Site) during construction, decommissioning (short term) and during operation in the short and medium terms before the establishment and maturation of new hedgerow proposed to the south of the PRoW. For stretches of this walk where it runs along PRoW South Acre RB2,		**Adverse**	management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • New hedgerow planting with hedgerow trees along lengths of PRoW to enclose views along route and screen the Scheme. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			potential views during construction would be primarily associated with the construction and installation of Solar PV Arrays to the south of the PRoW, within the adjacent Field(s) and the PAR Mitigation within Field 4. In addition there would be adverse effects during construction and decommissioning associated for users along PRoW South Acre / RB2 as outlined above. Within the Nar Valley, and on the southern valley slopes along West Acre RB7,			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			views of the Scheme would be limited due to screening effect of vegetation. Views from PRoW South Acre RB2, within the Site, would change in the long term once new hedgerow, which would be offset from the PRoW, has fully established, with views focussed laterally along the PRoW. Grid Connection Infrastructure would likely remain visible, in the long term, in southward facing views from the			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			northern stretches of this route.			
NK/South Acre/RB5	This is a short PRoW running north-south from PRoW South Acre RB2 to River Road. At the time of assessment this route did not appear used as it was obstructed by crops within Field 4. The baseline visual amenity of this route is similar to that of South Acre / RB2, with direct views into the Site to the east of the PRoW.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	There would be direct views from this PRoW, of construction and, decommissioning activities. Potential views during construction would be primarily associated with the construction and installation of Solar PV Arrays and PAR Mitigation, situated to the east and south of the PRoW. There would likely be visibility towards the Solar PV Arrays and PAR	**Medium-Low**	**Major-Moderate** -(significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase. **Neutral**	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • New hedgerow planting to the east of the PRoW.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			Mitigation situated within Field 4, during the~~and~~ short and medium term operation of the Scheme. Access to this PRoW would be improved as part of the Scheme, when compared to the baseline condition, as it would form part of a publicly accessible area. There would likely be adverse visual amenity and noise effects during construction and decommissioning. In the short and medium terms, the Scheme would remain visible			• Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW, • New public amenity space adjacent to PRoW which enhances recreational benefits and access to local landscape.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			as the new mitigation hedgerow planting is establishing within the Site. In the long term, new hedgerow planting would have matured and fully established alongside this PRoW. Views of the Scheme to the east would be limited and screened within a short distance of the PRoW. The new publicly accessible area proposed within closed proximity to this PRoW would provide recreational benefits in the short, medium and long term			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
			during the operation phase.			
NK/Sporle with Palgrave/FP11	This route runs along the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path, along the northeastern edge of the Site and South Acre Road. There are views westwards towards the Site, across the A1065. The context to this route is well wooded which provides enclosure to the north.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	There would likely be direct views of construction and decommissioning activities, and the operation phase of the Scheme, in the north-eastern area of the Site. Activity during construction and decommissioning would also be audible and visible, associated with the Grid Connection Infrastructure. In the short, medium and long terms there	**Low**	**Major-Moderate** (significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase **Adverse**	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows and woodland along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Minimum of 15m offset between the

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			would be adverse visual effects as a result of the Grid Connection Infrastructure, with users of this route having views of larger elements to the south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. Further tree and hedgerow planting along the western edge of the A1065 would provide a layering effect of visual screening once mature, in the long term. This PRoW is situated within the "potential temporary working area for			perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW. • Planting of new woodland belt to the east of Field 27.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity** **(as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude** **(as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect** **(as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
			grid connection infrastructure" during construction. This may result in temporary diversions and/or managed access.			
Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path National Trail	To the north of the Site views are partially contained to the immediate context by adjacent hedgerow, however gaps between trees and through Field access points enable views south towards rising ground within the Site. Farming structures and overhead transmission lines are clearly visible from this	**High** (High susceptibility/ National Value)	The construction and decommissioning activities would be partially visible from this route, as it passes through and adjacent to the north-eastern edge of the Site. The construction and decommissioning activities would be audible and traffic would be perceptible during these phases.	**Low**	**Major-Moderate** (significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate** (Not Significant) in the long-term operation phase.	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	viewpoint. A combination of rising landform and existing vegetation to the south restrict views beyond the adjacent Field(s). From more distant views to the east, within 2km, the Site forms a smaller part of the wooded context. Existing pylons are visible and traffic is perceptible along the A1065.		Construction activity associated with the Grid Connection Infrastructure would be directly visible from this route. This PRoW is situated within the "potential temporary working area for grid connection infrastructure" during construction. This may result in temporary diversions and/or managed access. Existing hedgerow, trees and woodland along the northern and eastern Field boundaries would serve to		**Adverse**	screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW • Planting of new woodland belt to the east of Field 27.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			partially screen oblique short distance views of lower level Solar PV Arrays and BESS from this PRoW, in close proximity or within the Site. The proposed Customer Substation and National Grid Substation would be partially visible in the short and medium term, but likely to be screened in the long term by new tree and woodland belt planting within the Site. Further planting along the western edge of the A1065 through the gapping up /			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			strengthening of hedgerows with additional hedgerow trees would create a layering effect of visual screening once mature. Grid Connection Infrastructure would also be visible alongside existing pylons in the northern area of the Site, in the long term. Traffic associated with Site access points from the A1065 would be perceptible for users of this route in close proximity to the Site. In the long term, both substations would be			

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			partially screened from this route by existing woodland and undulating landform. There would not be significant effects on the wider PRoW route in the long term.			
Outside Order limits						
NK/West Acre/RB7	This section of PRoW is situated to the northwest, just south of West Acre, connecting to South Acre / RB5 and South Acre / RB2. This route forms part of the recreational walking circuit through Castle Acre, known as Castle Acre Circular Walk.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Effects on this route would be greatest at the southernmost end of the PRoW reducing rapidly with distance as the PRoW runs north towards the River Nar. At the southern tip of this PRoW, there would be adverse effects during	**Low-Negligible**	**Slight** (Not Significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Slight-Minimal** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase.	• Retention of existing hedgerow and planting of new hedgerow with trees along the northern edge of the Site. Additional enhancement through gapping up and long term management for increased visual

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	Field 4 would be directly visible from the southernmost end of this PRoW, however visibility of the Site reduces rapidly with distance from the Order limits.		construction, decommissioning and operation caused by visibility the Scheme as well as some noise during construction associated with new Solar PV Arrays within Field 4.		**Adverse**	screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.
NK/Swaffham/RB1	This section of PROW runs along the boundary to the southwest, connecting South Acre RB1 and Swaffham RB2, at Scoot Wood. This route is through existing woodland, and therefore views are filtered northwards into the adjacent field.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Activity within the Site during construction and decommissioning would likely present adverse impacts on visual amenity and noise. The Scheme would present a medium scale of effect on route users. In the long term, gapping up along the woodland	**Low**	**Moderate-Slight** (Not significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Slight** (Not Significant) in the long term.	• **oCEMP [APP/7.6]** and **oDS [App/7.10]** to reduce intrusion by construction and decommissioning activities. • Retention of existing hedgerows along the PRoW, enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			edge would further filter views northwards, reducing the magnitude of effect as vegetation matures.		**Adverse**	increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Minimum of 15m offset between the perimeter fencing of the Scheme and PRoW
NK/Narborough/RB7a	This route is situated to the southwest, leading out of Narborough. There are middle distance filtered views towards the western edge of the Site along Narford Lane. Vegetation along this PRoW and woodland in the local landscape such as Burnstalk Plantation, generally	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	There would be limited adverse effects upon this route resulting from dust, noise, traffic, glint and glare during construction / decommissioning and operation. Visual effects would be tempered by visibility towards existing development known as Burnstalks Solar	**Low-Negligible**	**Slight-Minimal** (Not Significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Slight-Minimal** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase	• Retention of existing hedgerow along western Order limits, and enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	restrict views towards the wider Site. Burnstalks Solar Farm is visible alongside this PRoW.		Farm, directly adjacent to this PRoW. Mitigation and existing vegetation would largely screen the Scheme in the long term.		**Neutral**	
NK/Narford/ RB1	This route is situated to the west and runs through plantation woodland west of Narborough. Visibility of the Site is limited from this route. Where visible, there are middle distance direct views of the western edge of the Site, visible between Eyetrap Plantation and Fourteen Acre Plantation. Existing	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Existing woodland and vegetation in the context of the Site and along its western boundary would limit effects along this route. Construction and decommissioning phases may be audible and visible from this PRoW, within the western edge of the Site. During operation, the	**Low-Negligible**	**Slight** (Not Significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Slight-Minimal** (Not Significant) in the long-term operation phase. **Adverse**	• Retention of existing hedgerow along western Order limits, and enhancement through gapping up and long-term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	farming structures are partially visible on the skyline, situated within the Site. A small section of the western edge of the Site is visible from this locality, with the remainder of the Site screened by either woodland blocks and/or vegetated Fields in the Site's immediate context.		Solar PV Arrays would be partially visible above existing hedgerow in the landscape, between Eyetrap and Twenty Acre Plantation. There would be limited impacts from glint and glare.			
Castle Acre FP3	This route is situated within Castle Acre East Green, to the north-east of the Site. The northern Site Field(s) are visible alongside a well wooded skyline. Existing wind turbines	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Effects would be associated with adverse impacts on the visual amenity of the central and southern stretches of this route only. Larger elements situated	**Low**	**Moderate-Slight** (Not Significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation	• Retention of existing hedgerow and trees within northern Site area. Enhancement through gapping up with new hedgerow and trees, as well as long-term management for

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	are also visible on the skyline. Bartholomew's Hills Plantation and other woodland blocks within the Site and its context are visible on the skyline and restrict views beyond towards the remaining fields in the south of the Site.		within the north of the Site, such as the Grid Connection Infrastructure, would be visible in long distance views on the skyline. These elements would be visible above existing woodland such as Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. Effects upon decommissioning effects would remain unchanged given that the Grid Connection Infrastructure is not being decommissioned.		**Adverse**	increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
Castle Acre FP4	This route is situated within Castle Acre East Green, to the north-east of the Site. The northern Site Field(s) are visible alongside a well wooded skyline. Existing wind turbines are also visible on the skyline. Bartholomew's Hills Plantation and other woodland blocks within the Site and its context are visible on the skyline and restrict views beyond towards the remaining fields in the south of the Site.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Effects would be associated with adverse impacts on the visual amenity of the central stretches of this route only, before it reaches the River Nar. The larger elements situated within the north of the Site, such as the Grid Connection Infrastructure, would be visible in long distance views. These elements would be visible above existing woodland such as Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. Effects upon	**Low**	**Moderate-Slight** (Not Significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation **Adverse**	• Retention of existing hedgerow and trees within northern Site area. Enhancement through gapping up with new hedgerow and trees, as well as long term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
			decommissioning effects would remain unchanged given that the Grid Connection Infrastructure is not being decommissioned.			
Castle Acre FP12	This route connects Castle Acre to Walton Road, on the northern side of the Nar Valley. Existing development within Castle Acre and St James the Great Church are visible in the middle distance. Woodland blocks within the immediate context of the Site such as Washpit Plantation and Fingerhill Plantation are	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	During construction, and operation, adverse effects would be largely associated with visibility of Grid Connection Infrastructure on the wooded skyline to the south. Effects on decommissioning would remain unchanged given that the Grid Connection Infrastructure is not	**Low**	**Slight** (Not Significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation. **Adverse**	• Retention of existing hedgerow and trees within northern Site area. Enhancement through gapping up with new hedgerow and trees, as well as long term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
	visible on the skyline and restrict views further southwards into the Site.		being decommissioned.			
Castle Acre BR11	This route connects Walton Road to Common Road and PRoW FP10, to the south at the River Nar. From the north of this route woodland blocks within the immediate context of the Site such as Washpit Plantation and Fingerhill Plantation are visible on the skyline and restrict views further southwards into the Site.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	During construction, and operation, adverse effects would be largely associated with visibility of Grid Connection Infrastructure on the wooded skyline to the south. Effects on decommissioning effects remain unchanged given that the Grid Connection Infrastructure is not being decommissioned.	**Low**	**Slight** (Not Significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation. **Adverse**	• Retention of existing hedgerow and trees within northern Site area. Enhancement through gapping up with new hedgerow and trees, as well as long term management for increased visual screening under the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
Castle Acre FP15	This route connects Walton Road and Old Wicken Road. Woodland blocks within the immediate context of the Site such as Washpit Plantation and Fingerhill Plantation are visible on the skyline and restrict views southwards into the Site. Castle Acre is visible in the foreground.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	During construction and operation, adverse effects would be largely associated with visibility of Grid Connection Infrastructure on the wooded skyline to the south. Effects during decommissioning effects would remain unchanged given that the Grid Connection Infrastructure is not being decommissioned.	**Low-Negligible**	**Slight-Minimal** (Not Significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation. **Adverse**	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.
NK/Swaffham/RB2	This route is situated to the southwest of the Order limits and connects to Narford Lane. This PRoW is	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/	Limited adverse impacts associated with visual due to the vegetated nature of the route.	**Low**	**Moderate-Slight** (Not Significant) during construction,	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	vegetated to the north, with views towards the Site intermittent and generally screened. Middle ground views of western fields within the Site are partially visible, where they align Narford Lane. Existing farming structures are visible within the Site. The well vegetated field boundaries form a partially treed skyline which restrict views beyond.	Community Value)	Construction and decommissioning of Solar PV Arrays may be audible from this PRoW.		decommissioning and operation **Adverse**	with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.
NK/Swaffham/RB55	This route runs east-west from the southeastern tip of the Order limits. Views into the Site are largely	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/	Where visible, limited adverse impacts associated with visual amenity due to the vegetated nature of	**Low-Negligible**	**Slight-Minimal** (Not Significant) during construction,	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
	restricted by woodland, except for the westernmost edge of the PRoW. Views of the Site are partially filtered by existing hedgerow and trees.	Community Value)	the route. Construction and decommissioning of Solar PV Arrays may be audible from this PRoW.		decommissioning and operation **Adverse**	with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Setting back of the Scheme from the A1065, putting the Scheme at a greater distance to this PRoW beyond existing hedgerow and trees.
NK/Sporle with	This route runs adjoins PRoW NK/South Acre BR8, to the north-east of	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/	Construction activities associated with Grid Connection	**Medium-Low**	**Moderate** (Not significant) during construction,	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
Palgrave/BR2	the Order limits. There are views westwards towards the Site, across the A1065. The context to this route is well wooded which provides enclosure to the north.	Community Value)	Infrastructure would be audible and visible from this route. Limited change to the character and recreational amenity of this route, with partial views of the Grid Connection Infrastructure to the south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. Views of Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain during operation.		operation and decommissioning. **Adverse**	• Enhancements through gapping up with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long-term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Setting back of the Scheme from the A1065 and existing woodland within the Site, putting the Scheme at a greater distance to this PRoW beyond existing hedgerow and trees.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
NK/South Acre BR8	This route runs adjoins PRoW NK/Sporle with Palgrave/BR2, to the north-east of the Order limits. There are limited views westwards towards the Site, across the A1065. The context to this route is well wooded which provides enclosure to the west and south.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Construction activities associated with Grid Connection Infrastructure would be audible and visible from this route. Limited change to the character and recreational amenity of this route, with partial views of the Grid Connection Infrastructure to the south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. Views of Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain during operation.	**Medium-Low**	**Moderate** (Not significant) during construction, operation and decommissioning. **Adverse**	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long-term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Setting back of the Scheme from the A1065 and existing woodland within the Site, putting the Scheme at a greater distance to this PRoW

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
						beyond existing hedgerow and trees. •
NK/Sporle with Palgrave/BR5	This route runs east-west, connecting to the A1065. There are westward views towards agricultural fields within the Site. Traffic along the A1065 is audible and visible amongst hedgerow and trees in the local landscape.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	Direct views of construction and operation phase associated with Solar PV Arrays in the short and medium term, in the eastern area of the Site. Construction and decommissioning would likely be audible and visible. Adverse visual effects would likely be associated with the Grid Connection Infrastructure during construction and operation phases.	**Low**	**Moderate** (Not significant) during construction and decommissioning Reducing to **Moderate- Slight** (Not Significant) in the long term operation phase. **Adverse**	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long-term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**. • Setting back of the Scheme from the A1065, putting the

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
			Advanced planting along the A1065 would temper adverse visual effects upon this route. Decommissioning activity associated with the Solar PV Arrays would be limited due to the maturation of proposed mitigation planting along the A1065 and internal Site Field boundaries.			Scheme at a greater distance to this PRoW beyond existing hedgerow and trees.
The Nar Valley Way	Promoted route through the north of the study area, running east-west along the Nar Valley. There is intermittent visibility towards the	**High** (High susceptibility/ National Value)	The construction and operation phases associated with Grid Connection Infrastructure would be partially visible	**Medium-Low**	**Moderate** (Not significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	Site from this route. The route passes through a number of settlements in the local landscape, with views of existing pylons, development and highways infrastructure.		from this route, along Priory Road, as it passes through Castle Acre. During operation, there would be adverse effects upon the visual amenity of receptors with views southwards towards the Grid Connection Infrastructure. There would be adverse visual effects upon users along a short section of this promoted route as it runs through Castle Acre, within 1km of the Site.		**Adverse**	with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
Castle Acre Priory and permissive routes within	Accessible heritage asset situated within Castle Acre. There are middle distance views towards the Site, set against a backdrop comprising a well wooded skyline with overhead transmission lines and pylons rising up from the trees. Existing wind turbines are also visible on the skyline. South Acre Hall is partially visible in the valley.	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	During construction, and operation phases, the larger elements situated within the north of the Site, such as the Grid Connection Infrastructure, would be visible rising above existing woodland blocks and tree belts within the local landscape. There would be some adverse visual effects upon users of this recreational resource during construction and operation phases. There would be limited impacts as a result of	**Medium-Low**	**Moderate** (Not significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation **Adverse**	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long-term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	**Baseline Description**	**Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Potential Effects**	**Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)**	**Mitigation Measures**
			decommissioning due to the screening effect of existing woodland adjacent to the Site.			
Castle Acre Castle and PRoW within	Accessible heritage asset situated within Castle Acre. There is limited visibility towards the Site from lower-level areas within the castle grounds. However, there are views from local areas of high ground, upon the banks, which overlook adjacent residential properties within Castle Acre. There are middle to long distance views towards the Site. The northern most Field(s) within the	**High-Medium** (High susceptibility/ Community Value)	During construction, and operation phases, the larger elements situated within the north of the Site, such as the Grid Connection Infrastructure, would be visible rising above existing woodland blocks and tree belts within the local landscape. There would be some adverse visual effects upon users of this recreational resource	**Medium-Low**	**Moderate** (Not significant) during construction, decommissioning and operation **Adverse**	• Retention of existing vegetation within the Order limits. • Enhancements through gapping up with hedgerow whips and trees. • Long-term management of trees and hedgerow for increased visual screening as dictated by the **oLEMP [APP/7.11]**.

Amenity and Recreation Resource	Baseline Description	Sensitivity (as per LVIA methodology)	Potential Effects	Long Term Magnitude (as per LVIA methodology)	Significance of Effect (as per LVIA methodology)	Mitigation Measures
	Site are visible and set against a backdrop comprising a well wooded skyline with overhead transmission lines and pylons rising up from the trees. Existing wind turbines are also visible on the skyline.		during construction and operation phases. There would be limited impacts as a result of decommissioning due to the screening effect of existing woodland adjacent to the Site.			

8.7. Cumulative Effects

8.8. As with the LVIA **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2]**, the only cumulative development proposal identified that would have a potential significant in-combination cumulative effects on the amenity and recreational resource is the High Grove Solar Farm (PINS ref: EN0110010).

8.9. In terms of 'intra' cumulative effects, the Scheme and cumulative development above have the potential to affect the amenity experienced by users of recreational resources due to perceptual or actual changes to views, noise, or air quality. These effects within this assessment have been considered drawing on the following assessments:

- Landscape and Visual (Chapter 6) **[/APP/6.2]**;
- Ecology and Biodiversity (Chapter 7) **[/APP/6.2]**;
- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology (Chapter 8) **[/APP/6.2]**;
- Transport and Access (Chapter 9) **[/APP/6.2]**;
- Noise and Vibration (Chapter 10) **[/APP/6.2]**;
- Human Health (Chapter 15) **[/APP/6.2]**; and
- OEM (specifically within the Glint and Glare section) (Chapter 16) **[/APP/6.2]**.

8.9.1. The only recreational resource within the study area which could experience potentially significant adverse effects would be PRoW users of PRoW Sporle with Palgrave BR5, to the east of the Order limits. The Scheme would be partially visible in filtered views during construction, decommissioning and operation at the western end of the PRoW, alongside new solar PV development within High Grove Solar Farm, to the east of the A1065. Potential significant cumulative effects would likely be present along this route if the construction and decommissioning of the Scheme were to come forward once High Grove Solar Farm is operational. As well as potentially adverse impacts upon the visual amenity of PRoW users, there would also be potentially adverse impacts upon this route resulting from noise and dust for PRoW users, during construction of both the Scheme and High Grove Solar Farm.

8.9.2. During construction and decommissioning, the short-term temporary in combination effect would be of **Medium-Low** magnitude. The overall effect

would be of **Moderate** significance. This effect would be adverse and **significant.**

8.9.3. During operation, the magnitude of in combination effects would lessen, with recreational adverse effects predominantly associated with High Grove Solar Farm. High Grove Solar Farm would serve to screen views of the Scheme in part, with new solar PV panels present adjacent to the north and south of this PRoW. The in-combination effect would be **Low** magnitude**.** The overall effect would be of **Slight** significance. This effect would be adverse and **not significant.**

8.10. Conclusion

8.10.1. Amenity and Recreation Assessment relates to the disturbance of users of recreational resources comprising Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOAT)), permissive footpaths, permitted access land, cycle routes, outside public recreational facilities, open access land, common land, nature reserves, public open space and water bodies used for recreation.

8.10.2. This ARA considers the impact of the Scheme on users of the recreational resource which include heritage assets with public access, byways, bridleways and footpaths. A total of 7 PRoW pass through the Order limits, along with a greater number of PRoW and recreational resources also present within the wider 3km ARA study area. Only PRoW and recreational resources within the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), as determined within **ES Chapter 6 [APP/6.2]** , with potential views of the Scheme have been scoped into this assessment.

~~8.10.2.~~8.10.3. This ARA has been updated to consider the screening of the Solar PV Arrays from RAF Marham PAR. The parameters and commitments for the PAR Mitigation relating to the mitigation areas associated with the PAR Mitigation are provided in the **Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.5]** and will inform the design and specification of the PAR Mitigation at the detailed design stage.

~~8.10.3.~~8.10.4. Benefits of the Scheme include a total of approximately 3.5km of new permissive paths, which are proposed as part of the Scheme, creating new recreational opportunities across existing non publicly accessible land and linking to the wider PRoW network to provide offroad alternatives. In addition, along these new routes there are new nature areas, interpretation boards, publicly accessible amenity space and wayfinding signs proposed, which

would encourage engagement and understanding of the natural and historic environment. Specific measures focus on the creation of permissive routes to the southeast of the Order limits, linking to off-Site permissive paths associated with High Grove Solar Farm to achieve a continuous permissive path referred to as the "Swaffham Link" between Swaffham, South Acre, the Nar Valley and surrounding villages. The surface treatment of new permissive routes will be as per the existing surface treatment prior to construction phase.

~~8.10.4.~~8.10.5. The A&R resources within the Site and study area have been considered as part of the design evolution of the Scheme. No physical effects (i.e. permanent extinguishment or permanent diversion) to the amenity are proposed.

~~8.10.5.~~8.10.6. Where PRoW traverse through the Order limits, in proximity to the Scheme, a number of mitigation measures have been proposed to limit potentially adverse effects. Mitigation measures relevant to this ARA include:

- the offsetting of development from PRoW and other routes
- provision of new permissive routes both within and outside of the Site
- retention of the majority of existing vegetation
- gapping up and infilling of existing hedgerow with new trees
- planting of new lengths of hedgerow; and
- planting of new woodland belts and areas of scrub.

~~8.10.6.~~8.10.7. **Table 9** above details the potential effects of each amenity and recreational resources scoped into this ARA.

~~8.10.7.~~8.10.8. During construction and decommissioning, there would be likely significant impacts anticipated to the recreational amenity of PRoW within the Site, including: South Acre RB7, South Acre RB6 (Fincham Drove), PRoW South Acre RB1 (Petticoat Drove), PRoW South Acre RB2, PROW South Acre RB5, Sporle with Palgrave FP11, Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path. These effects would be short term and temporary.

~~8.10.8.~~8.10.9. There would be potentially long-term operation phase adverse effects upon the following PRoW: South Acre/RB1, RB2, RB6 and RB7, Sporle with Palgrave/BR2, BR5 and FP11, Peddars Way and Norfolk Coastal Path National Trail, The Nar Valley Way. These effects are not significant.

~~8.10.9.~~8.10.10. There would be potentially long-term operation phase adverse effects upon the following accessible landscapes: Castle Acre Priory and

permissive routes within the surrounding grounds as well as Castle Acre Castle and PRoW within the surrounding grounds. These effects are not significant.

~~8.10.10.~~8.10.11. There would likely be significant cumulative amenity and recreational effects on PRoW Sporle with Palgrave BR5, to the east of the Order limits. The Scheme would be visible and audible during construction and decommissioning as well as visible during the operation phase at the western end of the PRoW, alongside new solar PV development within High Grove Solar Farm, east of the A1065. No other significant effects were identified beyond the Order limits.

~~8.10.11.~~8.10.12. There would be no significant standalone or in combination cumulative effects during the operation phase of the Scheme.

Annex A – Pages From Published Landscape Character Assessments

LANDSCAPE TYPE D: THE BRECKS – HEATHLAND WITH PLANTATIONS

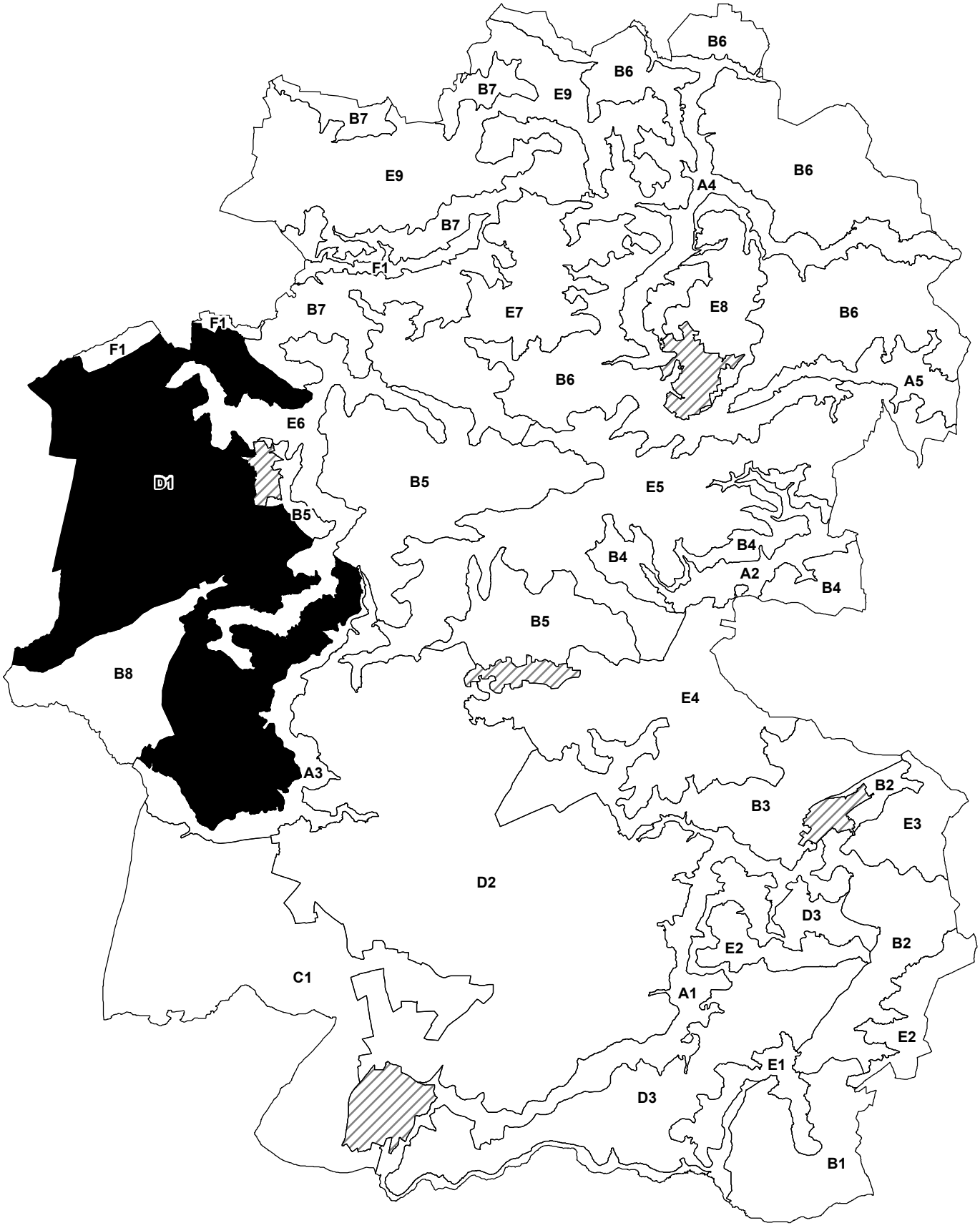
D1 This landscape type is defined primarily by the historic heathland land cover (now frequently replaced with arable fields), interspersed with small-medium scale blocks of mixed plantation woodland. The landscape type accommodates a range of land uses and has a less unified character than the *Brecks: Plantations* landscape type in view of this and the more open character created by the sparse, more varied woodland cover.

Key Characteristics

- A medium to large scale landscape characterised by areas of open farmland and heath and large coniferous plantations – changing perspectives from open to enclosed.
- River valleys cut through the Middle and Upper Chalk strata and plateaux rise to the north, creating a gently undulating landform with subtle slopes.
- Land cover is variable, ranging from intensively farmed arable fields, heathland and areas of coniferous plantation.
- Belts of twisted Scots pine, marking field boundaries and aligning roads, are sculptural features and points of focus.
- Settlement is dispersed and of low density but the urban edges of Swaffham and Thetford have an influence on the landscape.
- The skyline is prominent and for the most part wooded, defined by the solid lines of the coniferous blocks and shelter belt planting.
- Warrens, e.g. Beachamwell Warren and Gooderstone Warren are a distinctive feature.
- Views are often broken by tree cover allowing only glimpsed views into adjacent landscapes.
- Movement is variable –A roads and secondary routes bring a strong sense of movement to the landscape but away from these transport corridors, the area remains still and peaceful.
- Some large open, remote areas with few metalled roads or dwellings.

Landscape Type D: The Brecks – Heathland with Plantations
Character Area
D1 Swaffham Health
D2 Stanta Heath
D3 Harling Heathlands

D1: SWAFFHAM HEATH



D1: SWAFFHAM HEATH

Location and Boundaries

D1.1 A large area of the *Breckland Heathland with Plantation* landscape type located to the north-west, west and south west of Swaffham, with character defined primarily by the land use of arable farmland, historic parklands and plantation woodland and distinctive Scot's pine belts. To the north the character area boundary is marked by the adjacent *River Nar* character area and to the west by the district boundary and a change in character to a more settled area of farmland and plantations. To the south and east the landform falls towards the River Wissey.

Key Characteristics

- Drift deposits of sand, clay and gravel create a gently undulating landscape, with topography ranging from 10-70m AOD across the character area.
- Free draining sandy soils support the functional land cover of arable cultivation, pig farming and plantation woodland.
- Ancient, contorted scots pine shelterbelts and screening belts of trees provide shelter to the easily eroded brown soils and are a prominent landscape feature.
- At Cockleycley Heath and Swaffham Heath, the woodland plantation blocks create a visually prominent feature in the landscape.
- The large scale arable fields are delineated by hedgerows in variable condition from occasional species rich intact hedgerows with hedgerow trees, thorn hedges and pine lines.
- Breckland Farmland SSSI covers a large part of the character area – the cultivated land proving a habitat for stone curlew. A smaller area of Breckland Forest SSSI also covers part of the area.
- A large scale landscape, with an open, windswept character, quiet and seemingly remote in places.
- Historic parklands and parkland features such as lodge houses, rides/long vistas and parkland species are evident in the landscape.
- Sparsely populated - the settlement pattern is characterised by scattered Halls, farm buildings and a small number of nucleated villages and hamlets. Churches are often isolated.
- Distinctive building materials of knapped flint, clunch and brick
- The areas of open access land associated with plantations at Swaffham Heath and Coldharbour Wood provide opportunities for recreation.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

Physical/Natural

D1.2 The character area has an underlying solid chalk geology and a gently undulating plateau landform covered by a thin layer of glacial drift deposits including boulder clay and sands and gravels. The covering of drift deposits is shallower than in adjacent landscape character areas resulting in complex soils typically sandy free draining mixes of chalk, sand, silt, clay and flints.

D1.3 The light, droughty soils are prone to wind erosion. The geology and soils are reflected in the species composition of the woodland blocks, with pine being the main species. The blocks of plantation woodland and coniferous shelter belts have protected the soil from erosion and has allowed much of the landscape to be given over to arable production. In addition to arable cultivation, a number of areas are used for outdoor pig raising.

D1.4 Significant areas of the character area are covered by nature conservation designations, representing its ecological value. Large blocks of the character area are designated as part of Breckland Farmland SSSI (SPA), with the arable farmland notable for supporting almost half the stone curlews in Britain, nesting in the cultivated land favouring the areas of bare ground and very short vegetation. The majority of the Breckland Forest SSSI (SPA) lies outside of the character area, but plantation woodland at Cockleycley Heath and Swaffham Heath are parts of the SSSI. Gooderstone Warren is designated as a SPA.

D1.5 Field enclosure is provided by hedgerows of various condition and species composition. Historic, contorted scots pine wind breaks form a strong vertical feature in the flat landscape, as are localised areas of hedges of fast growing coniferous species. The grassy banks and field edges are very important to the conservation of the remnant Breckland grass-heath habitats.

D1.6 The entire character area falls within the 'Core Area' as defined by the Ecological Mapping Project for Norfolk. Core areas represent significant concentrations of high quality extant habitat. The high quality habitat represented within character area D1 is Breckland Forest and area of remnant heath.

Historic Character

D1.7 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk identifies extensive areas of heathland and common within the character area, including Beachamwell Warren and Swaffham Heath. At this time it was an exposed open landscape. These areas have now largely been planted for commercial forestry and partly absorbed within arable cultivation. The HLC data (which is partially complete for the area) shows that the three most significant influences to be piecemeal parliamentary enclosure, 18th-20th century plantation woodland, and 20th century enclosure, some with resultant boundary loss. The landscape today, is one of medium to large sized fields often being bounded by 'gappy' and degraded hedgerows.

D1.8 Plantations form significant blocks in two areas at Cockleycley Heath and Swaffham Heath. Conifer planting began in 1922 on areas of heath, and unstable sand dunes and marginal agriculture. The majority of the initial plantings reached the end of

their first rotation in the mid 1970s. Since then the harvesting of these and subsequent plantings has created a continuous supply of clear-felled areas and young plantations.

D1.9 A number of parklands both extant and remnant signify the past wealth of this part of Breckland, notably the Historic Park and Garden at Pickenham Hall and the former estate of the now destroyed Didlington Hall. Various parkland elements are visible within the character area, such as the vista to Cockleycley Hall.

Settlement and Built Character

D1.10 This is a sparsely settled landscape with a remote 'empty' quality in places. Settlement is characterised by a small number of nucleated villages generally located in proximity to and drawing on the resources of the intervening river valleys, as at Narborough (River Nar), Hilborough (River Wissey) and Cockley Cley (Gadder). In addition, there is a general pattern of dispersed farmsteads across the character area. The local vernacular is red/yellow brick and flint with occasional colour rendered buildings.

Perceptual/Visual

D1.11 This is a large scale landscape with a strong geometry – with large regular fields defined by straight rows of Scot's pine or thorn hedges, interspersed with areas of conifer plantation. In places this creates a very open, exposed and windswept landscape. There is a relatively low density of woodland blocks, although where they do exist, they are large in scale and create a notable feature within the landscape.

D1.12 Views both within the character area and to adjacent character areas are variable. In places views are distant, to the wooded skylines, to the elevated *North Pickenham Plateau* and to the *Wissey Valley*. However in other locations views are framed or contained by woodland blocks.

D1.13 The low population density and the large swathes of farmland and woodland create a peaceful, even remote landscape. Views to the wind turbines north of Swaffham in the *North Pickenham Plateau* character area add a sense of movement and activity. Some noise disturbance from RAF Marham (within the adjoining Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk) is apparent.

EVALUATION

Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

- The historic boundary features - distinctive scots pine windbreaks and hedgerows;
- Remnant parkland features such as vistas to Cockleycley Hall, flint estate walls and lodge houses which provide a sense of historical integrity;
- The varied landcover mosaic created by the plantation woodland and farmland;
- Sparse settlement and rural character of the hamlets and villages;

- The narrow, often unmarked rural lanes and tracks;
- The ecological value of the arable farmland for birds, notably stone curlew;
- Areas of remnant heathland character.

Visual Sensitivities

D1.14 A predominantly an open large scale landscape with long, open views. Within the more enclosed wooded areas vistas which were designed into the landscape as parkland features, have in places been retained. These views create surprise historical markers within the landscape and would be sensitive to unsympathetic woodland management.

D1.15 The woodland blocks create an important focus to the landscape, particularly where views are across arable fields to woodland blocks on the skyline.

Current State of the Landscape

D1.16 This is a functional managed landscape with an eroding character in places due to loss of characteristic elements, notably heathland, degraded field boundaries, and changes in farming. The arable farmland provides a valuable habitat for farmland birds.

Landscape Change

Past Change

- Agricultural enclosure and loss of heathland, plus further loss of heathland with decline in grazing;
- Conversion of parkland and heath/commons to plantation woodland;
- Declining condition of remaining areas of parkland;
- Agricultural changes including outdoor pig raising and development of water storage reservoirs on agricultural land.
- Decline of distinctive Scot's pine hedgerows;
- An increasing influence of traffic upon the landscape character with the inclusion and widening of the A47, A1122 and A1065.

Future Change

D1.17 Potential future landscape change may result from the implementation of agri-environment schemes and management to enhance ecological value. Changes in Forestry Enterprise Strategy, including heathland restoration and renewal may also have a positive effect on landscape character.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The landscape strategy should be to conserve the remote, open, sparsely settled character of the *Heathland with Plantation* landscape– restoring and enhancing the heathland character where appropriate and managing the arable farmland to enhance its ecological value, particularly for farmland birds.

Guidelines

Landscape Management

- Encourage take up of agri-environment schemes to improve the ecological value of arable farmland and to create habitat connectivity;
- Conserve and enhance the historic contorted pine wind break hedgerows through appropriate a management;
- Consider opportunities for heathland creation on areas where it has been lost, for example areas of plantation woodland;
- Ensure that any further recreation provision does not conflict with the sensitive species and habitats within the Breckland Farmland and Breckland Forest SSSI;
- Conserve the rides within parklands and plantations which provide attractive vistas to historic features, including those designated as Historic Parks and Gardens.

Development Guidelines

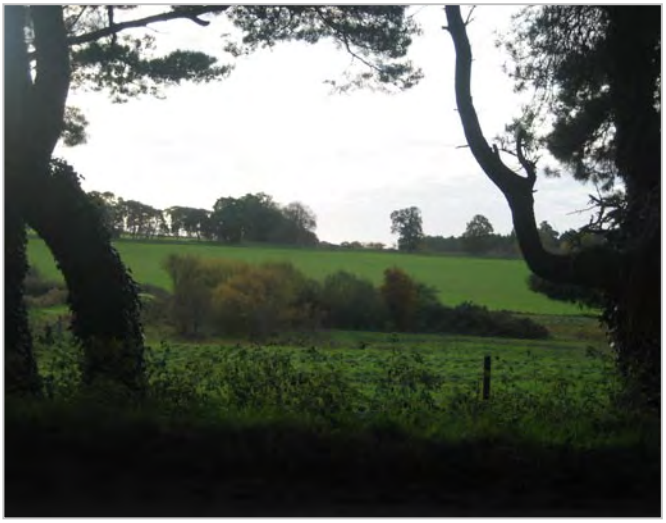
- Conserve the sparse settlement pattern of small villages associated with the edges of river valley and scattered farms;
- Ensure that any new built development fits with the local built vernacular, including use of materials (brick and flint);
- Conserve the existing rural road network, resisting traffic pressures and traffic calming measures which could have an urbanising influence;
- Consider the effect of tall or vertical structures within this very open, exposed landscape.













E6: NORTH PICKENHAM PLATEAU

Location and Boundaries

E6.1 *North Pickenham Plateau* encircles Swaffham from the northwest to the south, creating an elevated, arable plateau backdrop to the settlement. This largely flat, open landscape contrasts with the more undulating *Wissey Settled tributary farmland* and more wooded *Swaffham Heath* character areas that bound it.

Key Characteristics

- Thick Lowestoft Till glacial deposits underlie the character area creating its elevated position.
- A largely flat landscape defined by 70-75m contours.
- Due to the elevated position affords views across the adjacent Settled tributary farmland and Heathland with Plantation landscape types are possible. Church towers within adjacent character areas are distinctive and prominent in views across the character area.
- The turbines on the ridge directly north of Swaffham are visually prominent vertical structures.
- Predominantly arable agricultural land cover, with some areas of mature mixed plantation woodland in the southern part of the character area.
- Geometric/rectilinear field pattern, of large scale, defined by low, flailed hedges, with more extensively treed hedges to the network of lanes traversing the character area.
- Former marl pits are a feature of the plateau.
- Occasional osier beds are interspersed with the field network.
- Remote character with little evidence of settlement, other than isolated farms and network of semi enclosed and enclosed rural roads and lanes.
- The character area is defined by muted colour and is strongly rural. The landscape of the character area is relatively remote and peaceful, with little movement.
- Runways, disturbed ground and industrial premises associated with the former North Pickenham Airfield are apparent in the southern part of the character area.
- The historic way marked route of the Peddars Way bisects the character area in the east, together with other waymarked routes such as Procession Lane. There is a network of footpaths and bridleways across the character area.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

E6.2 The Character Area displays broadly consistent, gently undulating topography, and a large scale, rural landscape and land cover pattern.

Physical/Natural

E6.3 The physical geology of the character area is defined by glacial drift deposits of clay, silt, gravel and diamicton, which is reflected in the gently undulating, domed landform. Topography is defined by the 70-75 metre AOD contour.

E6.4 Landform is gently undulating or domed, and defined primarily by the 70-75 metre contour, and landuse is predominantly arable agriculture, defined by a large scaled field pattern with low, managed hedgerows often with drainage ditches.

E6.5 Whilst localised enclosure is provided by the hedged lanes and small scale blocks of oak-ash dominated woodland, in addition to historic scots pine dominated windbreaks the landscape is relatively open and exposed in view of the relatively sparse, large scale field pattern.

E6.6 The northern part of the character area lies within the one of the Ecological Network Mapping Project's Enhancement Area for heathland, grassland and woodland restoration, whilst the southern part of the character area, including and to the south of North Pickenham Airfield, falls within a Core Area. This is in view of the land designated as Breckland Farmland SSSI, in addition to an area of predominantly coniferous plantation woodland designated as part of Breckland Forest SSSI Forest SSSI. Breckland Farmland SSSI, which is also a SPA, is designated as such in view of the fact that it provides a breeding ground for Stone Curlew. Breckland Forest SSSI (SPA) is designated due to the fact that it provides a breeding ground for woodlark and nightjar and supports an important assemblage of nationally rare vascular plant species and a rich invertebrate fauna.

Historic Character

E6.7 Whilst the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has only been completed for the southern part of the character area, this has identified a number of historic landscape processes and pressures which have informed the present character of the landscape. These include heathland, 20th Century Enclosure and military land uses around North Pickenham Airfield.

E6.8 Faden's 1797 Map of Norfolk illustrates that the southern part of the character area was defined by common land and heathland at the end of the 18th Century, although this has subsequently been absorbed into both the arable field network and the plantations to the south of Swaffham which lie partly within this character area. The area was generally sparsely wooded in the late 18th Century. A more complex network of minor lanes, associated with isolated dwellings, is illustrated on the map, although these have largely been lost or otherwise absorbed into the agricultural landscape, sometimes surviving as tracks along field boundaries.

E6.9 The landscape of the character area is a post enclosure agricultural landscape, with a predominantly geometric field pattern defined by low, managed mixed hedgerows. This has evolved into a large scale field pattern, due to agricultural intensification.

E6.10 Localised areas of historic character and landcover survive, as at Grange Farm, with blocks of farm woodland containing veteran trees, together with densely wooded enclosed lanes. There are however few areas of designated Ancient Woodland, with the exception of a small parcel in the north eastern part of the character area.

E6.11 The line of the former Dereham branch of the Mid Norfolk Railway, built in 1882, lies in cutting, following a north-east to south-west arc across the central part of the character area, and is perceived generally by the presence of scrub vegetation and the remaining road bridges across it.

Settlement and Built Character

E6.12 There is little visual or physical evidence of historic settlement within this plateau landscape and it remains predominantly unsettled today, with occasional isolated farms and associated, relatively large modern farm buildings, notably Grange Farm, and a small, nucleated area of settlement at the cross roads at Edwin Farm, to the northern end of Sporle, which is largely outside the character area. The site of the former medieval village and associated moats of Great Palgrave adjoins the western edge of the character area.

E6.13 Sporle, whilst lying largely outside the character area, displays some use of local vernacular, with red brick and clay tiles.

E6.14 The other principal area of development within this character area are the runways and the brick built industrial premises associated with the former RAF North Pickenham Airfield.

Perceptual/Visual

E6.15 Opportunities are created for extensive and panoramic views across the plateau due to the openness of the landscape, and intervisibility with other landscape character areas is high.

E6.16 The character area as a whole is a generally simple landscape with a muted palette of colours, due to the predominantly arable agricultural land use, although with considerable seasonal variation depending on the crops planted. It is an essentially tamed rural landscape and is generally tranquil. It is remote in character due to its isolated settlement pattern.

E6.17 In terms of visual unity and perceptual/visual character, this is interrupted, with overhead power lines and pylons apparent, in addition to road noise and light glare from the A47. The wind turbines adjacent to Swaffham are prominent vertical structures in views across the south of this character area.

E6.18 In terms of use, much of the character area is a productive, working agricultural landscape. Opportunities for recreational access are however provided by a network of rights of way.

EVALUATION

Positive Landscape Features of Significance and Inherent Landscape Sensitivities

E6.19 The following are judged to be the key inherent landscape sensitivities which are fundamental to the character of the landscape.

- Dense, well treed hedgerows concentrated on the network of rural roads and lanes, in addition to localised enclosed lanes and hedgebanks with veteran trees, which impart an historic character to these parts of the landscape and provide evidence of the former landcover pattern;
- Mature trees (predominantly oak/ash) within isolated woodland blocks on the plateau are of significant landscape, biodiversity and amenity value;
- The sparse isolated settlement pattern and associated remote character, which would be compromised by further new development;
- The gently undulating landform and marl pits/clay ponds which dot the plateau;
- Localised areas of historic character associated with historic way marked routes such as Peddars Way and Procession Lane, in addition to more intact areas of Enclosure landscape;
- Presence of occasional osier beds interspersed within the field network providing local variation;
- Pine wind breaks – outgrown former hedgerows composed of Scots Pine are a locally occurring feature across the plateau and impart a sense of place and historic landcover pattern.

Visual Sensitivities

E6.20 The key visual sensitivities of this landscape relate to its elevated position and gently domed plateau landform. The landscape is exposed, due to its scale and comparatively sparse land cover. There is high intervisibility between settlements and between this and other character areas, with church towers forming a prominent element in views. Overhead power lines also form a prominent element in views, as do the wind turbines adjacent to Swaffham and the turbines and mast tower at North Pickenham.

Current State of the Landscape

E6.21 The landscape of the character area is that of a working arable agricultural landscape, and as such its visual intactness has been affected by agricultural intensification in the early and mid 20th Century and the associated removal of field boundary hedgerows. In terms of ecology the character area is, as a whole, relatively weak, with the exception of localised woodland blocks and the ancient hedgerows to the lane network. The character area is in a generally good, managed condition.

Landscape Change

Past Change

E6.22 The primary historic force for change within this character area are as follows:

- Early-mid 20th Century agricultural intensification, with the resultant loss of field boundaries and hedgerows;
- Loss of areas of common/heathland to plantations to the south of Swaffham.
- The creation of the RAF Airfield at North Pickenham in 1943-1944 further disturbed the historic field pattern.
- The turbines on North Pickenham Airfield have had a significant visual impact on the plateau landscape.

Future Change

E6.23 Potential future change may arise from further development of tall structures which could interrupt the open character of the landscape. In addition there may be the potential for expansion of residential /industrial development, e.g. associated with Swaffham or along the A47.

LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

The overall management objective should be to conserve the peaceful and rural character of the plateau and to support opportunities to recover semi natural habitats such as heathland. Key features that should be conserved include the veteran trees and the historic scots pine shelterbelts. Enhancement opportunities predominantly relate to succession planting of new hedgerow trees and reinforcement of field boundary hedgerows, which, with appropriate landscape management, would improve the integrity of the landscape and strengthen its character. There are also opportunities to restore elements that have been lost such as areas of heathland.

Guidelines

Landscape Management

- Conserve and enhance existing network of hedgerows and mature/over mature hedgerow trees, with appropriate additional and new native planting to ensure continuity of existing tree cover where it exists;
- Create new areas of set asides to field boundaries, to enhance biodiversity of cereal field margins, subject to the provisions of agri-environment schemes;
- Consider the creation of new areas of broadleaf woodland to reinforce existing farm woodlands, providing continuity of tree cover and habitat connectivity;
- Where possible, create new areas of heathland to satisfy the requirements of the EcoNet Project, by restoring some areas of farmland or plantation to this landscape type, when plantations have reached the end of their productive life;

Development Considerations

- Maintain the historically sparse development pattern and unsettled character of the plateau;
- Monitor the expansion of the few areas of settlement, to conserve individual identity and prevent gradual urban sprawl;
- Avoid the use of bunding and dense woodland screen planting, which would be uncharacteristic elements within this landscape, in proposals for screening development;
- Maintain characteristic dark night skies and consider appropriate lighting requirements for industrial premises within the area;
- Consider the effects of further tall structures on the remote character and simple uninterrupted views;
- In planning for future change, consider the scale of potential development and its effects on long views, skylines and intervisibility with surrounding character areas;
- Retain the rural character of narrow lanes and resist traffic pressures for road widening schemes/traffic calming measures, in addition to maintaining current level of low key road signage.













National Character Area profile:

85. The Brecks



NATURAL ENGLAND

www.gov.uk/natural-england

Introduction

As part of Natural England's responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper[1], Biodiversity 2020[2] and the European Landscape Convention[3], we are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs). These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

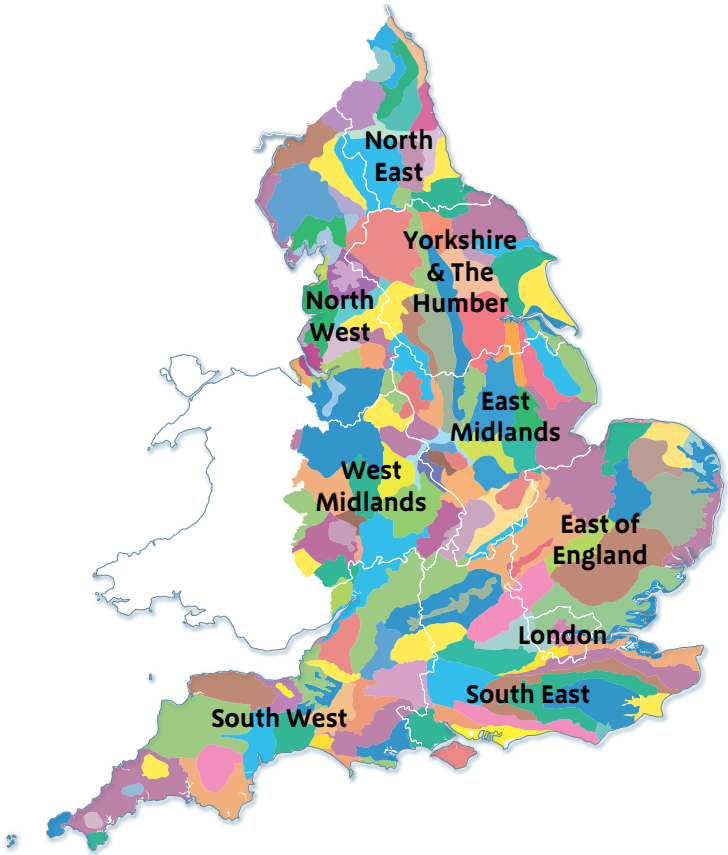
NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change.

Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information. The SEOs offer guidance on the critical issues, which could help to achieve sustainable growth and a more secure environmental future.

NCA profiles are working documents which draw on current evidence and knowledge. We will aim to refresh and update them periodically as new information becomes available to us.

We would like to hear how useful the NCA profiles are to you. You can contact the NCA team by emailing **ncaprofiles@naturalengland.org.uk**

National Character Areas map



[1] The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature, Defra (2011; URL: www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf)

[2] Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services, Defra (2011; URL: www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf)

[3] European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe (2000; URL: http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/176.htm)

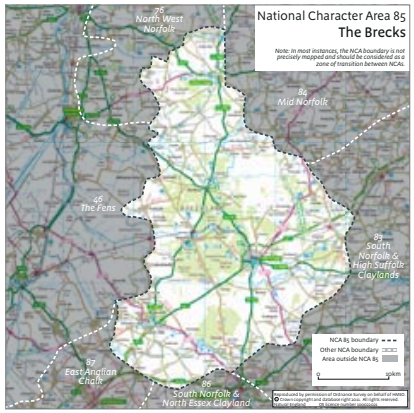
Summary

The Brecks National Character Area (NCA), also known as Breckland, lies at the heart of East Anglia, occupying much of south-western Norfolk and north-western Suffolk, together with a small part of north-eastern Cambridgeshire. The area has an ages-old identity, a very particular land use history and a richly distinctive wildlife, which sets it apart from all surrounding landscapes. Its underlying chalk geology has produced a low, gently undulating plateau, largely covered with sandy soils of glacial origin. The Brecks is sandwiched between the more fertile, and more wooded, clayland plateau to the north, east and south, and the level drained peat and silt fens to the west, which the main rivers, the Little Ouse, Wissey and Lark, drain into.

The Brecks is among the warmest and driest parts of the United Kingdom, with a markedly less maritime climate than other parts of England. This aspect, combined with its free-draining soils, has greatly influenced the landscape character and led to the development of dry heath and grassland communities. In the 19th century the area was termed a sandy waste, with small patches of arable cultivation that were soon abandoned. However, 20th-century agricultural advances have enabled the dry, low-fertility soils to be farmed and the area is now a major producer of vegetables and cereals, with over two-thirds of the land under cultivation.

The Brecks' rich and distinctive wildlife heritage has experienced extraordinary change and loss of species and habitats in just the last 60 years. The surviving remnants of dry heath and grassland support a great diversity of plants, invertebrates and breeding birds, which have also adapted to live in forestry and arable habitats. Woodlark and nightjar breed on the open heaths and recently felled areas within the vast conifer plantations of Thetford Forest (the largest area of lowland conifer forest in England), while 60 per cent of the United Kingdom's nesting stone curlew population establish nests on open ground provided by arable cultivation. A unique characteristic feature of these remnant heaths is that they often comprise complex mosaics of acid and calcareous grassland together with, in places, heather-dominated heath. Combined with the conifer plantations they contribute strongly to the sense of place. The rich biodiversity of the Brecks is recognised by the many statutory conservation designations which include the Breckland Special Protection Area, four Special Areas of Conservation, four National Nature Reserves and numerous Sites of Special Scientific Interest; together, these cover 40 per cent of the NCA's land area.

A wealth of archaeological heritage, including the Neolithic flint mines of Grime's Graves near Brandon and estate parklands such as Euston Park and Culford, also characterise the area. There are few settlements with Thetford being the main town, located on the A11 in the centre of the NCA, and Brandon, Mildenhall and Swaffham the only other settlements of any size. The larger town of Bury St Edmunds lies just outside the area to the south.



Click map to enlarge; click again to reduce.

Recent change has led to some increase in the heathland and grassland resource, through conservation efforts and changes in forestry management, which has also increased the proportion of deciduous tree species within the forested area. Uptake of the current agri-environment incentives supports the nationally and internationally important biological diversity found within the Brecks, helping to secure and increase numbers of rare farmland birds such as stone curlew, and scarce plants such as bur and sickle medick, and Spanish and sand catchfly. Increased recreational use of the forest and heathland areas, new housing around Thetford and infrastructure developments such as the dualling of the A11 continue to provide challenges and opportunities in this distinctive land of flint, sand and water. A key challenge will be to increase the establishment of sustainable land management practices that help to reduce the abstraction of water from the underground aquifer and safeguard and strengthen soils and habitats, while also providing sustainable income for land managers.



Conservation grazing by Exmoor ponies on Knettishall Heath.

Statements of Environmental Opportunity

- **SEO 1**: Conserve, enhance and increase public awareness of the distinctive historic landscape of the Brecks, which is of national and international significance, through securing and expanding its unique and varied habitat mosaic, protecting and managing its sensitive periglacial landscape and rich historic environment.

- **SEO 2**: Manage the Brecks' distinctive agricultural landscape to benefit biodiversity and soil and water quality, by promoting sustainable but productive farming practices that are able to adapt to changing agricultural economics, the considerable challenge of climate change and the increasing water stress within the NCA.

- **SEO 3**: Manage the Brecks' forest plantations and woodlands to combine commercial forestry and fuel production with a mix of habitats for rare and endangered plants and animals, enhancing both their capacity and capability as a national recreational resource and their role in climate change adaptation and regulation.

- **SEO 4**: Encourage measures which lead to the enhancement of landscape character and the historic environment, the sense of place and tranquillity, and the conservation of historic features when considering the design and location of new development and infrastructure and land management options, securing multiple benefits through the provision and management of high-quality green infrastructure networks.

Description

Physical and functional links to other National Character Areas

Spanning areas of Norfolk and Suffolk and a small part of Cambridgeshire at the centre of East Anglia, the Brecks shares with the surrounding National Character Areas (NCAs) an underlying geology of Middle and Upper Chalk, with overlying superficial deposits, originating from glacial drift deposited by the Anglian ice sheet. One of the most intriguing and uniting features of East Anglian scenery is its general flatness, forming landscapes well known for their wooded horizons and spectacular big skies. However, the Brecks' gently undulating plateau is very different from the areas that surround it, despite their similar topography.

The chalk aquifer which underlies the Brecks and adjoining NCAs provides functional links between these areas and the population of the East Anglian region whose water the aquifer supplies. In dry years the NCA's Norfolk rivers supply the Great Ouse Groundwater Scheme, which transfers groundwater to reservoirs in the Northern Thames Basin to meet public water demands in Essex and Cambridge.

The rivers Little Ouse, Lark and Wissey and their major tributaries arise to the east in the adjoining elevated South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands. They flow westwards, cutting through the Brecks' dry chalk plateau before flowing out of the NCA into the neighbouring flat expanse of the rich peaty Fens and ultimately into the Wash. The edge of the Fens and the Brecks wetland habitats rich with wildlife, connect these two distinct landscapes.

Arable farming is the predominant land use that links East Anglia's NCAs as major food producers. To the north, the arable landscape of the Brecks flows seamlessly into the managed, well-cultivated character of the 'Good Sands' of north-west Norfolk while, to the north-east, the gradual transition is to the ordered arable estate landscape of central Norfolk, which shares a similar topography to the Brecks.

To the east the landscape character of the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands differs considerably, although there is a transitional zone within which elements of discrete landscape areas mingle. This is even more apparent to the south, where the Brecks merges with the East Anglian Chalk NCA with which it shares some landscape continuity. Here the distinction between the chalklands around Newmarket and the blown sand over chalk of the Brecks is blurred.

Views between the NCA and neighbouring NCAs are often framed by areas of conifer plantation. From within the NCA the gently rolling, low landform means that there are views of varying distance, frequently shaped by pine shelterbelts and plantation blocks of Thetford Forest.

Radial road and rail routes fan out from Thetford, creating transport links to all surrounding areas, while connection to surrounding areas for the movement of animals and plants is provided through the Brecks' forest and woodlands, river valleys and wetlands and farmland networks, with their hedgerows and shelterbelts.

Distinct areas

- Thetford Forest

Key characteristics

- A largely open, gently undulating landscape with a low-lying, dry plateau that rises to the north. Subtle long slopes lead to alluvial flats containing shallow, meandering wooded river valleys.
- The chalk solid geology lies close to the surface and is covered by thin deposits of sand and flint. The effects of repeated freeze and thaw in the tundra-like climate of the last ice age have produced intricate ground patterns, with patches of calcium-rich soils interspersed with acidic conditions.
- Remnants of collapsed pingos and other ground-ice depressions which formed in periglacial conditions are typically found in the valleys, and are characteristic features at Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) such as Thompson Common, East Walton Common and Foulden Common.
- Vast commercial conifer plantations form a forest landscape, unique in lowland England. The regular geometric shape and form and the repeated occurrence of plantations and shelterbelts unify the land cover pattern, forming wooded horizons and framing views into adjacent landscapes.
- Predominantly agricultural land use focused on arable production, with planned courtyard farmsteads and large, regular 18th- and 19th-century enclosure fields often clearly defined by Scots pine and beech shelterbelts or neat hawthorn hedges, indicative of large estate enclosure. The regular field layouts combine with long, straight, undulating roads to create a geometric landscape character.
- Outdoor pigs and intensive indoor and outdoor poultry-rearing units are also characteristic.
- Free-draining geology and soils with naturally low fertility support internationally important lowland heathland and mosaics of lowland acid and calcareous grassland that bring colour and textural variation to the landscape and provide a biodiversity-rich resource.
- Narrow and meandering lush shallow river valleys (some of which contain unusually fast-flowing streams) form a marked but limited contrast to the dry, extensively arable upland catchment which they drain. All flow westward and are fed by nutrient-poor calcareous groundwater and support important wetland habitats.
- A high concentration of important archaeological features, resulting from a long continuity of human settlement, include Neolithic flint mines, medieval churches, priories and rabbit warrens, 18th- and 19th-century designed parklands and estate villages, Second World War defence features and 20th-century abandoned settlements in the military training area known as the Stanford Training Area (STANTA).
- The main population centre is Thetford with road and rail links radiating out from the town. The settlement pattern is sparse with nucleated villages scattered along the river valleys. Farm buildings and churches have considerable impact, but elsewhere the landscape is very empty. Large military air bases are a feature.



The blue Viper's Bugloss on farmland in high summer.

Key characteristics continued...

- Traditional knapped flint, clunch (a form of impure chalk) and 'white' brick are characteristic building materials.
- Away from the main A-road transport corridors where traffic is consistently busy including the A11, A1065 and A134, the area remains still and peaceful. On the approach roads to Swaffham, Watton and Thetford, vertical structures, including communications masts and the Swaffham and North Pickenham wind turbines, dominate the landscape.

Annex B – Redacted Copies of email correspondence with relevant consultees

PINS ref: [redacted]
Our ref: 24/01697/NSIPCO
Case Officer: [redacted]
Email [redacted]
Direct dial: [redacted]

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk

Via email: [redacted]
CC: [redacted]

24 January 2025

RE: The Droves Solar Farm – LVIA Consultation

Dear [redacted]

Thank you for your email and accompanying letter dated 7th January 2025 which relates to the LVIA approach for The Droves Solar Farm.

The Borough Council are in broad agreement with the representative viewpoints listed in Table 1, however the impact on both the landscape and the historic landscape are a key concern for the Borough Council and we therefore request that the following additional viewpoints are provided as follows:

1) Priory Road, Castle Acre
2) The high points of River Road and Petticoat Drove, within the site
3) At the Grade II Listed temple at Narford Lane
4) Important Views listed within the Castle Acre Neighbourhood Plan

As discussed in our meeting on 20th January 2025, the position and design of the two large substations (understood to have a site area of approx. 9ha total) will be highly relevant to the landscape and heritage impacts discussed above. We suggest a lighting impact assessment takes place to ensure that the future operational needs in regard to lighting are properly accounted for within any detailed scheme.

West Acre and Castle Acre have a very clear landscape character and the grain of fields in the surroundings will impact on mitigation opportunities. Connecting existing shelter belts and linking woodlands may impact on the openness and rural character of our Borough and so we request that mitigation areas are carefully designed with the current character and grain of fields in mind.

Please note that the above response is without prejudice to the Borough Council's future involvement. We are currently considering the involvement of a landscape specialist to provide detailed advice on the impacts on the scheme on the surrounding landscape – this was not possible within the deadline provided in your initial response.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

LDĀDESIGN

Breckland Council
Elizabeth House
Walpole Loke
Dereham
NR19 1EE

–

9485[redacted]
07 January 2025
The Droves Solar Farm - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Dear Sir/Madam,

LDA Design Consulting Ltd ('LDA Design') is appointed to provide professional landscape services for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' and is located in a largely rural area on land to the north of Swaffham and south of Castle Acre, in West Norfolk, and is wholly located within the administrative boundary of Breckland District Council. Part of LDA Design's commission is to prepare a Landscape and Visual Assessment ('LVIA'), Amenity and Recreation Assessment (ARA) and a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), all of which will be submitted as part of the forthcoming Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

A Scoping Response was provided by PINS in December 2024, which can be found on the PINS website for the project (PINS Case Reference: EN0110013), along with the Scoping Report submitted to PINS by the applicant. The programme for submission of the DCO is currently expected to be Statutory Consultation and a Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR) in Q2/3 of 2025, with the submission of the DCO to the Inspectorate expected

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Registered No. 09312403
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in November 2025. The proposed approach to the LVIA takes into account comments received as part of the Scoping Opinion.

Before undertaking the LVIA, LDA Design would like to confirm Breckland District Council's agreement to the planned approach in relation to the following:

- the LVIA methodological approach;
- the extent of the study area;
- the relevant landscape character baseline to inform the assessment of effects on landscape character; and
- the location and number of both proposed representative viewpoints and visualisations to inform the LVIA.

To meet the project programme, we will be undertaking site visits and photography during the week commencing 20 January 2025 and would therefore be grateful if you could review the information set out in this letter and confirm your agreement or return any comments you might have before 17 January 2025. If it would be helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss any details within this letter, please do let me know.

Methodology

This proposed assessment methodology was outlined within the Landscape and Visual Chapter of the project's EIA Scoping Report, which can be accessed at https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN0110013-000003-The%20Droves%20Solar%20Farm%20Scoping%20Report.pdf. The approach to the assessment will follow LDA Design's established LVIA methodology which considers impacts to landscape character, visual receptors and designated landscapes, drawing upon the established and best practice standards. Full details of the methodology used will be provided as an appendix to the LVIA.

Study Area

It is proposed that a 3km study area (defined by a 3km radius from the Site boundary) is used for the LVIA and ARA.

Based on a review of current information; Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling of proposed development within the Site; desk-based analysis; site visits in May and November 2024; and professional experience of similar projects of this nature, it is considered that a 3km study area would be sufficient to cover all potentially significant landscape and visual effects that could arise.

The extents of the 3km study area are illustrated on the attached ZTV drawing (**Figure 6-1**), which formed part of the Scoping Report. Should site analysis indicate the potential for significant effects to extend beyond 3km, this will be addressed in the LVIA and ARA.

The scope of residential properties to be included within the RVAA will initially be limited to within 800m distance of the Scheme, to take account of the potential for substation equipment up to a height of up to 15m being located within the Site. Beyond this distance, the Scheme

may be visible, but it is unlikely that it would result in any overbearing effects such that living conditions would be affected to an unacceptable degree. The extent of the study area may be refined once further detail on the location of the substation is confirmed.

Landscape Character and Designations

The LVIA will include an assessment of potential effects on the surrounding landscape character as well as considering the Site's physical internal fabric.

The Site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

There are several published assessments that describe the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, the following landscape character assessments have been identified and will be reviewed as part of the LVIA's approach:

- Natural England National Character Area Profiles.
- Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (2013)
- The Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022)
- The Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2007)

The National Character Areas provide context to the assessment but given their scale, and the presence of more detailed character areas at a local level, effects on these National Character Areas will not form the basis of the assessment.

It is proposed that the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character will be the landscape character areas that are mapped and described in the above published assessments, supplemented with information from the other published assessments and field observations. The primary assessments to be used for assessment of potential effects upon the local landscape character units are the Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022) and Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007). Further detail on the local landscape character areas and types is outlined within the EIA Scoping Report.

Viewpoints and Visual Receptor Groups

The ZTV and Site boundary illustrated on **Figure 6-1** is based on the parameters outlined within Chapter 3 of the EIA Scoping Report. The ZTV illustrates potential visibility of the tallest elements of the Proposed Development, the maximum height parameter of 15m, named 'Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation'.

As the design of the Scheme progresses and evolves, the location of the different elements of the Scheme will be refined and the ZTV will be re-run as the basis for the LVIA within the Landscape and Visual chapters of the PEIR and ES.

The ZTV is a theoretical model of potential visibility and is based on a computer-generated terrain model that does not account for all local features found on the ground, such as small woodland copses, hedgerows, individual trees and/or small built structures. As a result, the

actual extent of visibility on the ground is likely to be less than what is indicated in the modelling.

As defined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA3), representative viewpoints are selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the effects are unlikely to differ.

We have identified thirteen representative viewpoints which are proposed to be used as the basis for assessing potential visual effects within the LVIA. The locations of the proposed representative viewpoints are those originally proposed within the Scoping Report.

The representative viewpoints have been selected from publicly accessible locations to provide a proportionate range of views of the Proposed Development at different distances and directions from the Site. The viewpoint locations represent a wide range of receptors, providing a 'sample' of the potential effects from the locality, with locations purposefully selected to illustrate the range of visual effects; or specifically to ensure representation from an identified receptor. The viewpoints would be 'micro-sited' during the field surveys to represent the 'worst case scenario' or greatest extent of visibility for the particular viewpoint. Details are provided in Table 1 and locations presented on the attached drawing (**Figure 6-1**).

During the assessment process and whilst on Site, additional illustrative viewpoints may be identified; either to demonstrate the reduction of effects with distance or to specifically ensure the representation of a particularly sensitive receptor.

Table 1: Proposed Representative Viewpoints and Visualisation Approach

Representative Viewpoint	Representative Receptors	Direction & Distance	Visualisation Type
Viewpoint 1 – Castle Acre Castle	Walkers and Visitors to Castle Acre Castle	1.2km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 2 – Castle Acre Priory	Walkers and Visitors to Castle Acre Prior	0.83km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 3 – South Acre Road	PRoW users of The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path promoted route and road users along South Acre Road	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 4 - Intersection between PRoW West Acre RB7 and South Acre RB2	Users of PRoW West Acre RB7 and South Acre RB2	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 5 – Narford Lane	Road Users and Visitors to Narford Hall	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)

Viewpoint 6 – Public Access Route north of West Acre	Users of Public Access Route	1.6km, north	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 7 – Fincham Drove	Users of PRoW South Acre RB6, Fincham Drove and road users along River Road.	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 8 – Castleacre Road (A1065)	Users of PRoW Swaffham RB55 and road users along Castleacre Road	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 9 – South Acre Road	PRoW users of The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path promoted route and road users along South Acre Roa	1.26km, east	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 10 – PRoW West Acre RB3	Users of PRoW West Acre RB3	0.3km, west	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 11 – Church Green	Users of The Peddars Way Long Distance Trail and road users along Church Green	0.96km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 12 – Intersection between PRoW Swaffham RB2 and Narborough RB7a	Users of PRoW Swaffham RB2 and Narborough RB7a	1.1km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 11 – PRoW Narford RB1	Users of PRoW Narford RB1	0.93km, west	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)

Approach to Visualisations

As a minimum, all representative viewpoints will be presented as Type 1 visualisations (annotated viewpoint photographs, as outlined within 'Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals (2019)').

The representative viewpoints that are proposed for more sophisticated visualising of the Proposed Development are outlined within Table 1. Representative viewpoints proposed for Type 3 visualisations (photomontage/photowire) are viewpoint 1, 4, and 9.

Within the above TGN on visual representation, Type 3 visualisations are defined as *"photomontages or photowires (photographs with wireline overlays) where site photography forms the basis of the imagery, which is then overlaid by a 3D wireframe, massing or rendered model. Type 3 are suitable for representing proposals where precise perception of scale of the printed image, and the highest levels of locational accuracy, are not necessary."*

It is proposed that for the assessment within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), the visualisations would be of Type 3 (photowire), which would provide a

higher level representation of proposals generally showing the scale and heights of the maximum height parameters of each area of the Site, within a photographed context. For the full Environmental Statement (ES) at the submission stage, it is proposed that both parameters based Type 3 visualisations (photowire) and Type 3 (photomontage) are produced of an illustrative scheme.

It is proposed that the Type 3 visualisations illustrative photomontages would demonstrate potential views of the Proposed Development at both year 1 (demonstrating visual effects in the short term, following construction) and year 15 (demonstrating long term effects once any proposed mitigation planting has matured and established).

Cumulative Assessment

Developments that are subject to a valid planning application will be included where specific circumstances indicate there is potential for cumulative effects to occur, with progressively decreasing emphasis placed on those which are less certain to proceed. Typically, operational and consented developments are treated as being part of the landscape and visual baseline, i.e. it is assumed that consented schemes will be built except for occasional exceptions where there is good reason to assume that they will not be constructed.

High Grove Solar Farm has been identified as a cumulative scheme which will require consideration within a cumulative assessment. As part of the EIA process, the LVIA will undertake a cumulative assessment, which will consider both sites along with any other relevant cumulative developments identified as the assessment progresses. The approach and scope of developments to be included within the cumulative assessment will be agreed with relevant stakeholders.

The Scheme will take into consideration the nearby solar farm proposals and will be mindful of potential cumulative effects associated with High Grove Solar Farm.

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)

A separate Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) will be undertaken to consider the significance of effects on the private views of the surrounding properties and the acceptability of living conditions. The RVAA will be included as an appendix to the main LVIA.

The RVAA will be undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute's, Technical Guidance Note 02/2019. The scope of residential properties to be included within the RVAA will initially be limited to within 800m distance of the Scheme. Beyond this distance, the Scheme may be visible but it is unlikely that it would result in any overbearing effects such that living conditions would be affected to an unacceptable degree.

Night-Time Effects and Lighting

During the Operational Phase, the Scheme will generally remain unlit with the exception of the Customer and National Grid Substations with manually operated or motion-detection lighting utilised for operational and security purposes. The lighting design would seek to

limit any impacts on sensitive receptors through directional cowls, as secured through the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP). A separate Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA) has therefore been scoped out of the LVIA chapter. Whilst the Scoping Opinion indicates that a LIA should be prepared, it is anticipated that the lighting design for the proposed development will be such that this is not necessary.

Design and Mitigation

- The Landscape Architect plays a leading role in the design process; and the masterplanning, design and assessment stages are inevitably iterative with stages overlapping in parts. Details of any mitigation measures incorporated within the proposals to help reduce identified potential landscape and visual effects will be set out in the relevant sections of the PEIR and ES.

Next Steps

I would be grateful if you could review the information above and confirm your agreement as soon as possible. If we don't receive a response before 17.01.2025, we will proceed with the LVIA for the PEIR on the above basis and continue discussions to update viewpoint locations or any other aspects of the LVIA, ARA, and RVAA for the ES.

Should you have any queries or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at the address detail below. If more convenient to speak over the phone or via MS Teams I would be happy to arrange this.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

DRAWING TITLE:

Figure 6-1
Preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) including Woodland and Settlements

DOCUMENT:

EIA Scoping Report

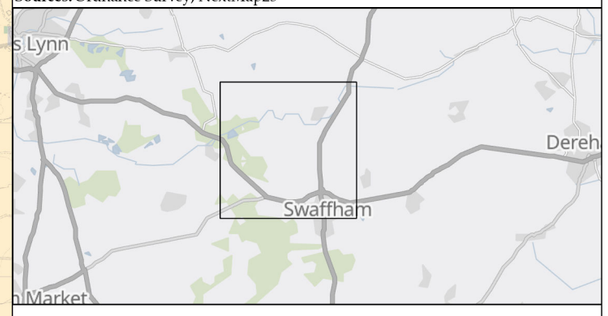
LEGEND:

- Site Boundary
- Distance from Site boundary (1,2 and 3km)
- Settlement
- Woodland
- Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation (extent as shown on Figure 2.2)
- Proposed Viewpoints

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) (computer generated)

- ZTV for Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation

Sources: Ordnance Survey, NextMap25



DWG. NO. Figure 6-1

DATE	Oct 2024	DRAWN	VW / BFr
SCALE @A3	1:40,000	CHECKED	OWh
STATUS	Final	APPROVED	RK

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All dimensions are to be checked on site.
Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

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0 — 2 Km

North

Island GREEN POWER

LDĀDESIGN

This drawing is based upon computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies produced using the viewshed routine in the ESRI ArcGIS Suite. The areas shown are the maximum theoretical visibility, taking into account topography, principal woodlands and settlements, which have been included in the model with the heights obtained from Nextmap 25. It should be noted that in some areas woodlands included within the ZTV may comprise active forestry, resulting in the felling and replanting of some areas modelled in the ZTV study. The ZTV study reflects this pattern at a specific point in time, as it is based on real height information. Whilst the felling cycle will alter the heights of different areas of forestry over time, altering localised visual effects, the wider pattern will remain relatively constant.

The model does not take into account any localised features such as small copses, hedgerows or individual trees and therefore still gives an exaggerated impression of the extent of visibility. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will be less than that suggested by this plan.

The ZTV includes an adjustment that allows for Earth's curvature and light refraction. It is based on Nextmap 25 terrain data and has a 25m^2 resolution.

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack

From: [redacted]
To:
Subject: [redacted]es Solar Farm - PINS Case reference: EN0110013
Date: 17 January 2025 12:09:00

Hello,

Was there any comments to be made on the below consultation letter? I am visiting site imminently for viewpoint photography and due to project timescales will proceed on the basis of the scope of the letter for PEIR, unless I hear otherwise.

More than happy to have a quick call to discuss anything further.

Many thanks in advance,

[redacted]

From [redacted]
Sent: 07 January 2025 18:20
To: [redacted]
Sub LVIA Consultation - The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case reference: EN0110013

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to consult and agree on the LVIA approach for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' (PINS Case reference: EN0110013).

Please see attached corresponding letter and plan, seeking agreement on the viewpoint locations and other landscape and visual matters.

I am due to visit site imminently in January, so any correspondence beforehand would be much appreciated, to ensure the PEIR assessment is robust and considers any other landscape points you deem important on top of what is mentioned within the attached letter.

Best wishes,

[redacted]

LDĀDESIGN

Natural England
County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester,
WR5 2NP,
United Kingdom

–

9485 [redacted]
07 January 2025
The Droves Solar Farm - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Dear Sir/Madam,

LDA Design Consulting Ltd ('LDA Design') is appointed to provide professional landscape services for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' and is located in a largely rural area on land to the north of Swaffham and south of Castle Acre, in West Norfolk, and is wholly located within the administrative boundary of Breckland District Council. Part of LDA Design's commission is to prepare a Landscape and Visual Assessment ('LVIA'), Amenity and Recreation Assessment (ARA) and a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), all of which will be submitted as part of the forthcoming Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

A Scoping Response was provided by PINS in December 2024, which can be found on the PINS website for the project (PINS Case Reference: EN0110013), along with the Scoping Report submitted to PINS by the applicant. The programme for submission of the DCO is currently expected to be Statutory Consultation and a Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR) in Q2/3 of 2025, with the submission of the DCO to the Inspectorate expected

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W www.lda-design.co.uk

LDA Design Consulting Ltd
Registered No. 09312403
17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough, PE1 1XX

in November 2025. The proposed approach to the LVIA takes into account comments received as part of the Scoping Opinion.

Before undertaking the LVIA, LDA Design would like to confirm Natural England's agreement to the planned approach in relation to the following:

- the location and number of the proposed representative viewpoints used to inform the photowire's and photomontages, presented within the LVIA. Please refer to proposed visualisation type and location as outlined within **Table 1** below.

Other relevant information regarding the proposed methodology, study area and scope of the LVIA are included below to help inform Natural England's position on agreement of visualisations. To meet the project programme, we will be undertaking site visits and photography during the week commencing 20 January 2025 and would therefore be grateful if you could review the information set out in this letter and confirm your agreement or return any comments you might have before 17 January 2025. If it would be helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss any details within this letter, please do let me know.

Methodology

This proposed assessment methodology was outlined within the Landscape and Visual Chapter of the project's EIA Scoping Report, which can be accessed at https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN0110013-000003-The%20Droves%20Solar%20Farm%20Scoping%20Report.pdf. The approach to the assessment will follow LDA Design's established LVIA methodology which considers impacts to landscape character, visual receptors and designated landscapes, drawing upon the established and best practice standards. Full details of the methodology used will be provided as an appendix to the LVIA.

Study Area

It is proposed that a 3km study area (defined by a 3km radius from the Site boundary) is used for the LVIA and ARA.

Based on a review of current information; Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling of proposed development within the Site; desk-based analysis; site visits in May and November 2024; and professional experience of similar projects of this nature, it is considered that a 3km study area would be sufficient to cover all potentially significant landscape and visual effects that could arise.

The extents of the 3km study area are illustrated on the attached ZTV drawing (**Figure 6-1**), which formed part of the Scoping Report. Should site analysis indicate the potential for significant effects to extend beyond 3km, this will be addressed in the LVIA and ARA.

The scope of residential properties to be included within the RVAA will initially be limited to within 800m distance of the Scheme, to take account of the potential for substation equipment up to a height of up to 15m being located within the Site. Beyond this distance, the Scheme may be visible, but it is unlikely that it would result in any overbearing effects such that

living conditions would be affected to an unacceptable degree. The extent of the study area may be refined once further detail on the location of the substation is confirmed.

Landscape Character and Designations

The LVIA will include an assessment of potential effects on the surrounding landscape character as well as considering the Site's physical internal fabric.

The Site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

There are several published assessments that describe the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, the following landscape character assessments have been identified and will be reviewed as part of the LVIA's approach:

- Natural England National Character Area Profiles.
- Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (2013)
- The Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022)
- The Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2007)

The National Character Areas provide context to the assessment but given their scale, and the presence of more detailed character areas at a local level, effects on these National Character Areas will not form the basis of the assessment.

It is proposed that the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character will be the landscape character areas that are mapped and described in the above published assessments, supplemented with information from the other published assessments and field observations. The primary assessments to be used for assessment of potential effects upon the local landscape character units are the Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022) and Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007). Further detail on the local landscape character areas and types is outlined within the EIA Scoping Report.

Viewpoints and Visual Receptor Groups

The ZTV and Site boundary illustrated on **Figure 6-1** is based on the parameters outlined within Chapter 3 of the EIA Scoping Report. The ZTV illustrates potential visibility of the tallest elements of the Proposed Development, the maximum height parameter of 15m, named 'Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation'.

As the design of the Scheme progresses and evolves, the location of the different elements of the Scheme will be refined and the ZTV will be re-run as the basis for the LVIA within the Landscape and Visual chapters of the PEIR and ES.

The ZTV is a theoretical model of potential visibility and is based on a computer-generated terrain model that does not account for all local features found on the ground, such as small woodland copses, hedgerows, individual trees and/or small built structures. As a result, the

actual extent of visibility on the ground is likely to be less than what is indicated in the modelling.

As defined in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA3), representative viewpoints are selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptor, where larger numbers of viewpoints cannot all be included individually and where the effects are unlikely to differ.

We have identified thirteen representative viewpoints which are proposed to be used as the basis for assessing potential visual effects within the LVIA. The locations of the proposed representative viewpoints are those originally proposed within the Scoping Report.

The representative viewpoints have been selected from publicly accessible locations to provide a proportionate range of views of the Proposed Development at different distances and directions from the Site. The viewpoint locations represent a wide range of receptors, providing a 'sample' of the potential effects from the locality, with locations purposefully selected to illustrate the range of visual effects; or specifically to ensure representation from an identified receptor. The viewpoints would be 'micro-sited' during the field surveys to represent the 'worst case scenario' or greatest extent of visibility for the particular viewpoint. Details are provided in Table 1 and locations presented on the attached drawing (**Figure 6-1**).

During the assessment process and whilst on Site, additional illustrative viewpoints may be identified; either to demonstrate the reduction of effects with distance or to specifically ensure the representation of a particularly sensitive receptor.

Table 1: Proposed Representative Viewpoints and Visualisation Approach

Representative Viewpoint	Representative Receptors	Direction & Distance	Visualisation Type
Viewpoint 1 – Castle Acre Castle	Walkers and Visitors to Castle Acre Castle	1.2km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 2 – Castle Acre Priory	Walkers and Visitors to Castle Acre Prior	0.83km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 3 – South Acre Road	PRoW users of The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path promoted route and road users along South Acre Road	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 4 - Intersection between PRoW West Acre RB7 and South Acre RB2	Users of PRoW West Acre RB7 and South Acre RB2	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 5 – Narford Lane	Road Users and Visitors to Narford Hall	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)

Viewpoint 6 – Public Access Route north of West Acre	Users of Public Access Route	1.6km, north	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 7 – Fincham Drove	Users of PRoW South Acre RB6, Fincham Drove and road users along River Road.	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 8 – Castleacre Road (A1065)	Users of PRoW Swaffham RB55 and road users along Castleacre Road	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 9 – South Acre Road	PRoW users of The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path promoted route and road users along South Acre Roa	1.26km, east	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 10 – PRoW West Acre RB3	Users of PRoW West Acre RB3	0.3km, west	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 11 – Church Green	Users of The Peddars Way Long Distance Trail and road users along Church Green	0.96km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 12 – Intersection between PRoW Swaffham RB2 and Narborough RB7a	Users of PRoW Swaffham RB2 and Narborough RB7a	1.1km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 11 – PRoW Narford RB1	Users of PRoW Narford RB1	0.93km, west	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)

Approach to Visualisations

As a minimum, all representative viewpoints will be presented as Type 1 visualisations (annotated viewpoint photographs, as outlined within 'Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals (2019)').

The representative viewpoints that are proposed for more sophisticated visualising of the Proposed Development are outlined within Table 1. Representative viewpoints proposed for Type 3 visualisations (photomontage/photowire) are viewpoint 1, 4, and 9.

Within the above TGN on visual representation, Type 3 visualisations are defined as *"photomontages or photowires (photographs with wireline overlays) where site photography forms the basis of the imagery, which is then overlaid by a 3D wireframe, massing or rendered model. Type 3 are suitable for representing proposals where precise perception of scale of the printed image, and the highest levels of locational accuracy, are not necessary."*

It is proposed that for the assessment within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), the visualisations would be of Type 3 (photowire), which would provide a

higher level representation of proposals generally showing the scale and heights of the maximum height parameters of each area of the Site, within a photographed context. For the full Environmental Statement (ES) at the submission stage, it is proposed that both parameters based Type 3 visualisations (photowire) and Type 3 (photomontage) are produced of an illustrative scheme.

It is proposed that the Type 3 visualisations illustrative photomontages would demonstrate potential views of the Proposed Development at both year 1 (demonstrating visual effects in the short term, following construction) and year 15 (demonstrating long term effects once any proposed mitigation planting has matured and established).

Cumulative Assessment

Developments that are subject to a valid planning application will be included where specific circumstances indicate there is potential for cumulative effects to occur, with progressively decreasing emphasis placed on those which are less certain to proceed. Typically, operational and consented developments are treated as being part of the landscape and visual baseline, i.e. it is assumed that consented schemes will be built except for occasional exceptions where there is good reason to assume that they will not be constructed.

High Grove Solar Farm has been identified as a cumulative scheme which will require consideration within a cumulative assessment. As part of the EIA process, the LVIA will undertake a cumulative assessment, which will consider both sites along with any other relevant cumulative developments identified as the assessment progresses. The approach and scope of developments to be included within the cumulative assessment will be agreed with relevant stakeholders.

The Scheme will take into consideration the nearby solar farm proposals and will be mindful of potential cumulative effects associated with High Grove Solar Farm.

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)

A separate Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) will be undertaken to consider the significance of effects on the private views of the surrounding properties and the acceptability of living conditions. The RVAA will be included as an appendix to the main LVIA.

The RVAA will be undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute's, Technical Guidance Note 02/2019. The scope of residential properties to be included within the RVAA will initially be limited to within 800m distance of the Scheme. Beyond this distance, the Scheme may be visible but it is unlikely that it would result in any overbearing effects such that living conditions would be affected to an unacceptable degree.

Night-Time Effects and Lighting

During the Operational Phase, the Scheme will generally remain unlit with the exception of the Customer and National Grid Substations with manually operated or motion-detection lighting utilised for operational and security purposes. The lighting design would seek to

limit any impacts on sensitive receptors through directional cowls, as secured through the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP). A separate Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA) has therefore been scoped out of the LVIA chapter. Whilst the Scoping Opinion indicates that a LIA should be prepared, it is anticipated that the lighting design for the proposed development will be such that this is not necessary.

Design and Mitigation

- The Landscape Architect plays a leading role in the design process; and the masterplanning, design and assessment stages are inevitably iterative with stages overlapping in parts. Details of any mitigation measures incorporated within the proposals to help reduce identified potential landscape and visual effects will be set out in the relevant sections of the PEIR and ES.

Next Steps

I would be grateful if you could review the information above and confirm your agreement as soon as possible. If we don't receive a response before 17.01.2025, we will proceed with the LVIA for the PEIR on the above basis and continue discussions to update viewpoint locations or any other aspects of the LVIA, ARA, and RVAA for the ES.

Should you have any queries or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at the address detail below. If more convenient to speak over the phone or via MS Teams I would be happy to arrange this.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

[redacted]

THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

DRAWING TITLE:

Figure 6-1
Preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) including Woodland and Settlements

DOCUMENT:

EIA Scoping Report

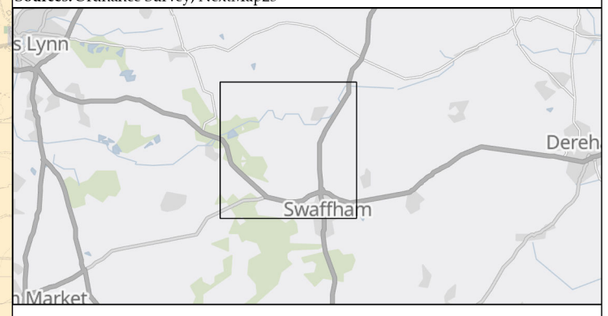
LEGEND:

- Site Boundary
- Distance from Site boundary (1,2 and 3km)
- Settlement
- Woodland
- Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation (extent as shown on Figure 2.2)
- Proposed Viewpoints

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) (computer generated)

- ZTV for Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation

Sources: Ordnance Survey, NextMap25



DWG. NO. Figure 6-1

DATE	Oct 2024	DRAWN	VW / BFr
SCALE @A3	1:40,000	CHECKED	OWh
STATUS	Final	APPROVED	RK

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Island GREEN POWER

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This drawing is based upon computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies produced using the viewshed routine in the ESRI ArcGIS Suite. The areas shown are the maximum theoretical visibility, taking into account topography, principal woodlands and settlements, which have been included in the model with the heights obtained from Nextmap 25. It should be noted that in some areas woodlands included within the ZTV may comprise active forestry, resulting in the felling and replanting of some areas modelled in the ZTV study. The ZTV study reflects this pattern at a specific point in time, as it is based on real height information. Whilst the felling cycle will alter the heights of different areas of forestry over time, altering localised visual effects, the wider pattern will remain relatively constant.

The model does not take into account any localised features such as small copses, hedgerows or individual trees and therefore still gives an exaggerated impression of the extent of visibility. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will be less than that suggested by this plan.

The ZTV includes an adjustment that allows for Earth's curvature and light refraction. It is based on Nextmap 25 terrain data and has a 25m^2 resolution.

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From: [redacted]
To:
Subject: RE: 2025-01-28 498314 LVIA Visualisation Consultation - The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case reference: EN0110013
Date: 17 January 2025 15:54:12
Attachments: image002.png

Dea [redacted]

Thank you for your email.

This proposal does not appear to be either located within, or within the setting of, any nationally designated landscape and therefore Natural England does not have remit to comment. All proposals however should complement and where possible enhance local distinctiveness and be guided by the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) landscape character assessment where available, and the policies protecting landscape character in the relevant LPA's local plan or development framework.

For future reference, any advice you require from Natural England on NSIPs will require a contract as all our advice on NSIPs is now chargeable.

Kind regards,

[redacted]
[redacted]Sustainable Development | Norfolk & Suffolk
Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich NR3 1UB
[redacted]
www.gov.uk/natural-england



From [redacted]
Sent: 07 January 2025 18:08
To
Cc:
Subject: LVIA Visualisation Consultation - The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case reference: EN0110013

> Some people who received this message don't often get email from olli.wheeler@lda-design.co.uk. Learn why this is important

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to consult and agree on the LVIA approach for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' (PINS Case reference: EN0110013).

Please see attached corresponding letter and plan, seeking agreement on the locations of visualisations to be produced as part of the LVIA.

I am due to visit site imminently, so any correspondence beforehand would be much appreciated, to ensure the PEIR and main ES assessment include visualisations that are appropriately located, from Natural England's perspective.

Best wishes,

[redacted]

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NR1 2DH

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948 [redacted]
23 D ber 2024
The Droves Solar Farm - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Dea [redacted]

LDA Design Consulting Ltd ('LDA Design') is appointed to provide professional landscape services for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' and is located in a largely rural area on land to the north of Swaffham and south of Castle Acre, in West Norfolk, and is wholly located within the administrative boundary of Breckland District Council. Part of LDA Design's commission is to prepare a Landscape and Visual Assessment ('LVIA'), Amenity and Recreation Assessment (ARA) and a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), all of which will be submitted as part of the forthcoming Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

A Scoping Response was provided by PINS in December 2024, which can be found on the PINS website for the project (PINS Case Reference: EN0110013), along with the Scoping Report submitted to PINS by the applicant. The programme for submission of the DCO is currently expected to be Statutory Consultation and a Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR) in Q2/3 of 2025, with the submission of the DCO to the Inspectorate expected

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LDA Design Consulting Ltd
Registered No. 09312403
17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough, PE1 1XX

in November 2025. The proposed approach to the LVIA takes into account comments received as part of the Scoping Opinion.

Before undertaking the LVIA, LDA Design would like to confirm Norfolk County Council's agreement to the planned approach in relation to the following:

- the LVIA methodological approach;
- the extent of the study area;
- the relevant landscape character baseline to inform the assessment of effects on landscape character; and
- the location and number of both proposed representative viewpoints and visualisations to inform the LVIA.

To meet the project programme, we will be undertaking site visits and photography during the week commencing 20 January 2025 and would therefore be grateful if you could review the information set out in this letter and confirm your agreement or return any comments you might have before 17 January 2025. If it would be helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss any details within this letter, please do let me know.

Ww would also like to agree the approach to the LVIA, ARA and RVAA with officers at Breckland District and Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, but have been unable to obtain their contact details to date. We will approach the relevant case officers at each Council, but if you have details of relevant Landscape Officers that you are able to share, that would be much appreciated.

Methodology

This proposed assessment methodology was outlined within the Landscape and Visual Chapter of the project's EIA Scoping Report, which can be accessed at https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN0110013-000003-The%20Droves%20Solar%20Farm%20Scoping%20Report.pdf. The approach to the assessment will follow LDA Design's established LVIA methodology which considers impacts to landscape character, visual receptors and designated landscapes, drawing upon the established and best practice standards. Full details of the methodology used will be provided as an appendix to the LVIA.

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It is proposed that a 3km study area (defined by a 3km radius from the Site boundary) is used for the LVIA and ARA.

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The scope of residential properties to be included within the RVAA will initially be limited to within 800m distance of the Scheme, to take account of the potential for substation equipment up to a height of up to 15m being located within the Site. Beyond this distance, the Scheme may be visible, but it is unlikely that it would result in any overbearing effects such that living conditions would be affected to an unacceptable degree. The extent of the study area may be refined once further detail on the location of the substation is confirmed.

Landscape Character and Designations

The LVIA will include an assessment of potential effects on the surrounding landscape character as well as considering the Site's physical internal fabric.

The Site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

There are several published assessments that describe the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, the following landscape character assessments have been identified and will be reviewed as part of the LVIA's approach:

- Natural England National Character Area Profiles.
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- The Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022)
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The National Character Areas provide context to the assessment but given their scale, and the presence of more detailed character areas at a local level, effects on these National Character Areas will not form the basis of the assessment.

It is proposed that the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character will be the landscape character areas that are mapped and described in the above published assessments, supplemented with information from the other published assessments and field observations. The primary assessments to be used for assessment of potential effects upon the local landscape character units are the Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022) and Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007). Further detail on the local landscape character areas and types is outlined within the EIA Scoping Report.

Viewpoints and Visual Receptor Groups

The ZTV and Site boundary illustrated on **Figure 6-1** is based on the parameters outlined within Chapter 3 of the EIA Scoping Report. The ZTV illustrates potential visibility of the tallest elements of the Proposed Development, the maximum height parameter of 15m, named 'Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation'.

As the design of the Scheme progresses and evolves, the location of the different elements of the Scheme will be refined and the ZTV will be re-run as the basis for the LVIA within the Landscape and Visual chapters of the PEIR and ES.

The ZTV is a theoretical model of potential visibility and is based on a computer-generated terrain model that does not account for all local features found on the ground, such as small woodland copses, hedgerows, individual trees and/or small built structures. As a result, the actual extent of visibility on the ground is likely to be less than what is indicated in the modelling.

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The representative viewpoints have been selected from publicly accessible locations to provide a proportionate range of views of the Proposed Development at different distances and directions from the Site. The viewpoint locations represent a wide range of receptors, providing a 'sample' of the potential effects from the locality, with locations purposefully selected to illustrate the range of visual effects; or specifically to ensure representation from an identified receptor. The viewpoints would be 'micro-sited' during the field surveys to represent the 'worst case scenario' or greatest extent of visibility for the particular viewpoint. Details are provided in Table 1 and locations presented on the attached drawing (**Figure 6-1**).

During the assessment process and whilst on Site, additional illustrative viewpoints may be identified; either to demonstrate the reduction of effects with distance or to specifically ensure the representation of a particularly sensitive receptor.

Table 1: Proposed Representative Viewpoints and Visualisation Approach

Representative Viewpoint	Representative Receptors	Direction & Distance	Visualisation Type
Viewpoint 1 – Castle Acre Castle	Walkers and Visitors to Castle Acre Castle	1.2km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 2 – Castle Acre Priory	Walkers and Visitors to Castle Acre Prior	0.83km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 3 – South Acre Road	PRoW users of The Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path promoted route and road users along South Acre Road	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)

Viewpoint 4 - Intersection between PRoW West Acre RB7 and South Acre RB2	Users of PRoW West Acre RB7 and South Acre RB2	0km, adjacent to Site	Type 1 (PEIR, ES) Type 3 (PEIR, ES)
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Viewpoint 6 – Public Access Route north of West Acre	Users of Public Access Route	1.6km, north	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
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Viewpoint 10 – PRoW West Acre RB3	Users of PRoW West Acre RB3	0.3km, west	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
Viewpoint 11 – Church Green	Users of The Peddars Way Long Distance Trail and road users along Church Green	0.96km, northeast	Type 1 (PEIR, ES)
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Approach to Visualisations

As a minimum, all representative viewpoints will be presented as Type 1 visualisations (annotated viewpoint photographs, as outlined within 'Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 – Visual Representation of Development Proposals (2019)').

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Design and Mitigation

The Landscape Architect plays a leading role in the design process; and the masterplanning, design and assessment stages are inevitably iterative with stages overlapping in parts. Details of any mitigation measures incorporated within the proposals to help reduce identified potential landscape and visual effects will be set out in the relevant sections of the PEIR and ES.

Next Steps

I would be grateful if you could review the information above and confirm your agreement as soon as possible. If we don't receive a response before 17.01.2025, we will proceed with the LVIA for the PEIR on the above basis and continue discussions to update viewpoint locations or any other aspects of the LVIA, ARA, and RVAA for the ES.

Should you have any queries or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at the address detail below. If more convenient to speak over the phone or via MS Teams I would be happy to arrange this.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

[redacted]

THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

DRAWING TITLE:

Figure 6-1
Preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) including Woodland and Settlements

DOCUMENT:

EIA Scoping Report

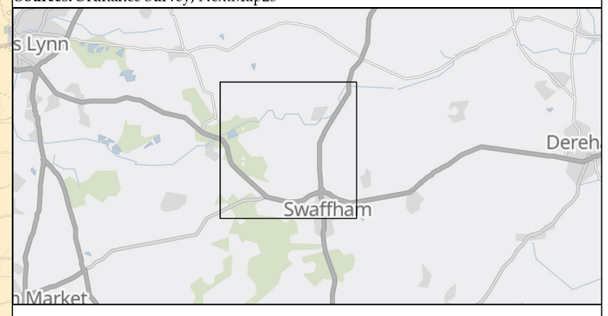
LEGEND:

- Site Boundary
- Distance from Site boundary (1,2 and 3km)
- Settlement
- Woodland
- Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation (extent as shown on Figure 2.2)
- Proposed Viewpoints

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) (computer generated)

- ZTV for Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation

Sources: Ordnance Survey, NextMap25



DWG. NO. Figure 6-1

DATE	Oct 2024	DRAWN	VW / BFr
SCALE @A3	1:40,000	CHECKED	OWh
STATUS	Final	APPROVED	RK

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All dimensions are to be checked on site.
Area measurements for indicative purposes only.

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0 — 2 Km

North

Island GREEN POWER

LDĀDESIGN

This drawing is based upon computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies produced using the viewshed routine in the ESRI ArcGIS Suite. The areas shown are the maximum theoretical visibility, taking into account topography, principal woodlands and settlements, which have been included in the model with the heights obtained from Nextmap 25. It should be noted that in some areas woodlands included within the ZTV may comprise active forestry, resulting in the felling and replanting of some areas modelled in the ZTV study. The ZTV study reflects this pattern at a specific point in time, as it is based on real height information. Whilst the felling cycle will alter the heights of different areas of forestry over time, altering localised visual effects, the wider pattern will remain relatively constant.

The model does not take into account any localised features such as small copses, hedgerows or individual trees and therefore still gives an exaggerated impression of the extent of visibility. The actual extent of visibility on the ground will be less than that suggested by this plan.

The ZTV includes an adjustment that allows for Earth's curvature and light refraction. It is based on Nextmap 25 terrain data and has a 25m^2 resolution.

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack

From: [redacted]
To:
Subject: RE: LVIA Consultation - The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case reference: EN0110013
Date: 17 January 2025 12:07:00

Hi [redacted]

Do you have any comment on the below consultation letter? I am visiting site imminently for viewpoint photography and due to project timescales will proceed on the basis of the scope of the letter for PEIR, unless I hear otherwise.

More than happy to have a quick call to discuss anything further.

Many thanks in advance,
[redacted]

From: [redacted]
Sent: 23 December 2024 13:13
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]

Subject: LVIA Consultation - The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case reference: EN0110013

Dear [redacted]

I am writing to consult and agree on the LVIA approach for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' (PINS Case reference: EN0110013).

Please see attached corresponding letter and plan, seeking agreement on the viewpoint locations and other landscape and visual matters.

I am due to visit site in January, so any correspondence beforehand would be much appreciated, to ensure the PEIR assessment is robust and considers any other landscape points you deem important on top of what is mentioned within the attached letter.

Best wishes,
[redacted]

LDĀDESIGN

King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council
King's Court,
Chapel St,
King's Lynn
PE30 1EX
SENT VIA EMAIL

9485/[redacted]
07 January 2025
The Droves Solar Farm - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Dear Sir/Madam,

LDA Design Consulting Ltd ('LDA Design') is appointed to provide professional landscape services for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' and is located in a largely rural area on land to the north of Swaffham and south of Castle Acre, in West Norfolk, and is wholly located within the administrative boundary of Breckland District Council. Part of LDA Design's commission is to prepare a Landscape and Visual Assessment ('LVIA'), Amenity and Recreation Assessment (ARA) and a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), all of which will be submitted as part of the forthcoming Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

A Scoping Response was provided by PINS in December 2024, which can be found on the PINS website for the project (PINS Case Reference: EN0110013), along with the Scoping Report submitted to PINS by the applicant. The programme for submission of the DCO is currently expected to be Statutory Consultation and a Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR) in Q2/3 of 2025, with the submission of the DCO to the Inspectorate expected

A 17 Minster Precincts
Peterborough
PE1 1XX
United Kingdom
T [redacted]

W www.lda-design.co.uk

LDA Design Consulting Ltd
Registered No. 09312403
17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough, PE1 1XX

in November 2025. The proposed approach to the LVIA takes into account comments received as part of the Scoping Opinion.

Before undertaking the LVIA, LDA Design would like to confirm King's Lynn and West Norfolk Council's agreement to the planned approach in relation to the following:

- the LVIA methodological approach;
- the extent of the study area;
- the relevant landscape character baseline to inform the assessment of effects on landscape character; and
- the location and number of both proposed representative viewpoints and visualisations to inform the LVIA.

To meet the project programme, we will be undertaking site visits and photography during the week commencing 20 January 2025 and would therefore be grateful if you could review the information set out in this letter and confirm your agreement or return any comments you might have before 17 January 2025. If it would be helpful to arrange a meeting to discuss any details within this letter, please do let me know.

Methodology

This proposed assessment methodology was outlined within the Landscape and Visual Chapter of the project's EIA Scoping Report, which can be accessed at https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN0110013-000003-The%20Droves%20Solar%20Farm%20Scoping%20Report.pdf. The approach to the assessment will follow LDA Design's established LVIA methodology which considers impacts to landscape character, visual receptors and designated landscapes, drawing upon the established and best practice standards. Full details of the methodology used will be provided as an appendix to the LVIA.

Study Area

It is proposed that a 3km study area (defined by a 3km radius from the Site boundary) is used for the LVIA and ARA.

Based on a review of current information; Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) modelling of proposed development within the Site; desk-based analysis; site visits in May and November 2024; and professional experience of similar projects of this nature, it is considered that a 3km study area would be sufficient to cover all potentially significant landscape and visual effects that could arise.

The extents of the 3km study area are illustrated on the attached ZTV drawing (**Figure 6-1**), which formed part of the Scoping Report. Should site analysis indicate the potential for significant effects to extend beyond 3km, this will be addressed in the LVIA and ARA.

The scope of residential properties to be included within the RVAA will initially be limited to within 800m distance of the Scheme, to take account of the potential for substation equipment up to a height of up to 15m being located within the Site. Beyond this distance, the Scheme

may be visible, but it is unlikely that it would result in any overbearing effects such that living conditions would be affected to an unacceptable degree. The extent of the study area may be refined once further detail on the location of the substation is confirmed.

Landscape Character and Designations

The LVIA will include an assessment of potential effects on the surrounding landscape character as well as considering the Site's physical internal fabric.

The Site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory landscape designations.

There are several published assessments that describe the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, the following landscape character assessments have been identified and will be reviewed as part of the LVIA's approach:

- Natural England National Character Area Profiles.
- Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks Landscape Character Assessment (2013)
- The Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022)
- The Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Landscape Character Assessment (2007)

The National Character Areas provide context to the assessment but given their scale, and the presence of more detailed character areas at a local level, effects on these National Character Areas will not form the basis of the assessment.

It is proposed that the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character will be the landscape character areas that are mapped and described in the above published assessments, supplemented with information from the other published assessments and field observations. The primary assessments to be used for assessment of potential effects upon the local landscape character units are the Breckland Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2022) and Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment (2007). Further detail on the local landscape character areas and types is outlined within the EIA Scoping Report.

Viewpoints and Visual Receptor Groups

The ZTV and Site boundary illustrated on **Figure 6-1** is based on the parameters outlined within Chapter 3 of the EIA Scoping Report. The ZTV illustrates potential visibility of the tallest elements of the Proposed Development, the maximum height parameter of 15m, named 'Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation'.

As the design of the Scheme progresses and evolves, the location of the different elements of the Scheme will be refined and the ZTV will be re-run as the basis for the LVIA within the Landscape and Visual chapters of the PEIR and ES.

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[redacted]

[redacted]

THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

DRAWING TITLE:

Figure 6-1
Preliminary Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) including Woodland and Settlements

DOCUMENT:

EIA Scoping Report

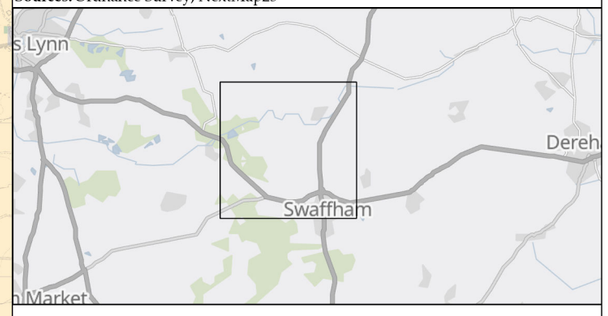
LEGEND:

- Site Boundary
- Distance from Site boundary (1,2 and 3km)
- Settlement
- Woodland
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- Proposed Viewpoints

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) (computer generated)

- ZTV for Solar PV Site, Associated Development and Customer and National Grid Substation

Sources: Ordnance Survey, NextMap25



DWG. NO. Figure 6-1

DATE	Oct 2024	DRAWN	VW / BFr
SCALE @A3	1:40,000	CHECKED	OWh
STATUS	Final	APPROVED	RK

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0 — 2 Km

North

Island GREEN POWER

LDĀDESIGN

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack

From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Our Ref: 24/01697/NSIPCO The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case Reference EN0110013
Date: 08 January 2025 10:46:41
Attachments: image002.png
image003.png
image004.png
image005.png

De [redacted]

Thanks for the response.

I will make contact with Emma direct.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

From [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 10:02 AM
To [redacted]
Cc [redacted]
Subject: RE: Our Ref: 24/01697/NSIPCO The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case Reference EN0110013

Dear [redacted]

Many thanks for your response.

I appreciated the turnaround is fairly swift, which is broadly dictated by the project programme working towards PEIR stage. Would the following week be achievable for a response, by Friday 24th January? If not, then a response issued as close to those dates as possible would be appreciated, to inform any additional LVIA inputs that may need to be covered before the PEIR assessment.

The main planning contact for The Droves Solar Farm is Emma-Jane Hayward, at DWD (cc'd to this email).

Best wishes,
[redacted]

[redacted]

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17 [redacted]
Tel
em
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From [redacted]
Sent:
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: Our Ref: 24/01697/NSIPCO The Droves Solar Farm - PINS Case Reference EN0110013

Dea [redacted]

Thank you for your email and attachments.

Your suggested timescale is very tight given that we do not have a Landscape Officer in house that would be able to provide full comments. What flexibility is there please?

Also, can you provide the main planning contact details please for this project.

Many thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

From: [redacted]
Sent: W
To [redacted]
Subject: 24/01697/NSIPCO The Droves Solar

From: [redacted]
Se
To [redacted]
Su rence: EN0110013

[External Email]
[Confirm the senders email address is genuine, before clicking on links and replying]

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to consult and agree on the LVIA approach for a proposed development comprising solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station, and associated development including Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Ancillary Infrastructure, a Customer Substation and Grid Connection Infrastructure (including a new National Grid Substation). The proposed development is known as 'The Droves Solar Farm' (PINS Case reference: EN0110013).

Please see attached corresponding letter and plan, seeking agreement on the viewpoint locations and other landscape and visual matters.

I am due to visit site imminently in January, so any correspondence beforehand would be much appreciated, to ensure the PEIR assessment is robust and considers any other landscape points you deem important on top of what is mentioned within the attached letter.

wishes,

[redacted]

[redacted]

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17 Minster Precincts, Peterborough, PE1 1XX
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email [redacted]
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THE DROVES

SOLAR FARM