o30landscape

Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park

Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

31.08.22

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIa) concerns the proposed Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park at Whiterails Road, Wootton, Isle of Wight for a solar renewable energy project and natural landscaping (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development and described further at Section 2.0 and Section 9.0 and as detailed within the accompanying application drawings and documents). This report presents an appraisal of the likely effects of the Proposed Development on the environment with respect to landscape and views. In particular, consideration is given to the landscape character and resource of the Site and its context and, separately, to views and the visual amenity of the area.

1.2. This is not a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as one would find as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – see 3.4 below.

1.3. This appraisal does not consider the effect of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of residential receptors – this is dealt separately in the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment, which forms part of this planning application.

Document structure

1.4. This document is structured to provide a summary description of the Site and the Proposed Development (Section 2.0), an outline of the appraisal methodology (Section 3.0), and a summary of the relevant legislation and planning policy context (Section 4.0). It sets out the landscape baseline (Section 5.0), and the visual amenity baseline (Section 6.0) and provides a summary of the landscape sensitivity (Section 7.0) and visual sensitivity (Section 8.0). It then describes the Proposed Development and outlines the landscape mitigation and enhancement strategy (Section 9.0), outlines the landscape effects (Section 10.0) and the visual effects (Section 11.0) and provides a cumulative appraisal (Section 12.0). The conclusion provides a summary of the issues raised in this appraisal (Section 13.0). A list of relevant document references are included at the rear of the document (Section 14.0). The following Appendixes also form part of the LVIa:

- Appendix A includes the assessment matrixes (relevant to Sections 7.0, 8.0, 10.0 and 11.0).
- Appendix B includes the figures.
- Appendix C includes the viewpoint photosheets.
- Appendix D contains the full LVIa methodology (an overview is provided at section 3.0).
- Appendix E lists the relevant landscape planning policy.
- Appendix F provides an outline of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.
- Appendix G is a separate document of the viewpoints with photomontages.

2.0 Site location and the Proposed Development

2.1. As illustrated by Figure 1, the Site is located close to the built-up area of Wootton, within a settled rural landscape and dissected by Whiterails Road. The Proposed Development is located more than 640m from the nearest edge of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

2.2. The Site, defined by the application boundary, covers 32.5ha and consists of a number of pastoral and arable (animal feedstock) fields enclosed by clipped hedgerows and mature

hedgerow trees. The ground-mounted solar PV arrays are set out on land to the north of Whiterails Road within a fenced area of approximately 27.2ha. To the south of Whiterails Road, positioned against existing woodland and close to the existing substation, is the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and proposed substation. Access to this supporting infrastructure will be made via an existing farm track off Briddlesford Road, which will undergo surface improvements typical of an agricultural farm track. All cabling and grid connections will be below-ground. The proposed site plan is shown in Figure 2.

2.3. The following development heights are anticipated:

- a conservative height of 3m for solar PV arrays (the highest intended height is 2.8m);
- 3.5m for the BESS with a 4m acoustic fence; and
- 6m for the substation.

3.0 Appraisal methodology

3.1. Details of the methodology used for assessing the effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual amenity are provided in Appendix D. A summary is presented in this section.

3.2. The purpose of the LVIA process is to identify and assess the likely significance of the effects of a proposed development on the landscape resource, landscape character and visual amenity. This methodology has at its core the guidance and recommendations made in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), published jointly by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in March 2013.

3.3. The GLVIA3 concentrates on principles and process. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation; it states that it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand. It suggests that it is important to (a) note the need for proportionality, (b) identify opportunities for landscape mitigation and enhancement, (c) focus on likely significant adverse or positive effects, and (d) pay particular attention to matters which are relevant to the competent authority's decision.

3.4. Through the EIA Screening Opinion process with the Isle of Wight Council, it was confirmed that an EIA was not required for this application. As a consequence, a LVIa (appraisal) has been carried out which follows the same robust principles and process as one would find in a full LVIA (assessment) but does not identify 'significant' effects in accordance with the requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. GLVIA3 confirms that the LVIA process can be carried out either as part of an EIA, or as a contribution to an 'appraisal', as in the case here. As explained further within the methodology (Appendix D) the term 'significant' is still used here to continue the same recognised terminology, to help the decision maker identify the effects which are considered to be the most serious and could be considered a material consideration within the planning process. The term is not used in the same way that 'significant' is utilised within an EIA.

Study area

3.5. In order to assess the landscape and visual baseline of the Proposed Development, a study area was defined (and subsequently agreed with the Isle of Wight Council) by reviewing the relevant

Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs and by analysing material obtained from field surveys, as well as through the preparation of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). A study area of 3km was established from the centre of the Site (as identified in Figure 1).

The main stages of the appraisal

Baseline study

3.6. The baseline study is the initial stage, which records the existing situation. It includes a review of (a) the landscape resource and character, and (b) the visual amenity of the study area and the Site.

Sensitivity

3.7. The first stage of assessing the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development is carried out by identifying the sensitivity of the receptor (the landscape character, landscape resource and visual amenity) to change as a result of the Proposed Development. The sensitivity of the receptor to change is a product of its susceptibility and its value (resulting in a high, medium, low or negligible sensitivity).

Description of development and primary mitigation

3.8. This stage identifies and describes the Proposed Development and, most particularly, those aspects of the Proposed Development that may affect the landscape resource, landscape character and visual amenity. This stage describes the primary mitigation that has been incorporated into the design at all stages, including the avoidance and reduction of effects.

Significance of effect

3.9. The sensitivity of the receptor to change as a result of the Proposed Development is considered in relation to the magnitude of effect (high, medium, low or negligible), which together result in the significance (very substantial, substantial, moderate, slight, or negligible or no effect). The nature of that change is also assessed as being adverse, beneficial or neutral. Residual effects are considered after a 15-year establishment period, taking into account mitigation measures including tree-planting.

3.10. It is important to determine whether the predicted effects are likely to be 'significant' in the context of material considerations so they can be fully considered through the planning process. Significant landscape and visual effects, in the assessor's opinion, resulting from the Proposed Development would typically be those effects that result in a 'very substantial', 'substantial' or in some instances 'moderate' level of effect.

Cumulative effects

3.11. The effects of the Proposed Development are also considered against foreseeable future developments that could result in additional changes to the landscape or the visual amenity.

Limitations and assumptions of the appraisal

3.12. The visual survey work was undertaken between March and July 2022, with the photographs taken on days with fine weather to display clear and open views. The photography was undertaken during winter and early spring, and again in the summer, to show the varying levels of

vegetation cover through the seasons, thereby displaying a worst case and a best case in terms of the potential visibility of the Site and the Proposed Development. The likely increase or decrease in screening from deciduous vegetation was considered for each of the receptor locations. Supplementary sequential views were also provided to show the experience and context of the route along which a particular viewpoint is situated. Photographs were taken during the day, and observations were made where appropriate to reflect any changing conditions of night-time views, particularly in relation to the Isle of Wight Dark Skies. The assessments presented in this report represent the conclusion of a chartered landscape architect using professional judgement.

3.13. The appraisal of the effect of the Proposed Development is based upon an understanding of the nature, form and scale of the proposals, as indicated on the supporting application drawings and reports.

3.14. The extent, species type and precise location of any proposed landscape planting would be confirmed by the planning conditions. However, it is reasonable to assume that new trees and shrubs will be planted throughout the Site, that the planting will be carried out in accordance with good practice (such as BS8545:2014) and that there will be a suitable maintenance regime to ensure the healthy establishment and growth of the newly planted trees and shrubs.

Future baseline conditions

3.15. Existing dead, dying or decayed trees are recorded within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) undertaken by MJC Tree Services Ltd, and considered as part of the existing baseline conditions.

3.16. Landscapes alter naturally through time on their own accord, without human intervention, as a result of natural causes, unrelated to any potential development change. During the short lifetime of the project (in relative terms) there are unlikely to be any foreseeable significant alterations to the landscape and visual baseline conditions due to variations e.g. external climate change factors, changing management practises, or as a result of pests or diseases. As a result of climate change, it is conceivable that certain trees located in unfavourable growing conditions may find it harder to thrive (flood or drought). Similarly, certain species of tree could be more susceptible to invasive pests and diseases, such as Ash dieback disease (*hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). Ongoing woodland management works are also taking place in the adjoining Fattingpark Copse (protected Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland) as a working, sustainable natural woodland but this is not expected to change the overall wooded character.

3.17. The natural diversity and robustness of the surrounding woodland and tree species should safeguard continued tree cover. Furthermore, if a particular location or species is targeted, natural regeneration is expected to occur with little perceived change to the overall landscape pattern.

Consultation

3.18. A summary of the consultation that was undertaken in relation to this LVIa is presented in Table 3.1, which also outlines (where relevant) how and where the comments have been considered within this LVIa.

Table 3.1 Consultation responses

Date	Consultee	Action
March 2022	Isle of Wight Council – EIA screening opinion	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) not required, but an LVIA would need to be submitted as part of the planning application.
April 2022	Isle of Wight Council – Viewpoint locations	Pre-application response received 30th May 2022 confirming viewpoint locations and appraisal methodology.

4.0 Relevant legislation and planning policy context

4.1. A full and detailed consideration of planning policy is contained in the accompanying Planning Statement. This section describes the national and local planning policies that are relevant to this LVIa, with further details contained in Appendix E. LVIAs are guided by the following legislation:

- the European Landscape Convention 2000;
- the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and
- the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

National planning policy

4.2. Chapter 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021) is specifically, but not exclusively, relevant to landscape and visual matters. In addition, chapters 12, 14, 16 of the NPPF are relevant to LVIAs.

4.3. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides regulation on the 'Natural Environment' (updated in 2019) and specific to this LVIa, 'Renewable and low carbon energy' (published in 2015).

Local planning policy

4.4. The Island Plan Core Strategy was adopted by the Isle of Wight Council in March 2012 along with the Proposals Map which is shown in Figure 3 (also illustrated here is the location of the consented football stadium discussed at Section 12.0). The adopted Island Plan Core Strategy includes the following policies that are relevant to landscape and visual matters:

- SP5 Environment;
- SP6 Renewables;
- DM12 Landscape, Seascape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity; and
- DM13 Green Infrastructure.

4.5. Specific to the Proposed Development, Policy SP6 suggests: *"Within areas of protected and sensitive landscapes, development should generally be small scale or community-based. It is expected that large-scale wind and photovoltaic schemes will be located outside of the AONB (and grade 1–3a agricultural land for photovoltaics) and other designated environmental assets, although schemes within the AONB will be considered when there are no alternative sites outside of the AONB and where a considerable community benefit is demonstrated and considered to outweigh the landscape impact."*

4.6. Paragraph 7.46 of Policy DM2 states that "*The Council will seek to minimise effects on the environment by encouraging development to incorporate renewable energy technologies, energy conservation techniques and waste management facilities. Energy conservation and generation will need to be designed to minimise any adverse impact on landscape, wildlife and amenity*."

4.7. The Draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS) (Isle of Wight Council, 2021) sets the approach to planning for the Island up to 2035 but at the present time the IPS has no weight in the decision making process. Draft policies related to landscape include:

- EV1 Conserving and enhancing our historic environment;
- EV2 Ecological assets and opportunities for enhancement;
- EV5 Trees, woodland and hedgerows;
- EV8 Protecting high grade agricultural land;
- EV9 Protecting our landscapes and seascapes;
- EV11 Isle of Wight AONB; and
- C10 Supporting renewable energy and low carbon technologies.

5.0 Landscape baseline

5.1. This section describes the existing landscape conditions within the study area. It provides a factual description of the landscape resource (including land use, topography, watercourses, movement, etc.) and its value, and it describes the landscape character.

Landscape resource

Land use (see Figure 4)

5.2. The Site comprises a number of agricultural fields used for arable (animal feedstock) and pastoral farming. The individual field parcels are defined and enclosed by clipped hedges, some of which are dominated by mature trees, either as individual specimens or as linear groups.

5.3. As illustrated by the aerial photo in Figure 4, the Site is located within a wider settled, rural agricultural and wooded landscape. A landscape that contains tourist attractions (Butterfly and Fountain World, Island Riding Centre, Monkey Haven, Briddlesford Farm Shop and Café), industrial premises, a care home, a crematorium, solar farms, residential buildings (as isolated dwellings, e.g. dwellings to Whiterails Road, or as small groups, e.g. dwellings to Briddlesford Road) and agricultural farmsteads. The landscape is also crossed by 33kV powerlines and pylons, and includes a large substation located off Whiterails Road.

5.4. Land immediately to the north-west of the Site is dominated by Fattingpark Copse, an area of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), with a tree-lined disused railway line (now the popular Newport–Wootton Bridge cycleway) located to the north. The north-east boundary is formed in part by Park Road, with fields and woodland beyond, and a number of residential properties line the road further to the south. Small and medium-sized agricultural fields enclosed by clipped hedgerows are located to the south of the Site, with Briddlesford Farm to the south-east and an area of woodland to the south-west. To the west of the Site lies Wootton Business Park, boarding kennels, Butterfly and Fountain World, and a large electrical substation. Grange Farm Solar Farm lies to the north-west of the Site, with areas of woodland beyond.

Topography (see Figure 5)

5.5. The Site sits towards the bottom of a shallow valley, defined by Palmer's Brook, which leads towards the coast in a northerly direction. The Site rises steadily to the south-east until it meets a ridge, along which Briddlesford Road follows. On the opposite side of the shallow valley, land rises steadily to the south leading to a ridge at Staplers Hill. West of here, land falls towards the River Medina. Further to the south of the Site, the land continues to rise steadily towards Downend at 105m above ordnance datum (AOD) and the chalk downs, which dominate the centre of the Island and run east to west across its width. To the north of the Site, the land rises gently beyond Palmer's Brook towards Whippingham, reaching a height of 55m AOD.

5.6. The highest point of the Site is located to the eastern edge, alongside Whiterails Road at 43.5m AOD. The lowest point of the Site is located to the west at 24.5m AOD.

Vegetation (see Figure 4)

5.7. Remnants of historic hedgerows are located within the Site and contain a varying density of mature oak trees. Hedgerows to the north of the Site contain mainly mature trees, whilst to the south the tree coverage is limited. Hedges are dominated by hawthorn, are well maintained and are clipped to approximately 1.5m in height. Other than trees to hedgerows, the Site contains no vegetation.

5.8. Trees follow the line of Palmer's Brook to the west of the Site, leading further to the south and north and connecting with other areas of woodland, including Fattingpark Copse. Woodland is a common characteristic of the local landscape, with a large number of copses located in all directions to the west, south, east and north.

5.9. The AIA undertaken by MJC Tree Services Ltd identifies a large number of category A2 trees, which under BS5837:2012 are defined as trees of high quality and that can make a substantial contribution (minimum lifespan of 40 years). These trees are identified as individual specimens in hedgerows or as linear groups of trees.

Hydrology

5.10. The Site contains no watercourses or other aquatic features. Ditches are located alongside the hedgerows, connecting into wet ditches and streams outside the Site which lead towards Palmer's Brook.

Ecology

5.11. Refer to the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), which includes the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by E3S Consulting Ltd. This identifies that habitats on-site have potential to provide foraging and commuting opportunities but in its current use/state, overall, it was assessed as having limited potential to support protected and/or notable species.

Archaeology

5.12. The Archaeology Desk Based Assessment (DBA) undertaken by E3S Consulting Ltd (February 2022) shows that the presence of archaeological remains of regional or local importance on the site itself cannot be demonstrated. However, due to the fact that the study area has remained largely undisturbed since at least the early 19th century there is potential for prehistoric archaeology within the site.

Historic landscape (see Figure 6)

5.13. The historic map of 1866 shows a distinctly agricultural landscape, with similar characteristics to those of today. The fields were regular in shape, ranging from small to medium in size, and enclosed by hedgerows. The hedges located within the Site shown in the historic map all remain to this day. The significant blocks of woodland located in the context of the Site are also still evident, with some new woodland areas now located west of Fattingpark Copse.

5.14. This is shown as an unsettled landscape, with little of the development now evident along Staplers Road and Whiterails Road. No residential dwellings are located along Park Road or Briddlesford Road.

5.15. Fattingpark Copse was originally part of Wootton Common, which provided grazing land used by eight inhabitants of Wootton Manor. It is also believed that Fattingpark Copse might originally have been part of the Quarr Abbey Estate.

Landscape and environmental designations (see Figure 7)

5.16. A number of international, national and local landscape and heritage designations are located within the study area. The Site itself contains no such designations.

5.17. The Solent & Southampton Water Ramsar is an international designation located beyond 1.8km to the north and east, following the River Medina and Palmer's Brook. The designation protects coasting habitats and estuaries that are internationally important for waterfowl.

5.18. Following the same coverage, the Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) is a European designation that covers estuaries and harbours within the Solent as important coastal habitats for seabirds. The Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also a European designation that protects unique intertidal estuarine habitats, and this covers an area similar to that covered by the SPA.

5.19. At the national level, the Isle of Wight Area of AONB at its nearest point, is located 640m to the south of the Proposed Development. Around half of the Isle of Wight is protected as an AONB in separate areas, which include the principal landscape features of the interior's central and southern downlands in addition to much of its famous coastline.

5.20. Several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located more than 1km from the Site. These include Briddlesford Copses to the east, King's Quay Shore to the north, and Medina Estuary to the west.

5.21. The study area includes a large number of protected ancient woodland areas designated as ASNWs or Ancient Replanted Woodland (ARW). These include Fattingpark Copse (ASNW), which is located immediately to the north-west of the Site.

5.22. Fattingpark Copse together with woodland further to the west is designated a local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Other nearby SINCs include woodland at Wootton Common and Lushingham Copse (to the north) and Blacklands (to the south).

5.23. The nearest listed building is the grade II listed Palmers Lodge, which is located approximately 500m to the north of the Site and once formed part of the Osborne Estate. Also, approximately 900m to the north-west of the Site are Brickfield Cottages, designed by the Prince Consort and

part of the Osborne Estate. A total of two grade II* listed buildings and thirteen grade II listed buildings are located within the study area, all beyond 1km of the Site.

Landscape qualities and value

5.24. As a prerequisite of paragraph 174 of the NPPF, the intrinsic landscape qualities or value of the Site can be determined by a number of factors as identified by Table 1 of 'Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations' – Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (Landscape Institute, 2021) and outlined below.

Natural heritage

5.25. As described, apart from the existing trees and vegetation to boundaries, the Site is not considered to be a valuable habitat resource, as it is dominated by agricultural fields.

Cultural heritage

5.26. The Site is not known to contain valuable archaeological or historical features or offer any cultural value. The Site is located >3km from the Newport Conservation Area and separated from listed buildings (including the nearest: Palmers Lodge and Brickfield Cottages) by dense woodland as well as unsympathetic buildings and structures. There is no intervisibility between the Site and the nearest listed buildings, and the Site does not form part of their setting.

Landscape condition

5.27. The Site is dominated by agricultural fields that are maintained accordingly for farming to maximise yields. The boundary vegetation is maintained to a good condition, and the mature hedgerow trees are in good condition with many categorised as A2 (high quality under BS5837:2012). The northernmost corner of the Site is not farmed due to the damp conditions, and displays a more natural, wild appearance.

Associations

5.28. The DBA confirms that the majority of the Site formed part of Wootton Common grazing land, as depicted on the 1793 Ordnance Survey. The Site is not known to have any associations with historical events, people, or artists.

Distinctiveness

5.29. As explored further from 5.35 to 5.39, the Site contains hedges and trees which form part of the characteristics of the local landscape character type 'Northern Clay Pasture Land'. The Site and that of the wider study area are characteristics of the settled rural landscape typical of the north-east Isle of Wight. The Site does not contain any elements or features that are considered to be rare or would warrant the landscape being defined as 'rare'.

Recreational

5.30. The Site is private with no permitted access rights, and it offers no recreational value.

Perceptual (scenic)

5.31. The Site slopes to the north-west, offering opportunities to view over this shallow valley up to 2km to the west, north and south. The views are often constrained and framed by woodland, which is also visible along the horizon. The views are not entirely rural, with the notable presence of the high-voltage powerlines and towers, Grange Farm Solar Farm, and buildings along Whiterails Road and Staplers Road.

Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)

5.32. The Site sits either side of Whiterails Road, a busy main road with traffic passing at speeds of up to 60mph. Away from the road and closer to woodland further to the north and south, the Site has a greater sense of tranquillity and wilderness, and where birdsong can be appreciated. The Site faces away from the built-up area of Wootton. The Site is identified as being relatively dark, with the CPRE 'Night Blight' report identifying the Site within the 1–2 nanoWatts category (>32 brightest, <0.25 darkest).

Functional

5.33. The Site is used for agricultural purposes, forming part of the wider healthy functioning intensive agricultural landscape. Fields on the lower ground to the north and west are evidently used for less intensive purposes. The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) report finds that the agricultural quality of the land is classed as grade 3b or lower.

5.34. To summarise, the Site is used for agricultural purposes, which the ALC report considers to be 3b moderate quality or lower. Apart from the trees and hedges to field boundaries, the Site contains no important landscape features, it is not rare or unique, nor does it have any distinct cultural, heritage or recreational value. There are no landscape or heritage designations within or in close proximity to the site, or any that have a direct physical or visual relationship with the Site. The perceptual qualities are interrupted by buildings and structures within this rural settled landscape, and by traffic noise from passing cars along Whiterails Road.

Landscape character

National Character Areas

5.35. At a national level, the Site is located within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) '127 Isle of Wight', which covers the Island in its entirety. The study suggests: "*The Island exhibits, at a small scale, the key characteristics of much of lowland England, from farmed arable coastal plains to pastures and woodland, and from steep chalk downs to diverse estuarine seascapes and dramatic sea cliffs and stacks*." Due to the scale and extent of NCAs, this appraisal focuses on the more local and relevant landscape receptors identified below.

The East Wight Landscape Character Assessment 2015

5.36. The landscape character at a local county level is established by the East Wight Landscape Character Assessment (EWLCA) 2015, with the Site falling within the 'Pasture Land' landscape character type and, more specifically, the 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' character area (as illustrated in Figure 8). The study recognises the East Wight as well-settled landscape, with a number of the Island's larger urban areas located on the coastline; away from these urban areas, the landscape retains a strong rural character. There is no published character assessment for the central part of the Isle of Wight in the vicinity of the River Medina (land >1km to the west of the Site).

5.37. The wider 'Pasture Land' Landscape Character Type is "*located across the East Wight area on the heavier clays in the north, alongside the main watercourses and in particular the Eastern Yar river south of the central downland ridge and north of the southern downland area. It is the predominant character type of the East Wight area in terms of its extent*."(EWLCA). Hedges and hedgerow trees are described as being a feature, as is ancient woodland and copses. It is a "*rolling landscape of irregular and in some areas more regular shaped fields which are in general*

small or medium in size" with a "*strong pastoral character*". The EWLCA also recognises the pressure from amenity and leisure uses and its proximity to settlement and urban areas.

5.38. 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' is identified as a large landscape character area to the north-west of the East Wight and is described as a "*rolling landscape gradually sloping towards the northern coastline with small and medium sized fields often irregular in shape but in some areas more linear in pattern and enclosed by mature hedgerows with hedgerow trees*". The EWLCA suggests that the landscape character type has the following key characteristics:

- Rolling pastoral landscape with small copses, hedgerows and hedgerow trees.
- Field trees are a feature of the east of the area around Hardingshute, Nunwell and Upton.
- Historic farmsteads are located throughout the area.
- The designed landscape and historic buildings at Nunwell contribute strongly to the character of that part of the area.
- Ancient woodland areas.
- Nature conservation value of woodland and grassland areas within the area and wetland areas on its edges.
- Scheduled monuments, a number of which are currently at risk.

5.39. Located more than 700m to the north of the Site is the 'EWW1 Coastal Woodland' character area, defined as an unsettled landscape containing ancient coastal woodland that leads to the shore.

5.40. Located more than 1km to the east of the Site is the 'EWW2 Northern Woodlands' character area, which is characterised by dominant woodland blocks, often comprised of individual woodlands and copses grouped around small pastoral fields containing hedges and trees.

5.41. The study area also includes a number of identified 'Changed Countryside' character areas. These include the 'CC6 Solar Farms' located 1km to the west of the Site, which is described as fields containing solar arrays that have an industrial appearance but provide valuable grassland wildlife habitats. 'CC2 Business' is located beyond 300m to the north of the Site as a business premises containing signage, car parking and built structures. Also a feature within the study area is 'CC1 Amenity', the Lynbottom civic amenity waste facility, which now includes new 'hills' that have undergone grassland and heathland restoration as well as large sheds, signage, fencing and waste storage and sorting areas. Additional 'Changed Countryside' character areas are included on Figure 8. These have been suggested by the assessor as areas that had not been developed before the 2015 study (including the Grange Farm solar farm), or were simply not included but are considered to be also 'Changed Countryside'.

The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation 2008

5.42. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) identifies and describes the Isle of Wight historic landscape character types based on present land-use, land-management and settlement patterns which reflect different historical processes in their formation. It also defines and describes the past landscape character of the Isle of Wight, using a variety of sources, to understand how this past landscape character has influenced the present historic landscape character of the area.

5.43. The HLC identifies the Site and surrounding landscape as falling within the 'Northern Lowlands', which covers the majority of the northern half of the Isle of Wight. This half of the Island "*encompasses much of the land to the north of the central chalk ridge. It is mainly a lowland area but is moderately hilly in parts, although the land does not rise above the 75 metre contour. The*

area is characterised by its extensive Solent coastline and by the creeks, inlets and estuaries punctuating that coastline. Drainage is provided by streams flowing northward into the Solent." The HLC suggests that "*Much of the agricultural land is pasture at the present day but arable use does occur*" on areas of "*superficial gravel around Osborne and Wootton*". It recognises that "*Fields are generally of small-medium size (3–6 ha) and are often surrounded by well-wooded hedgerows, giving the impression of a much larger amount of tree cover than actually exists.*" The HLC suggests that woodland clearance took place during the Neolithic period, "*with some woodland remaining into the Bronze Age before its final demise at the expense of increasing agriculture. Oak and hazel remained in the region to become managed woodland.*" The study also suggests that "*Large parts of the Northern Lowlands may have been open clay heath commons in medieval and early post-medieval times.*" This includes land at Wootton Common, which by the 19th century had been enclosed.

Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024

5.44. The Isle of Wight AONB was designated in 1963 and covers 191km^2, which is approximately half the land surface of the Island. Unusually, the AONB area is not continuous and is made up of five distinct land parcels across the Island separated by non-AONB landscapes and built-up areas. In 1994, the then Countryside Commission published a landscape assessment of the Isle of Wight, with a specific focus on the AONB. This identified 11 broad landscape character types across the AONB that contribute to its overall character spread over the Isle of Wight, and these are still considered to be relevant today. The Proposed Development is located more than 640m from the nearest edge of the AONB (or 345m to the nearest edge of the Site boundary), defined as a 'Traditional enclosed pasture' landscape character area. A further 450m to the east is the 'Northern woodland' character area. An additional area of 'Traditional enclosed pasture' is located 2.1km to the north of the Site.

5.45. The 'Traditional enclosed pasture' AONB landscape character area is defined as having the following key characteristics:

- Land mainly used for pasture.
- Well-preserved and dense hedgerows with mature hedgerow oak trees in the northern part of the area.
- Irregular small fields.
- Narrow enclosed winding lanes.
- Well wooded, with numerous copses.
- Small scattered farmsteads.
- Settlement patterns mostly linear in nature or small clusters.

5.46. The 'Northern Woodland' AONB landscape character area is defined as having the following key characteristics:

- Large woodland blocks of conifers and broadleaved species form a dominant feature in the landscape.
- Small enclosed fields.

Summary of landscape character

5.47. Based on the desktop and site appraisal, it is considered that the Site itself, and the immediate rural landscape, is representative of the 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land'(EWLCA) and 'Northern

Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area which are identified as having similar characteristics. It can be described as a rolling pastoral landscape containing small and medium-sized agricultural fields, regular in shape, surrounded by a well-wooded landscape of copses, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. These characteristics are also partly true of the nearest AONB landscape character areas ('Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland'). It is a relatively closed landscape with short- to medium-distance views available to the next topographical ridge, area of woodland or hedgerow. It is also a landscape which contains a number of 'Changed Countryside' uses. These are described at 5.41, and Figure 8 suggests that there are additional 'Changed Countryside' features not included in the 2015 EWLCA study. These include Grange Farm Solar Farm (CC6) and business premises (CC2) at Whiterails Business Park and Butterfly and Fountain World, the Island Riding Centre, and Monkey Haven, as well as high-voltage pylons and powerlines. These developments are not collectively visible due to intervening tree cover, but their presence is evident; taken together, they do detract from the rural qualities of this relatively small part of the 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land'(EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) landscape character area.

5.48. As explored further at Section 7.0 and 10.0, this appraisal considers the effects on both the local landscape character area (EWLCA PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land and HLC Northern Lowlands – which share the same characteristics) and separately, the nearest AONB landscape character areas (Traditional Enclosed Pasture and Northern Woodland). The other local landscape character areas described at 5.39 - 5.41 are not considered worthy of further investigation given their separation from the Site as a result of intervening vegetation and or topography.

6.0 Visual amenity baseline

6.1. This section provides a factual description of the landscape visibility. It also presents information on the contextual visibility of the Site within the study area. The selected viewpoint locations are shown in Figure 11 and the viewpoint photography is provided in Appendix C.

Extent of visibility

6.2. The ZTV is shown in Figure 9. As outlined in the methodology (Appendix D), the ZTV is a 'worst case' theoretical computer-generated model based on the visibility of the Proposed Development (placed at 3m to be representative of the solar arrays and at 6m for the substation). The ZTV is based on terrain only and does not take into account the significant screening effect of existing vegetation and buildings. The ZTV is not definitive, but it acts as a guide for selecting the appropriate representative viewpoints. This is followed by on-site fieldwork to refine the visual envelope.

6.3. As demonstrated by the ZTV, the Proposed Development on the Site is shown to be theoretically visible within the shallow valley, on the slopes leading to the ridge to the east (up to a distance of 500m), again across the opposite rising slopes to the west (up to 1.3km), then again along the valley floor to the south (up to a distance of 1.8km) and to the north over rising ground (beyond 3km). This follows the underlying topographical forms, as illustrated in Figure 5. The ZTV also suggests that the Proposed Development would be visible from rising ground on the opposite side of the River Medina, towards Northwood (beyond 3km). The ZTV demonstrates that there is no further visibility to the east or west beyond the enclosing valley ridges, or to the south at the point where the land rises to meet the downs.

6.4. The potential public visual receptor locations shown in Figure 10 identify where the public might be able to experience views over the landscape. This shows Whiterails / Staplers Road as a main road, with speeds of up to 60mph, passing through the Site. This joins Park Road, which leads north-west initially as a 30mph road, increasing to 40mph and joining the A3054 / Lushington Hill as the main road between Newport and Ryde. Briddlesford Road leads south from Park Road as a 60mph road towards the Downs Road junction at Downend.

6.5. Located immediately to the north of the Site is the Newport–Wootton Bridge cycleway and public right of way N214, which follows a former railway line. Passing through woods to the west of Fattingpark Copse are public rights of way N111, N112 and N113. Leading south from here along the ridge towards Staplers is public right of way N116. There are no public footpaths or public open spaces in the immediate vicinity of the Site.

6.6. A number of public attractions and amenity sites are located within the study area, offering additional locations for public views of the landscape from private land. These include Butterfly World located to the south-west of the Site (>80m) and, further to the south-west along Staplers Road, the Island Riding Centre (>500m) and Monkey Haven (>850m). Briddlesford Farm Shop and Café is located to the south-east of the Site (>275m). The Isle of Wight Crematorium is located to the north-west of the Site (>250m).

6.7. A total of 10 representative viewpoints (coded 'VP') were selected from public locations within the ZTV, often representing the worst-case scenario along any receptor group. The viewpoints represent the available views of travellers (using a variety of modes), leisure users of recreational open space and public rights of way, motorists, and residents close to the Site. Viewpoints that represent a similar location, type of receptor and/or experience are grouped together into eight visual receptor groups (coded 'GP'). Additional 'illustrative' and 'sequential' views were taken where appropriate for each of the viewpoints to the support the analysis of the different receptors. The viewpoint locations are shown in Figure 11 and the viewpoint photography is provided in Appendix C.

6.8. This appraisal also includes the production of four photomontages selected from the more sensitive viewpoint locations, which accurately illustrate the Proposed Development within its existing landscape setting. These were produced by MS Environmental Ltd as 'Type 4' views in accordance with TGN06/19[1] and are included separately as Appendix G. The photomontages are based on winter photography and show the effect of landscape mitigation and enhancement planting with no leaf cover and thereby represent a worst case experience.

6.9. The true visibility of the Site is very much constrained by the prominence of woodland and hedgerows, as well as buildings and structures, which the ZTV does not take into account. The Visual Appraisal (Figure 12) provides a more accurate picture of the actual visibility of the Site. This shows that the primary visibility (clear, open views of most of the Site) is concentrated in the Site and its immediate context, whilst the secondary visibility (glimpses or filtered views of part of the Site) is concentrated in the east and south-east along Briddlesford Road, to the south-west towards Staplers, and over the south-facing hillside in the vicinity of Alverstone Road to the north. The visual experiences of the Site in relation to the identified eight visual receptor groups are described below.

[1] Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019)

GP1. Immediate views from alongside the Site (Whiterails Road) (VP1 and VP2)

6.10. Whiterails Road runs immediately alongside the Site and dissects the Site into two parts. The junction to Station Road/Park Road/Briddlesford Road is enclosed by trees, hedgerows and buildings. On leaving this junction in a south-westerly direction, views open up across the shallow valley to the west. Roadside hedgerows limit the availability of open views across the Site to the south and in part to the north. As the road passes down the slope to the lower ground, the availability and distance of views decreases and is limited to trees, buildings and fencing. Looking back in a north-easterly direction from this lower ground, properties along Park Road are partially visible on the horizon.

GP2. Close views from the south-west (Staplers Road) (VP3 and VP4)

6.11. As the road rises on the opposite side of the shallow valley along what is now Staplers Road, the views are initially limited by trees and roadside hedgerows but open up again along the higher ground. From here, there are long-distance views to the north-east across the Solent towards Portsmouth. Medium-distance views are available to local hilltops to the north at Whippingham (where Osborne House is visible) and north-west towards Lushington Hill at Wootton. Views to the east and south are not available due to intervening roadside vegetation.

GP3. Close views from the north-east (Park Road) (VP5)

6.12. A number of residential properties are served along both sides of a 300m stretch of Park Road, restricting the availability of views as a result of intervening buildings, fencing and mature gardens. Occasional glimpse views are available between buildings. Further to the north-west, along a 150m stretch, the road is bordered by roadside hedgerows which allow medium-distance views across open fields to the south-west and towards the ridge at Staplers. Views to the north-east are not available due to the height of the hedgerow on this side of the road. As the road continues in a north-westerly direction, views over the landscape are not available due to intervening trees and woodland.

GP4. Close views from the north (Newport – Wootton Bridge cycleway) (VP6)

6.13. The first 180m stretch of the former railway line are bordered by overgrown hedgerow vegetation, offering only filtered, glimpse views to the north or south through occasional gaps in vegetation cover (notable at VP6 along the route to the SGN gas main). Further to the west, the route becomes fully enclosed by woodland and there is no visibility over the wider landscape.

GP5. Distant views from the north (Alverstone Road) (VP7)

6.14. Alverstone Road rises to the north-east and begins to offer elevated, clear views over hedgerows which line the road, not only along the length of the shallow valley to the south but also further to the south-west and west. Views to the east are restricted by woodland, and a group of trees at VP7 restricts views to the west. After the junction with Brocks Copse Road, views over the landscape are no longer available due to the height of the roadside hedgerow. Parts of Whippingham Road, west of VP7, also offer opportunities to view over the landscape to the south and west.

GP6. Distant views from the west (public right of way N116) (VP8)

6.15. Public right of way N116 follows the elevated ridge in a southerly direction along the western edge of the fields. The presence of the powerlines is dominant in this location. Views over the wider landscape are restricted to the west by the hedgerow and trees located along the edge of the field, and they are restricted to the east by areas of mature woodland within the valley. It is

only on the higher ground, further to the south towards Staplers, where the footpath is sufficiently elevated over the woodland to provide far-reaching open views to the east, north-east, north and, to a lesser extent, the north-west towards the built-up area of Newport (over the top of the hedgerow).

GP7. Close views from the east (Briddlesford Road) (VP9)

6.16. Hedgerows line both sides of Briddlesford Road, offering limited opportunities to view over the landscape to the east. The road is at an elevated level and follows the ridge, which rises gently to the south. From this vantage position, views over the hedgerow are available along the shallow valley to the north-west and south-west, and to the opposite side of the valley to the west. Buildings around Briddlesford Farm restrict views for a 150m stretch of the road.

GP8. Distant views from the south-east (Briddlesford Road) (VP10)

6.17. Slightly more elevated but seemingly offering a similar visual experience, views are available along the length of this shallow valley to the north-west and to the opposing ridge and woodland to the west. Woodland to the eastern edge of the road restricts the views in this direction. To the south-west, Lynnbottom civic amenity site is readily visible, surrounded by woodland. At this point, the road forms the boundary to the AONB, which, as described is concealed from view as a result of intervening woodland and hedgerow.

7.0 Landscape sensitivity

7.1. Determining the sensitivity of each of the landscape receptors is based upon combined judgements about (a) their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed, and (b) the value attached to the landscape. The sensitivity of each landscape receptor is based on the criteria set out in the methodology (Appendix D).

7.2. Appendix A1 (Landscape Resource and Character Assessment Table) provides a full description of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors in relation to the landscape character and resource. This description is summarised below.

7.3. The sensitivity of the landscape resource is considered to be low/medium. The Site is used for agricultural purposes as part of a wider healthy functioning intensive agricultural landscape. Features of interest include the hedgerows and trees, but these are not rare (and will be retained where possible - see accompanying Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Hedgerow Assessment). There are no landscape or heritage designations within or in close proximity to the Site. The Site does not contain any demonstrable physical attributes that would allow it to be defined as a 'valued landscape' under paragraph 174 of the NPPF (as outlined in 5.24–5.33).

7.4. The sensitivity of the 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character areas to the changes proposed on the Site is considered to be low/medium. The area is typified by a rolling landscape containing hedgerows, trees, copses and areas of woodland. It offers little intervisibility across the wider character area, which is itself often severed by other character areas and settlements.

7.5. The sensitivity of the 'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character area is considered to be medium/high. Having similar wooded characteristics, there is little intervisibility across the AONB character areas, but they are under pressure from non-AONB landscape uses and built-up areas and are recognised as nationally important.

Table 7.1: Landscape sensitivity summary

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity
Landscape resource (direct effects on the Site)	Low/medium
'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area	Low/medium
'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character area	Medium/high

8.0 Visual amenity sensitivity

8.1. Determining the sensitivity of each of the visual receptors is based upon combined judgements about (a) their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed, and (b) the value attached to the view. The sensitivity of each visual receptor is based on the criteria set out in Appendix C.

8.2. Appendix A2 (Visual Amenity Assessment Table) provides a full description of the sensitivity of the visual receptors. This description is summarised below.

8.3. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 1 (Immediate views alongside the Site from Whiterails Road) and from receptor group 2 (Close views to the south-west from Staplers Road) is considered to be low/medium as a result of the receptor being predominantly motorists passing along a fast road with little appreciation of the wider landscape. Cross section A on Figure 14 illustrates the visual experience of the motorist passing along the road here. The roadside vegetation limits the opportunity to fully appreciate the wider landscape.

8.4. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 3 (Close views from the north-east from Park Road) is considered to be low/medium. Whilst also predominantly experienced by motorists, this location has a lower speed limit and the view offered at VP5 is wide-ranging and rural. Elsewhere along Park Road, vegetation and buildings restrict the availability of views.

8.5. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 4 (Close views from the north from the Newport–Wootton cycleway) is considered to be low/medium. Although the user has a high susceptibility to change, the vegetation alongside the former railway line restricts the availability of views and the gap at VP6 is unique and fleeting.

8.6. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 5 (Distant views from the north from Alverstone Road) is considered to be low/medium. These are also views experienced by motorists, but passing along a country lane at an elevated position with occasional views over hedgerows towards the wider settled-rural landscape.

8.7. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 6 (Distant views from the west from public right of way N116) are considered to be medium/high. Here, the leisure walker has a high susceptibility to any changes in the landscape. The footpath at VP8 offers elevated, panoramic views over the landscape and towards the built-up area of Newport. Woodland vegetation within the shallow valley and hedgerows alongside the footpath control the availability of views. The value of the view is considered to be low as it does not have any recognised importance.

8.8. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 7 (Close views from the east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be low/medium as a result of the receptor being predominantly motorists passing along a fast road with little appreciation of the wider landscape. Roadside vegetation limits the availability of views over the wider landscape to the east.

8.9. The sensitivity of views from receptor group 8 (Distant views from the south-east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be medium. Despite the road passing alongside the AONB, the receptor is predominantly as a motorist passing along a fast road with no sense of being close to an AONB landscape (having recently passed the civic amenity site and as a landscape which is largely not visible as a result of intervening woodland and hedges).

Table 8.1: Visual sensitivity summary

Visual receptor group	Sensitivity
1. Immediate views from alongside the Site (Whiterails Road)	Low/medium
2. Close views from the south-west (Staplers Road)	Low/medium
3. Close views from the north-east (Park Road)	Low/medium
4. Close views from the north (Newport–Wootton cycleway)	Low/medium
5. Distant views from the north (Alverstone Road)	Low/medium
6. Distant views from the west (public right of way N116)	Medium/high
7. Close views from the east (Briddlesford Road)	Low/medium
8. Distant views from the south-east (Briddlesford Road)	Medium

9.0 The Proposed Development

Project description

9.1. If approved, the following development changes will occur on the Site (refer to the Project Description for full details):

- Installation of 29,955 solar modules which are pushed into the ground (except where concrete pads are required where the panels are within 8m of the gas pipelines) with a combined capacity of 20MW (megawatts). The PV arrays will be orientated to face due south, sloping at an angle of 15º from the horizontal. The PV arrays will be 2.8m at their highest and 0.9m at their lowest (despite being modelled at 3m on the ZTV).
- Installation of a perimeter stock/deer security fence 1.8m in height and approximately 4km in length, to include access gates.

- Installation of approximately 80 infrared CCTV cameras and poles (at 2m in height along the inside of the perimeter fence).
- Installation of central invertors 4no. up to 2.5m in height.
- Installation of other electrical infrastructure elements, including battery energy storage system (BESS), power invertors and transformers (one of which would be approximately 12.2m long by 3.5m high by 2.4m wide, with two units being 3.7m long, 3.5m high, 2.4m wide and two units at 6m long, 3.5m high, 2.4m wide) and a substation (up to 6m in height).
- Installation of a site cabinet (typically 3m high, 3m wide and 6m in length).
- Installation of a 4m high acoustic fence surroundings parts of the BESS units.
- Creation of naturally surfaced access tracks (typical farm track), 4.5m in width and approximately 1.6km in length.
- Installation of temporary safety lighting in the vicinity of the substation.
- Removal of short sections of hedgerow to facilitate access.
- Landscaping and planting (as outlined below and shown in Figure 13).

Project duration

9.2. The following projected timescales are anticipated:

- The construction phase is expected to last 6 months.
- The operational phase is expected to last 40 years.
- At decommissioning, the solar PV arrays and associated infrastructure will be removed and the Site will likely revert back to agricultural uses. The proposed structural landscaping will be retained in perpetuity. It is anticipated that the proposed grassland areas would be lost at this stage with the fields reverting to traditional agriculture.

Mitigation and enhancement proposals

9.3. The following measures adopted as part of the Proposed Development (also referred to as primary mitigation measures) are encapsulated in the landscape mitigation proposals identified in Figures 13 and 14, which form a fundamental part of the Proposed Development. These measures have been developed in line with the following guidance set out in the EWLCA specific to 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land':

Landscape Guidelines

- *Conserve and enhance the hedgerows, hedgerow trees.*
- *Conserve the ancient woodland, copses and field trees.*
- *Work with owners using fields to keep horses to encourage sensitive approaches to pasture management, hedgerow maintenance and the siting and maintenance of structures and other paraphernalia.*
- *Conserve and enhance the historic environmental features which contribute to the character of this area such as its listed buildings, scheduled monuments and undesignated sites. Particular attention should be given to those structures and sites on the heritage at risk register.*
- *Retain and maintain access to the area via the public rights of way network.*
- *Conserve and enhance grasslands and peripheral wetlands for nature conservation benefit.*

9.4. Primary mitigation measures seek to minimise a Proposed Development's visual impact and strengthen the landscape character of the Site and surroundings by introducing key features and constraints that are essential to the design solution from the outset. These measures are set out below:

- Solar PV arrays will be restricted to a maximum height of 3m and will follow the topography. Open views to important landscape features, including tree belts, will be available over the top of the arrays.
- Existing hedgerows and trees will be retained except where isolated removal is required to facilitate access (see AIA and Hedge Assessment accompanying this application).
- Existing hedgerows will undergo an enhanced maintenance regime to (a) improve their structure and habitat potential (clipped to an A-shape), (b) increase their overall height over time, and (c) improve their species diversity and fill gaps (by planting mixed native species).
- Certain hedgerows (shown in Figure 13) identified as key landscape/woodland corridors will be supplemented with additional hedgerow and/or scrub plantings as a thicker hedgerow belt.
- Locally native tree specimens will be planted at irregular spacings within or immediately alongside the existing hedgerows, in keeping with the existing landscape character. These are not seen to provide a solid visual screen but will help soften the appearance of the panels.
- From the outset and during the construction stage, alongside Whiterails Road and following the north-eastern edge of the Site, an evergreen hedge will be planted at 2m in height to obscure views of the panels and fencing. As demonstrated in Figure 14, this is a temporary measure, which will be managed back once the proposed new belt of native scrub planting has reached an equally sufficient height.
- A similar belt of new native scrub planting will be located to the north of the Site, which will help to obscure views of the panels from locations along Park Road.
- An entirely new mixed native hedgerow will be planted next to the existing tree belt located to the north of the Site, connecting with Park Road and shorter sections planted to plug gaps in the existing hedgerows where access is no longer required. Another new mixed native hedgerow will be planted alongside the location of the BESS and substation.
- The existing and proposed hedgerows and scrub vegetation will be maintained at a sufficiently low height (around 3m) to retain open views across the landscape whilst obscuring the panels.
- A 15m natural landscape corridor will be provided alongside the Fattingpark Copse ancient woodland to the north of the Site, as well as to the area of woodland to the south of the proposed substation. This buffer will be planted with native scrub and seeded with wild grassland to create a natural tiered woodland edge.
- Wild grassland will be seeded over the entire extent of the Site (including beneath the panels but not along the access tracks). Strict maintenance regimes will enhance the ecological value and species diversity, with mowing expected to occur twice a year only (see separate EcIA which assesses the biodiversity net gain of the Proposed Development).

9.5. An outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) is contained in Appendix F which sets out the landscape and ecological management principles for the existing and proposed enhancement measures outlined above.

10.0 Landscape effects

Construction

10.1. The predicted temporary effects of the Development on landscape receptors during construction will arise from activities and processes being carried out on the Site over a short period of around 6 months. Various method statements and strategies will be prepared to ensure that the surrounding landscape features and habitats are protected and the impacts are minimised. These are likely to be controlled via planning conditions.

10.2. Changes to the landscape resource during the temporary construction phase will include:

- loss of open farmland;
- removal of sections of hedgerows to facilitate access;
- creating access and maintenance tracks;
- excavations associated with the laying of underground cables;
- site fencing to protect retained boundary trees and hedges;
- stockpiles and material storage areas;
- mobile construction plant, such as diggers, lifts and lorries;
- site compounds, protective hoardings and signage;
- a wheel washing facility;
- the presence of partially constructed solar panels and other infrastructure;
- increase in movement of plant and other traffic; and
- the planting of the temporary evergreen hedge.

10.3. Appendix A1 provides a detailed appraisal of the construction effects on the landscape character and resource for each of the identified receptors. The tabular format provides a concise and transparent process for determining the effects for each receptor. The results are summarised below.

10.4. The magnitude of change to the landscape resource (direct effects on the Site) is considered to be medium during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the effects are considered to be moderate adverse during construction. Due to the nature of the Development and the loss of the open rural fields, these effects are considered to be unavoidable.

10.5. The magnitude of change to 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character areas is considered to be low during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the effects are considered to be slight adverse during construction. This is considered appropriate, given that construction activity is likely to be only partially visible within a small part of the character area and given that the Proposed Development sits within a corridor of other 'Changed Countryside' uses.

10.6. The magnitude of change to 'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character areas is considered to be negligible during construction. Combined with a medium/high sensitivity, the effects are considered to be negligible neutral during construction.

The Proposed Development is located outside the AONB and is separated from it by vegetation and changing topography.

Table 10.1: Landscape effects summary (construction)

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of effect	Significant (Yes/No)
Landscape resource (direct effects on the Site)	Low/medium	Medium	Moderate adverse	No
'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character area	Medium/high	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No

Completion

10.7. Upon completion, the Proposed Development will generate a number of reversible, medium-term changes to the landscape and visual amenity. The principal activities that will have an impact on the fabric, quality and character of the landscape upon completion are:

- the loss of agricultural land;
- the introduction of panels, fencing, transformers and other mechanical and electrical infrastructure, including CCTV poles and cameras;
- the creation of access tracks and highway access junctions onto Whiterails Road;
- the introduction of a new evergreen hedgerow;
- the creation of areas of new native scrub, hedge-planting and tree-planting; and
- the establishment of extensive areas of natural grassland.

10.8. Appendix A1 provides a detailed appraisal of the completion effects on the landscape character and resource for each of the identified receptors. The tabular format provides a concise and transparent process for determining the effects for each receptor. The results are summarised below.

10.9. The magnitude of change to the landscape resource (direct effects on the Site) is considered to be medium upon completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the effects are considered to be moderate adverse upon completion. This is due to the nature of the Development, the loss of the open rural fields, and the fact that the landscape enhancement initiatives will not yet be fully established.

10.10. The magnitude of change to 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character areas is considered to be low upon completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the effects are considered to be slight adverse upon completion. This is considered appropriate, given that landscape changes would only be experienced within the Site itself in the context of other 'Changed Countryside' uses and not within the wider character area (which covers a large area of the eastern Isle of Wight and is separated and isolated by other character areas and settlements).

10.11. The magnitude of change to 'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character areas is considered to be negligible upon completion. Combined with a medium/high sensitivity, the effects are considered to be negligible neutral upon completion. The Proposed Development is located outside the AONB and separated from it by vegetation and changing topography.

Table 10.2: Landscape effects summary (completion)

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of effect	Significant (Yes/No)
Landscape resource (direct effects on the Site)	Low/medium	Medium	Moderate adverse	No
'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character area	Medium/high	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No

After 15 years

10.12. After a 15-year establishment period, when the residual effects are assessed, the changes will be reversible and medium/long term. At this time, the likely residual effects on the landscape resource will be assessed in the context of further mitigating factors, including:

- the maturity of buffer/scrub planting;
- the maturity of wildlife habitats, including species-rich meadow grassland;
- the maturity of specimen trees to hedgerows; and
- the weathering and dulling of built interventions.

10.13. Appendix A1 provides a detailed appraisal of the residual effects on the landscape character and resource for each of the identified receptors. The tabular format provides a concise and transparent process for determining the effects for each receptor. The results are summarised below.

10.14. The magnitude of change to the landscape resource (direct effects on the Site) is considered to be low after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the effects are considered to revert to providing a slight benefit after a 15-year establishment period. The new grassland and scrub/hedge landscape features are considered to be a landscape enhancement beyond that of the existing open agricultural fields.

10.15. The magnitude of change to 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character areas is considered to be negligible after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the effects are considered to be negligible neutral after 15 years. This is considered appropriate, given that the proposed planting measures have been carefully designed to naturally form part of and complement the existing landscape characteristics.

10.16. The magnitude of change to 'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character areas is considered to be negligible after 15 years. Combined with a medium/high sensitivity, the effects are considered to be negligible neutral after 15 years. This is considered appropriate, given the Site's separation from the AONB and in spite of the proposed additional tree- and hedge-planting that is expected to further contribute to the characteristics of the local AONB and non-AONB landscape.

Table 10.3: Landscape effects summary (after 15 years)

Landscape receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of effect	Significant (Yes/No)
Landscape resource (direct effects on the Site)	Low/medium	Low	Slight benefit	No
'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area	Low/medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No
'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character area	Medium/high	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No

11.0 Visual effects

Construction

11.1. The changes generated by the Proposed Development during construction are set out in 10.2 above. Reference is made to the viewpoint photosheets in Appendix C, Figure 14 in Appendix B, and the proposed montages shown in Appendix G.

11.2. Specifically in relation to views from Whiterails Road (receptor group 1), the cross sections at Figure 14 help to illustrate the changing visual conditions of the principle motorist receptor in relation to the existing and proposed vegetation cover at various stages of the Proposed

Development. It is worth noting here that the cross sections show a viewing eye height of a standard vehicle at 1.05m[2] high and how this differs with the additional height achieved from the Type 1 and Type 4 viewpoint photography which sit at 1.5m, in accordance with TGN06/19, representative of a 'pedestrian' where there are no pedestrian receptors. Whilst motorists in standard cars are the dominant user, with vehicles passing at regular intervals, it is also acknowledged that higher heights can be achieved from commercial vehicles and from double decker buses (1 bus every 10 minutes at peak times).

11.3. Appendix A2 provides a detailed appraisal of the construction effects on the visual amenity for each of the visual receptors. The tabular format provides a concise and transparent process for determining the effects on each view. The results are summarised below.

11.4. The magnitude of change from receptor group 1 (Immediate views from alongside the Site from Whiterails Road) is considered to be medium during construction. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be moderate adverse. Construction activity is expected to be partially visible over some parts of the Site.

11.5. The magnitude of change from receptor group 2 (Close views from the south-west from Staplers Road) is considered to be negligible during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be negligible neutral, as activities at this stage are expected to be barely perceptible.

11.6. The magnitude of change from receptor group 3 (Close views from the north-east from Park Road) is considered to be low during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be slight adverse. Construction activity is expected to be partially visible over some parts of the Site.

11.7. The magnitude of change from receptor group 4 (Close views from the north from the Newport–Wootton cycleway) is considered to be low during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be slight adverse. Construction activity is expected to be partially visible over some parts of the Site through gaps in the vegetation cover.

11.8. The magnitude of change from receptor group 5 (Distant views from the north from Alverstone Road) is considered to be low during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be slight adverse, as some construction activity is expected to be visible.

11.9. The magnitude of change from receptor group 6 (Distant views from the west from public right of way N116) is considered to be negligible/low during construction. Combined with a medium/high sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be slight adverse. Some construction activity is expected to be visible over parts of the Site at a distance of over 1km.

11.10. The magnitude of change from receptor group 7 (Close views from the east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be negligible/low during construction. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered to be slight adverse.

[2] Department for Transport, *Manual for Streets*, 2007

Construction activity is expected to be only partially visible from this location due to intervening hedgerows.

11.11. The magnitude of change from receptor group 8 (Distant views from the south-east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be negligible during construction. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the significance of effect during construction is considered negligible neutral. Construction activity is not expected to be visible from this location due to changing topography and intervening hedgerows.

Table 11.1: Visual effects summary (construction)

Visual receptor group	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of effect	Significant (Yes/No)
1. Immediate views from alongside the Site (Whiterails Road)	Low/medium	Medium	Moderate adverse	No
2. Close views from the south-west (Staplers Road)	Low/medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No
3. Close views from the north-east (Park Road)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
4. Close views from the north (Newport–Wootton cycleway)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
5. Distant views from the north (Alverstone Road)	Low/medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No
6. Distant views from the west (public right of way N116)	Medium/high	Low	Slight adverse	No
7. Close views from the east (Briddlesford Road)	Low/medium	Negligible/low	Slight adverse	No
8. Distant views from the south-east (Briddlesford Road)	Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No

Completion

11.12. The changes generated by the Proposed Development upon completion are set out in 10.8 above. Appendix A2 provides a detailed appraisal of the completion effects on the visual amenity for each of the views. The tabular format provides a concise and transparent process for determining the effects for each visual receptor. The results are summarised below.

11.13. The magnitude of change from receptor group 1 (Immediate views from alongside the Site from Whiterails Road) is considered to be medium upon completion. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be moderate adverse. Low level views over the open fields will be closed off by the evergreen hedgerow, which forms a temporary, non-native feature in these agricultural fields. Glimpse views of the panels and other interventions, including CCTV cameras, would still be expected at this stage. Open views over the hedgerow will be retained to woodland beyond.

11.14. The magnitude of change from receptor group 2 (Close views from the south-west from Staplers Road) is considered to be low at completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be slight adverse. Glimpse views of the solar panels or substation may be possible at this stage through the vegetation cover.

11.15. The magnitude of change from receptor group 3 (Close views from the north-east from Park Road) is considered to be medium upon completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be moderate adverse. Panels are expected to be visible over much of this view, albeit at a low height, with views to woodland and trees retained.

11.16. The magnitude of change from receptor group 4 (Close views from the north from the Newport–Wootton cycleway) is considered to be medium upon completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be moderate adverse. This location provides a fleeting open view over the Proposed Development, which for the remainder of the cycleway is not available due to intervening vegetation.

11.17. The magnitude of change from receptor group 5 (Distant views from the north from Alverstone Road) is considered to be low upon completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be slight adverse. Some solar panels are expected to be visible through the vegetation, but they will be experienced against other visual detractors.

11.18. The magnitude of change from receptor group 6 (Distant views from the west from public right of way N116) is considered to be low/medium upon completion. Combined with a medium/high sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be moderate adverse. An area of panels is expected to be visible within what is currently an agricultural field.

11.19. The magnitude of change from receptor group 7 (Close views from the east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be low/medium upon completion. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered moderate adverse. The openness of this view provides an expansive outlook over the shallow valley, but only glimpses of the Development are expected from some locations.

11.20. The magnitude of change from receptor group 8 (Distant views from the south-east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be negligible/low upon completion. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the significance of effect upon completion is considered to be slight adverse as distant glimpses of development may be possible from some locations along this road.

Table 11.2: Visual effects summary (completion)

Visual receptor group	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of effect	Significant (Yes/No)
1. Immediate views from alongside the Site (Whiterails Road)	Low/medium	Medium	Moderate adverse	No
2. Close views from the south-west (Staplers Road)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
3. Close views from the north-east (Park Road)	Low/medium	Medium	Moderate adverse	No

4. Close views from the north (Newport–Wootton cycleway)	Low/medium	Medium	Moderate adverse	No
5. Distant views from the north (Alverstone Road)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
6. Distant views from the west (public right of way N116)	Medium/high	Low/medium	Moderate adverse	No
7. Close views from the east (Briddlesford Road)	Low/medium	Low/medium	Moderate adverse	No
8. Distant views from the south-east (Briddlesford Road)	Medium	Negligible/low	Slight adverse	No

After 15 years

11.21. The changes generated by the Proposed Development after 15 years are set out in 10.14 above. Appendix A2 provides a detailed appraisal of the residual effects on the visual amenity for each of the views. The tabular format provides a concise and transparent process for determining the effects for each visual receptor. The results are summarised below.

11.22. The magnitude of change from receptor group 1 (Immediate views from alongside the Site from Whiterails Road) is considered to be low after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be slight adverse. The evergreen hedgerow will be replaced over time with a naturalised native hedgerow, typical of the local wooded landscape, which will be maintained at a height of approximately 2.5m to allow open views across the valley and to the woodland beyond, whilst obscuring low-level views of the panels.

11.23. The magnitude of change from receptor group 2 (Close views from the south-west from Staplers Road) is considered to be negligible after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be negligible neutral, given that the additional proposed tree-planting to hedges will offer further visual protection.

11.24. The magnitude of change from receptor group 3 (Close views from the north-east from Park Road) is considered to be low after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be slight adverse. The maturing new vegetation will combine to restrict the visibility of the panels and of short- to medium-distance views. Longer-distance views towards woodland and trees will be retained.

11.25. The magnitude of change from receptor group 4 (Close views from the north from the Newport–Wootton cycleway) is considered to be low after 15 years. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be slight adverse. New native planting along this boundary will help to close off views of the solar panels.

11.26. The magnitude of change from receptor group 5 (Distant views from the north from Alverstone Road) is considered to be negligible after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be negligible neutral. The maturing new planting will combine with existing vegetation to obscure the panels.

11.27. The magnitude of change from receptor group 6 (Distant views from the west from public right of way N116) is considered to be low after 15 years. Combined with a medium/high sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be slight adverse. Maturing new tree-planting within the existing hedgerows will combine to obscure the panels.

11.28. The magnitude of change from receptor group 7 (Close views from the east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be negligible/low after 15 years. Combined with a low/medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be slight adverse The maturing scrub- and tree-planting alongside Whiterails Road will combine to close off views of the Proposed Development but some panels may still be visible from this elevated location.

11.29. The magnitude of change from receptor group 8 (Distant views from the south-east from Briddlesford Road) is considered to be negligible after 15 years. Combined with a medium sensitivity, the significance of effect after 15 years is considered to be negligible neutral, as the Development is not expected to be visible.

Table 11.3: Visual effects summary (after 15 years)

Visual receptor group	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Significance of effect	Significant (Yes/No)
1. Immediate views from alongside the Site (Whiterails Road)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
2. Close views from the south-west (Staplers Road)	Low/medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No
3. Close views from the north-east (Park Road)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
4. Close views from the north (Newport–Wootton cycleway)	Low/medium	Low	Slight adverse	No
5. Distant views from the north (Alverstone Road)	Low/medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No
6. Distant views from the west (public right of way N116)	Medium/high	Low	Slight adverse	No
7. Close views from the east (Briddlesford Road)	Low/medium	Negligible/low	Slight adverse	No
8. Distant views from the south-east (Briddlesford Road)	Medium	Negligible	Negligible neutral	No

12.0 Cumulative effects

12.1. The effects of the Proposed Development have also been considered against a cumulative baseline condition to test if judgement in respect of significance would alter if the committed development, detailed below, is constructed.

P/01573/17 Proposed football ground, grandstand and floodlights, clubhouse and associated roads and parking (Approved May 2019)

12.2. The proposed relocated Newport football ground is located off Fairlee Road, 700m to the north-west of the Site, close to the East Cowes roundabout (see Figure 3). The proposals include a new grandstand and floodlights, which would rise above the surrounding hedgerow and tree cover. Due to the intervening woodland following Palmer's Brook at the base of the valley, it is considered unlikely that the new stadium would be visible or experienced in the context of the Proposed Development or the majority of its identified landscape and visual receptors. That said, it is considered likely that the football ground (especially the grandstand and floodlights) would be visible from visual receptor group 5 (distant views from the north from Alverstone Road) and, in particular, from VP7c, VP7d, and VP7e (sequential viewpoints in Appendix C). The additional imposition of this type of development will further impose on the rural qualities associated with the visual experience here. However, given the anticipated negligible/low magnitude of the Proposed Development on the visual receptors here and the woodland and tree cover that helps to separate the two sites, it is considered unlikely that the football ground development, when considered cumulatively, would change the conclusions in respect of the receptor's significance of effect.

12.3. In landscape character terms, the football ground development will further dilute the rural qualities of the surrounding countryside and add another element of 'Changed Countryside'. However, this is not considered significant enough to change any of the conclusions in respect of the significance of effect on the local landscape character areas ('PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' and 'Northern Lowlands') or the local AONB character areas. This conclusion is considered appropriate, given that the two sites sit within this wooded landscape with little intervisibility across the character area.

12.4. There are no other proposed developments or applications within the study area that would have an effect on the existing landscape and visual amenity baseline or create a cumulative effect in association with this Proposed Development. As outlined, built developments, including the nearby solar farms are considered as part of the existing landscape and visual baseline condition.

13.0 Conclusions

13.1. This LVIa demonstrates how the Proposed Development could be delivered sympathetically to address the identified landscape and visual sensitivities and makes the following concluding points, summarising the residual effects (15 years after completion) that remain after mitigation.

13.1.1. The Site is considered to be typical of the 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area, being characterised as a rolling pastoral landscape containing small and medium-sized agricultural fields, regular in shape, surrounded by a well-wooded landscape of copses, hedgerows and hedgerow trees. These characteristics are also partly true of the nearest AONB landscape character areas ('Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland'). It is a relatively closed landscape with short- to medium-distance views available to the next topographical ridge or area of woodland. It is also a landscape that contains a number of recognised 'Changed Countryside' uses, in addition to subsequent new or unidentified 'Changed Countryside' uses, which have occurred since the EWLCA was published in 2015.

13.1.2. The Site is managed as arable (animal feedstock) and pastoral farmland. There are no noteworthy landscape or heritage designations within or in close proximity to the Site,

and there are none that have a direct physical or visual relationship with the Site. Features of interest include the hedgerows and trees, but these are not rare (and will be retained except where small sections will be removed for access). The Site does not have a statutory status (National Park, AONB), is not designated or referred to as a 'valued landscape', and does not have any identified quality in the Island Plan Core Strategy. Therefore, despite the attributes outlined in 5.24–5.34 within the text, when applying the 'commensurate' test as set out in paragraph 174 of the NPPF, the Site is not subject to any protection or enshrined enhancements.

13.1.3. The Proposed Development is considered to have a slight beneficial effect on the landscape resource (direct effects) after a 15-year establishment period. This is considered appropriate, given that the new grassland and scrub/hedge landscape features are considered to be a landscape enhancement beyond that of the existing working agricultural fields, providing a net biodiversity gain of over 30% (refer to the EcIA).

13.1.4. The Proposed Development is considered to have a negligible neutral effect or no effect on the local landscape character areas ('PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' and 'Northern Lowlands') after a 15-year establishment period. This is considered appropriate, given that landscape changes would only be experienced within the Site itself in the context of other 'Changed Countryside' uses and not within the wider character area (which covers a large area of the Isle of Wight and is separated and isolated by other character areas and settlements). Furthermore, the proposals in the landscape mitigation and enhancement strategy have been carefully designed to naturally form part of and complement the existing landscape characteristics.

13.1.5. The Proposed Development is considered to have a negligible neutral effect or no effect on the nearest AONB landscape character areas ('Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland') after 15 years. This is considered appropriate, given the Site's separation from the AONB and in spite of the proposed additional tree- and hedge-planting, which is expected to further contribute to the characteristics of the local AONB and non-AONB landscape.

13.1.6. The Site sits towards the bottom of a shallow valley, defined by Palmer's Brook, which leads towards the coast in a northerly direction. Remnants of historic hedgerows are located within the Site and contain a varying density of mature oak trees. Woodland follows Palmer's Brook along the valley floor and connects with other areas of woodland, including the adjoining Fattingpark Copse. This vegetation combines with the topographical changes to create a contained landscape, with views often only available to the nearest ridge or block of woodland.

13.1.7. The viewpoint photography in Appendix C and Appendix G together with the Visual Appraisal (Figure 12) shows that the visibility of the Proposed Development would be extremely localised, with primary visibility (clear, open views of most of the Site) limited to the Site and its immediate context. Secondary visibility (glimpses or filtered views of part of the Site) would be limited to the east and south-east along Briddlesford Road, to the south-west towards Staplers Road, and over the south-facing hillside in the vicinity of Alverstone Road to the north.

13.1.8. This appraisal identifies that five of the eight visual receptors are expected to experience a slight adverse effect after a 15-year establishment period. Adverse effects are considered to be unavoidable from all but one of these visual receptors due to their proximity to the receptor. However, these are views predominantly experienced by transient receptors, either as a motorist or cyclist, who have a lower sensitivity and appreciation of the landscape (compared with that of a leisure walker passing along a rural public footpath). Furthermore, the proposed mitigation measures will ensure that the magnitude of effect is minimised through new native plantings within and along the edges of the Proposed Development. The other visual receptor which is expected to experience adverse effects after 15 years is located from a distant, elevated public footpath. Here, views of some of the panels will be experienced at a distance of over 1km within a much wider settled-rural landscape.

13.1.9. The appraisal identifies that three of the eight visual receptors are expected to experience a negligible neutral effect after 15 years, as the Proposed Development is not expected to be visible from these receptors due to the intervening topography and existing or proposed new vegetation.

13.1.10. The extensive range of mitigation and enhancement measures identified in Figure 13 have been developed to enhance the landscape character of the Site and to remedy the potential adverse landscape and visual effects. These initiatives include planting new mixed native hedgerows, planting a temporary evergreen hedge that will in time be replaced by a native scrub/hedgerow edge, planting new native trees within or next to existing hedges, and establishing extensive natural grassland areas over the area covered by the proposed solar PV arrays.

13.1.11. The Proposed Development is expected to be in operation for a limited period of 40 years and is therefore considered to be reversible. After the panels and associated infrastructure are removed, the landscape will return to the current farming use, albeit within a retained enhanced landscape framework (subject to the necessary change of use planning consents).

13.2. In summary, it is considered that the Proposed Development approach is sensitive to the local landscape character and visual impact through the incorporation of primary mitigation and enhancement measures. These include locating the PV arrays and associated infrastructure within the existing landscape setting of hedges and trees, which will be strengthened with additional native hedges, scrub and trees planted within and around the edges of the Site. Furthermore, extensive areas of natural grassland, new hedgerows and tree planting will take place as an identified landscape improvement for the local landscape character area ('PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land'). Effects on landscape character and resource would be greatest at the Site level and visual effects would be greatest for cyclists (RG8) and motorists (RG1, RG3, RG7) passing alongside the Site. However, as set out in the LVIa, there would be no significant effects in planning terms, on the landscape character and resource, or visual amenity arising from the Proposed Development after a 15-year establishment period when residual effects are considered.

13.3. This is a development which is considered to meet the requirements the Isle of Wight Core Strategy, specifically in relation to protecting the environment (SP5) and generating renewable electricity outside of the AONB, ALC grade 1-3a and designated environmental assets (SP6). It is

also development which has been designed with careful consideration of the landscape and its setting (DM2) whilst enhancing its biodiversity and Green Infrastructure value (DM12 and DM13), principles which are integral to the NPPF at Chapter 15.

14.0 References

- Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition* (2013)
- Landscape Institute *Visual Representation of Development Proposals - Technical Guidance Note 06/19* (2019)
- Landscape Institute *Landscape Character Assessment - Technical Note 08/2015* (2015)
- Landscape Institute *Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations - Technical Guidance Note 02/21* (2021)
- Natural England *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (2018)
- Natural England, *National Character Area 127 Isle of Wight* (2014)
- Brownscombe, *East Wight Landscape Character Assessment* (2015)
- Basford, *The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation* (2008)
- Isle of Wight Council, *Island Plan Core Strategy (including Waste and Minerals) and Development Management development Plan Document* (2012)
- The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership, Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024, 2019
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Practice Guidance* (2019)
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Practice Guidance* (2015)
- Department of Energy and Climate Change, *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)* (2011)
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2021)

Appendix A - assessment matrixes

Table A1 Landscape resource and character assessment table

	Sensitivity			Magnitude of effect					Significance of effect	
Receptor Group	Susceptibility	Value	Overall sensitivity	Scale and contrast of changes	Geographic extent of changes	Duration and reversibility	Overall magnitude	Mitigation / enhancement	Significance and nature	Residual effects
Landscape Resource (direct effects on the Site)	The susceptibility of the landscape resource to change on the Site is **medium.** The Site contains open fields which are enclosed by hedges and to a varying degree on containment, by hedgerow trees. The Site slopes to the southwest as part of this wider shallow valley. It is therefore a relatively closed landscape with no intervisibility across the whole of the Site, with views often limited to the next field.	The site is managed as arable (feedstock) and pastoral farmland and contains high-voltage powerlines. There are no landscape or heritage designations of worthy note within or in close proximity to the site, or any that have a direct physical or visual relationship with the Site. The Site has neither a statutory status (National Park, AONB), nor is it designated or referred to as a 'valued landscape', or has any identified quality in the Island Plan Core Strategy. The ALC defines the fields as being moderate quality (3b). Therefore, despite the attributes outlined at 5.24 – 5.33 within the text, when applying the 'commensurate' test as set out paragraph 174 of the NPPF, the Site is not subject to any protection or enhancement. Therefore, the value of the site is considered to be **low**.	The overall sensitivity to change on the Site is **low/medium**.	The scale and contrast of the changes to the landscape resource is considered to be **medium**. The open agricultural fields will be replaced by meadow grassland with solar arrays above, fencing, pathways, battery cells, CCTV cameras, and the substation. Hedgerows and trees will be retained throughout except where removal is required for access. New tree and scrub planting will occur within the Site and alongside existing hedgerows.	The geographical extent over which the changes will be felt is considered to be **medium/high**. The changes will occur within a large part of the Site, with areas retained as natural grassland or scrub planting (beneath the pylons, on the route of the SGN pipeline, and alongside the ancient woodland).	During the construction phase, the changes are temporary and short term. At completion, the changes will be reversible and will be judged over the short/medium term. After a 15-year establishment period, the changes are reversible and and medium/long term.	Construction: **medium** Completion: **medium** After 15 years: **low** The development of the Site will result in the loss of open agricultural fields and replaced with natural grassland, solar panels and associated infrastructure, fencing and trackways. The existing trees and hedges within the Site will be retained and protected except where removal is required for access. Construction activity will result in the loss of the open fields but hedgerows will be protected. At completion, the magnitude is considered to be medium due to the loss of open fields and the areas of new grassland and tree planting would not be fully established. The magnitude will reduce further after 15 years after the establishment of plantings.	Agricultural fields with low biodiversity value will be replaced by meadow grassland with additional areas of tree and scrub planting.	The Proposed Development would introduce a **moderate adverse** effect on the local landscape resource at construction due to construction activity and associated works and loss of open fields. It would introduce a **moderate adverse** effect at completion due to the loss of open fields and the natural grassland and areas of planting not fully established.	The residual effects would revert to **slight benefit** after 15 years, following the establishment of the new ecological and landscape enhancements.
'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' (EWLCA) and 'Northern Lowlands' (HLC) local landscape character area	The susceptibility of these character areas to change on the Site is **low**. The rolling landscape is interspersed with hedgerows, trees, copses and areas of woodland, which is visually contained with little intervisibility across the wider character area. The EWLCA character type covers large areas of countryside to the northeast of the Isle of Wight, not as one continuous swathe but as many isolated or interspersed areas of the landscape separated by other character areas.	The value of this character area is considered to be **medium** as it forms a distinct character area within the Isle of Wight landscape. A landscape which is recognised as containing amenity and leisure uses, as well as being under pressure from nearby settlements and urban areas.	The overall sensitivity to change on the Site is **low/medium**.	The scale and contrast of the change in relation to the local landscape character areas is considered to be **low**. The character area covers a large part of the north-eastern Isle of Wight with fragments of the character area severed by urban areas and other landscape character types. The majority of the character area does not have any physical or visual relation with the Site, other than the Site itself and its immediate context which includes a number of existing 'Changed Countryside' uses including a solar farm (CC6). Large areas of the Site will remain undeveloped as open grassland / scrubland and grassland beneath the panels.	The geographical extent over which the changes will be felt is considered to be **low**. The changes will occur within the site itself and its immediate setting and not to the wider character area.		Construction: **low** Completion: **low** After 15 years: **negligible** The character area covers a large area of eastern Isle of Wight, and the scheme 'develops' a tiny proportion of its area. The area over which the landscape effects would be felt would also be limited to the Site itself and its immediate boundaries and experienced against the backdrop of existing 'Changed Countryside' uses. Construction activity will be partially visible and will result in a low magnitude. At completion, the Proposed Development would bring about landscape changes to the site itself and no further within the character area. The magnitude will reduce further after 15 years after the establishment of plantings.	Locally native trees will be planted to hedgerows characteristic of the landscape character which will contribute to the local character and reduce the visibility of the proposed development.	The Proposed Development would introduce a **slight adverse** effect on the LCA at construction due to construction activity and associated works. It would introduce a **slight adverse** effect at completion due to the loss of open countryside land.	The residual effects would reduce to **negligible neutral** after 15 years, following the maturing of trees, hedgerow planting which will further enhance the wooded character of the local character area. Furthermore new grassland areas will be created as an identified recommendation of the character EWLCA.
'Traditional enclosed pasture' and 'Northern woodland' AONB landscape character area	The susceptibility of these character areas to change is considered to be **medium**. The landscape is dominated by vegetation, either as dense hedgerows with mature trees, or as woodland blocks restricting any visual connection to the wider landscape. Despite this visual containment, given that the AONB designation covers 5 separate areas of the Isle of Wight (rather than a single entity) it is under pressure from adjoining non-AONB landscape uses and built-up areas.	The value of these character areas is considered to be **high** as it forms a distinct character area within the nationally recognised and protected Isle of Wight AONB.	The overall sensitivity to change on the Site is **medium/high**.	The scale and contrast of the change in relation nearest AONB landscape character areas is considered to be **negligible**. The site is not located within the AONB and is separated from it by a distance of over 345m in a landscape containing trees and hedgerows, and topographical changes.	The geographical extent over which the changes will be felt is considered to be **negligible**. The site is small in size compared with the nearest AONB character areas which are spread over the whole of the Isle of Wight and are severed by other AONB character areas and non-AONB landscape and built-up areas.		Construction: **negligible** Completion: **negligible** After 15 years: **negligible** The AONB landscape character areas are often isolated and separated by other AONB character areas and parts of non-AONB landscape and built-up areas, and spread over the whole of the Isle of Wight. The Proposed Development is located outside of the AONB and separated from it by vegetation and changing topography and is not expected to be visible at all stages of the project duration, or would only offer glimpse views from the outer edge of the AONB, and experienced amongst the wider non-AONB landscape.	Locally native trees will be planted to hedgerows characteristic of the landscape character which will contribute to the local character and reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development.	The Proposed Development would introduce a **negligible neutral** on the nearest AONB landscape character areas at construction and completion.	After 15 years the residual effects are expected to remain at **negligible neutral**, despite the additional tree planting which is expected to further contribute to the characteristics of the local AONB and non-AONB landscape.

Table A2 Visual amenity assessment table

		Sensitivity				Magnitude of effect					Significance of effect	
Receptor Group	Viewpoint	Susceptibility: Activity of receptor	Susceptibility: Extent of interest in the landscape and type of view	Value	Overall sensitivity	Scale and contrast of changes	Geographic extent of changes	Duration and reversibility	Overall magnitude	Mitigation / enhancement	Significance and nature	Residual effects
1. Immediate views from alongside the Site (Whiterails Road)	1	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Whiterails Road at speeds of up to 60mph but also as a cyclist. There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians who might have a heightened interest in the landscape. The viewpoint is also representative of views from private residential dwellings. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the transient nature of the experience.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **medium**. At this point the road leaves the built-up area of Wootton and provides partly elevated open views across the valley here, over rural countryside. The roadside hedgerow partly contains the view and restricts the visibility of the nearest field and directs views along the valley to the south and north. Woodland is visible beyond as is the rising hillside on the opposing side of the valley.	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is an every-day view with no recognised importance.	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this visual receptor group is considered to be **low/ medium**.	The scale and contrast of the view is considered to be **medium**. Views over the adjoining open agricultural field to the north will be lost and replaced initially, by a temporary evergreen hedge which will appear as a non-native feature within this rural landscape. The hedge will however effectively conceal the solar panels and other built interventions. Although some glimpse views of panels and CCTV cameras through and over the evergreen hedge may be possible. Once fully established, new native scrub planting along this boundary will grow to a height where the evergreen hedge is no longer required and will be gradually removed. All planting along this roadside edge will be no higher than necessary so that views to the distant woodland and trees can be retained, as will views across and along the valley, thereby maintaining the experience of openness. New trees will be planted within existing hedgerows, including those to Whiterails Road, in keeping with the existing local landscape character.	The extent of changes are considered to be **medium** as the changes will occur on one side of Whiterails Road, at a perpendicular angle of travel but will be experienced along the majority of this open stretch of road.	During the construction phase, the changes are temporary and short term. At completion, the changes will be reversible and will be judged over the medium term. After a 15-year establishment period, the changes are reversible and and medium/long term.	Construction: **medium** Completion: **medium** After 15 years: **low** Construction activity in the form of material stockpiling, machinery and fencing will be visible within part of these open fields but largely hidden from view once the temporary evergreen hedge is planted (which will appear as a non-native feature), resulting in a **medium** magnitude. At completion, the level of magnitude is considered to be **medium** as views over the panels will be largely closed off by the evergreen hedgerow which forms a non-native feature in these agricultural fields. Glimpse views of the panels and other interventions including CCTV cameras would be expected at this stage. After 15 years the magnitude is expected to reduce to **low** as the evergreen hedge would have been removed and the new native boundary vegetation and trees will have matured, concealing the panels, and forming part of the natural, wooded landscape character. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting over these fields. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions is unlikely to change given the openness of views here across the Site and that an 'evergreen' hedge will be planted and replaced over time by a thick belt of native scrub.	An evergreen hedge will be planted as a temporary feature to reduce the visual appearance of the solar panels and other built interventions along this roadside edge. An additional belt of native scrub is also planted along the edge here which supplements the existing hedgerow. In time, once the new native plantings have matured, the evergreen hedge will be removed. As an additional visual measure, the roadside hedgerow maintenance regime will be altered so that it is clipped into an A-shape which improves the durablility of the hedge and the height will be slightly raised to around 2m. Native trees will also be planted within the roadside hedgerow.	The Development would introduce a **moderate adverse** effect on views from this location at construction. At completion the effects are considered to be **moderate adverse** due to the proximity of the view and introduction of the evergreen hedge.	It is anticipated that effects from this location will reduce but remain at **slight adverse** after 15 years once the new natural wooded edge to the Site has developed.
	2	As viewpoint 1, the visual experience is dominated by motorists travelling at high speeds. Viewpoint 2 is also partly representative of views from business premises and the Butterfly World visitor attraction and its car park. The viewpoint is also representative of views from private residential dwellings There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians who might have a heightened interest in the landscape. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience but with added interest from the adjacent visitor attraction.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **low**. Here, on the lower ground at the base of the valley, views over the landscape are more contained and views are largely focused along the length of the road. Views to the south are restricted by buildings and vegetation. Views to the north are partly available through and over roadside vegetation towards distant woodland.									
2. Close views from the southwest (Staplers Road)	3	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Staplers Road at speeds of up to 60mph but also as a cyclist. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **low**. As with VP2, the lower section of Staplers/Whiterails Road is more enclosed, with high, overgrown hedges	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is an every-day view with no	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this viewpoint is considered	The scale of change and contrast of the view is considered to be **low**. The proposed substation is expected to be partially visible from this location but would be experienced against the much larger and equally	The extent of changes are considered to be **negligible/low**. The proposed substation is located at a perpendicular angle of travel and forms a		Construction: **negligible** Completion: **low** After 15 years: **negligible** Construction activity is expected to be largely not visible from this location as much of the	Existing hedgerows located within the Site will be supplemented with additional hedgerow species to fill gaps and strengthen. New	The Development would introduce a **negligible neutral** during construction as activities at this stage are expected to be barely perceptible. At completion some	After a 15 year establishment period, the maturing hedgerow and tree structure are expected to close off the remaining views of

		Sensitivity				Magnitude of effect					Significance of effect	
Receptor Group	Viewpoint	Susceptibility: Activity of receptor	Susceptibility: Extent of interest in the landscape and type of view	Value	Overall sensitivity	Scale and contrast of changes	Geographic extent of changes	Duration and reversibility	Overall magnitude	Mitigation / enhancement	Significance and nature	Residual effects
		to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience.	and mature trees located alongside the road. The gap in vegetation here offers a fleeting view over the valley to the north, towards Bridlesford Road and the existing substation.	recognised importance.	to be **low/ medium**.	visible existing substation. The proposed solar farm is not expected to be visible due to intervening vegetation, although glimpse views may be possible during winter months.	small part of the wider view.		Site is concealed from view by vegetation, resulting in a **negligible magnitude**. At completion some solar panels or substation are expected to be visible through vegetation (more so during the winter) but experienced against the existing visible solar farm or much larger substation, resulting in a **low magnitude**. After 15 years the magnitude is expected to reduce to **negligible** as hedges and trees located within Site will offer additional visual protection. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting over the panels and lighting to the proposed substation will only be in operation on infrequent occasion when staff or engineers are visiting. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions may increase slightly as a result of the loss of vegetation cover within the valley but will at the same time increase the visibility of other visual detractors (buildings, pylons etc).	specimen trees will also be planted within the hedgerow. Enhanced maintenance regimes will increase the height of the hedges within the Site to around 2m. Any lighting to the substation will be designed in a conservative manner with controls to limit unnecessary usage.	glimpse views of the proposed BESS and substation may be possible, resulting in a **slight adverse** effect.	the Proposed Development, resulting in a **negligible neutral**.
	4	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Staplers Road at speeds of up to 60mph but also as a cyclist. There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians. Locations here are also representative of views from the local visitor attractions including the Island Riding Centre and Monkey Haven. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience but with added interest from the nearby visitor attractions.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **medium**. On higher ground, as with VP1, views are more open and expansive. The hedge to the north-western side of the road is low and offers long distant views over part of this settled-rural countryside. The overgrown roadside hedgerow to the southeast closes off views in this direction	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is an every-day view with no recognised importance.		The scale and contrast of changes are considered to be **low**. The solar panels are expected to be largely concealed beyond mature trees which sit at the bottom of the valley. Glimpses of panels within part of the site can be expected through vegetation, particularly during winter months – an experience which will be lessened during the spring/summer. This is experienced within a settled-rural landscape containing buildings and structures, pylons and the partly visible solar farm at Grange Farm.	The extent of changes are considered to be **low**. The changes on the Site are expected to form a small part of the wider view, with the eye focused towards the horizon, where in the distance, the Solent and mainland is visible.					
3. Close views from the northeast (Park Road)	5	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Park Road at a speed of up to 40mph (30mph further to the south) but also as a cyclist. There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians who might have a heightened interest in the landscape. The view is also partly representative of private residential properties and their gardens which back onto the Site. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **medium** as the stretch of road at VP5 offers a rare chance to view over the wider landscape to the southwest and over the valley. This is a rural view dominated by trees and woodland along the horizon, with little evidence of built interventions. Views to the northeast are restricted by the tall roadside hedgerow. Elsewhere along Park Road, as illustrated by the supporting sequential views, trees, hedgerows, fences and buildings restrict the availability of views.	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is an every-day view with no recognised importance.	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this viewpoint is considered to be **low/ medium**.	The scale and contrast of the change in the view is considered to be **medium** as the solar farm introduces development into what is otherwise a rural view. However as illustrated by the proposed montages, the panels are set back from the road and are low in height so the overall wooded impression of the view, with trees remaining visible through the middle-ground and along the horizon.	The extent over which the changes would be felt is considered to be **medium**. The Proposed Development is located at a perpendicular angle of travel but covers the width of much of this available open view. Panels are low in height and set below the treeline. Development will be concealed along much of remaining length of Park Road as a result of the intervening dwellings, fences and vegetation.		Construction: **low** Completion: **medium** After 15 years: **low** Construction activity in the form of material stockpiling, machinery and fencing will be partly visible from this location resulting in a low magnitude. At completion the panels are expected to cover much of this wider view resulting in a medium magnitude. After 15 years the magnitude would reduce to low as the proposed additional hedge, scrub and tree planting located along the northern edge of the Site will close off views of the panels. Heights of the vegetation will be controlled so the wider open views across the valley will be retained. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting over these fields. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions is likely to increase due to the loss of vegetation cover to proposed hedgerows and trees.	Existing hedgerows will be reinforced with additional plantings and trees to strengthen and fill gaps. A new hedgerow will be planted along the line of oak trees to the immediately to the west of VP5. A new belt of native scrub vegetation will be planted along the northern edge of the site. Together these elements will combine to restrict the low-level views of the proposed panels.	The Development would introduce a **slight adverse** effect on views from this location during construction. The Development is expected to introduce a **moderate adverse** effect at completion due to the presence of built-interventions in this rural view. Longer distance views to woodland and trees will be retained.	It is anticipated that effects from this location will reduce to **slight adverse** after 15 years as a result of the maturing new vegetation which will combine to restrict the visibility of the panels and also of short / medium distance views. Longer distance views to woodland and trees will be retained.

		Sensitivity				Magnitude of effect					Significance of effect	
Receptor Group	Viewpoint	Susceptibility: Activity of receptor	Susceptibility: Extent of interest in the landscape and type of view	Value	Overall sensitivity	Scale and contrast of changes	Geographic extent of changes	Duration and reversibility	Overall magnitude	Mitigation / enhancement	Significance and nature	Residual effects
4. Close views from the north (Newport - Wootton cycleway)	6	The type of user is predominantly as a cyclist travelling along a popular cycleway but as a walker, horse rider or jogger. Despite the transient nature of the route here, the users are likely to have a higher susceptibility to change given their greater awareness of their surroundings (compared to a motorist), resulting in a **high** susceptibility to change.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **low** as the former railway line directs views along its length by the nature that both sides of the route are lined with overgrown hedegrows or woodland. It is only at VP 6 where there is an opening over the gas main, allowing views over the landscape to the south. This is largely a short distance view over the immediately adjacent open field, framed by trees and hedges. As demonstrated by the supporting sequential photos, beyond this point views over the landscape are restricted by vegetation.	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is a view with no recognised importance.	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this viewpoint is considered to be **low/ medium**.	Given the proximity of this location to the proposed panels, the scale and contrast of the change is considered to be **medium/high**. The backs of the panels will obscure low level views over this open field.	The changes will be experienced at a perpendicular angle of travel and as a fleeting glimpse view through a gap in vegetation cover, considered to be a **low** extent of change. Over much of the remainder of the length of this cycleway, development on the Site is not expected to be visible.		Construction: **low** Completion: **medium** After 15 years: **low** Construction activity in the form of material stockpiling, machinery and fencing will be partly visible from this location, resulting in a **low magnitude**. At completion, the panels are expected to cover much of this open field resulting in a **medium magnitude**. After 15 years the magnitude would reduce to **low**. New native scrub planting in this location will close off views Into the Site, much like the remainder of the cycleway experience. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting over these fields. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions is likely to increase due to the loss of vegetation cover to existing hedgerows and trees – as demonstrated by the supporting sequential viewpoint photography.	A new belt native trees and shrub vegetation will be planted alongside the boundary to the cycleway reinforcing the existing mature hedgerow.	The Development would introduce a **slight adverse** effect on views from this location during construction. The Development is expected to introduce a **moderate adverse** effect at completion due to glimpse open view that this location provides.	Effects are expected to reduce to **slight adverse** after a 15 year establishment period as proposed planting Is expected conceal views of the panels.
5. Distant views from the north (Alverstone Road)	7	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Alverstone Road at a speeds of up to 60mph but also as a cyclist. There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience along a rural country lane.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **medium** as this location offers elevated views to the south along the length of this shallow valley over the rural-settled landscape. Woodland and hedgerow boundaries combine to shape and restrict the visibility of elements within the landscape.	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is an every-day view with no recognised importance.	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this viewpoint is considered to be **low/ medium**.	The scale of change in the view is considered to be **low**. Some panels may be visible through tree boundaries but the visible fields immediately to the north of the Site will not be developed and will remain open. The Proposed Development would be experienced amongst the wider settled landscape containing solar farms, Lynbottom tip, and pylons.	The extent over which the changes would be felt is considered to be **negligible**. The changes form a very small part of the wider view and experienced at a distance of over 1km.		Construction: **negligible** Completion: **low** After 15 years: **negligible** Construction activity is expected to be largely not visible from this location as much of the Site is concealed from view by vegetation, resulting in a **negligible magnitude**. At completion some solar panels are expected to be visible beyond vegetation but experienced against other built interventions in the landscape, resulting in a **low magnitude**. After 15 years the magnitude is expected to reduce to **negligible** as proposed hedges and trees located within Site will offer additional visual protection. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting within the panels. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions may increase slightly as a result of the loss of vegetation cover within the valley but will at the same time increase the visibility of other visual detractors (buildings, pylons etc).	Existing hedgerows will be reinforced with additional plantings and trees to strengthen and fill gaps. A new hedgerow will be planted along the line of oak trees off Park Road. A new belt of native scrub vegetation will be planted along the northern edge of the site. Together these elements will combine with existing vegetation to restrict the views of the proposed panels.	At construction the Proposed Development would introduce a **negligible neutral** on views from this location as activities are likely to be barely perceptible. At completion there is a expected to be a **slight adverse** effect on views as the panels are expected to be visible within a small part of the Site.	After 15 years, maturing new planting will combine with existing vegetation to reduce the visual appearance of the panels, resulting in a **negligible neutral**.
6. Distant views from the west	8	The type of user is predominantly as a leisure walker and dog walker passing through rural countryside along	The extent of interest in the landscape is considered to be **medium** as the elevated view provides an	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This view has	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this	The scale and contrast of the change in the view is considered to be **medium**. The proposed photomontage shows that existing tree cover	The extent over which the changes would be felt is considered to be **low**. Views towards the Site are		Construction: **low** Completion: **low/medium** After 15 years: **low**	Trees will be planted within the existing hedgerows which pass through the Site. Overtime	At construction the Proposed Development would introduce a **slight adverse** effect on	After 15 years, maturing new trees will combine to reduce the visual appearance of the

		Sensitivity				Magnitude of effect					Significance of effect	
Receptor Group	Viewpoint	Susceptibility: Activity of receptor	Susceptibility: Extent of interest in the landscape and type of view	Value	Overall sensitivity	Scale and contrast of changes	Geographic extent of changes	Duration and reversibility	Overall magnitude	Mitigation / enhancement	Significance and nature	Residual effects
(Public right of way N116)		a public footpath. Due this receptor's heightened appreciation of the landscape, the susceptibility is considered to be **high**.	opportunity to not only view over the rural-settled countryside but also the built-up area of Newport and towards Cowes, which detract from the rural qualities of the view. The type of view is considered to be **high** as this location provides an elevated, open panoramic view over the landscape. The hedgerow to the west of the footpath does limit views to Newport and therefore focuses the attention towards the north, northeast, and east across this shallow valley. As illustrated by the supporting sequential views, for the remainder of the footpath, views over the landscape are limited by woodland and overgrown hedges.	no recognised importance.	viewpoint is considered to be **medium/ high**.	restricts the visibility of the majority of the panels and those that are visible sit within the wider rural-settled landscape which includes the existing solar farm at Grange Farm. The field to the northeast of the site, below Park Road remains open and undeveloped. The panels sit within the existing landscape and field pattern and at this distance appear as a different colour shading to what is normally an agricultural field (blue/grey vs green/brown). It should be noted that the photomontage is taken during the winter (worst case) and further screening of foreground woodland would be expected during the spring/summer months.	experienced at a distance of over 1km. The visible panels form a very small part of the much wider panoramic view.		Construction activity is expected to be largely not visible from this location due to the distance of the view and that most of the site is concealed by vegetation, resulting in a **low magnitude**. At completion an area of panels is shown to be visible within what was an agricultural field resulting in a **low/medium** magnitude. After 15 years the magnitude is expected to reduce to **low** as trees planted within the hedgerows will begin to break up the view of the panels. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting within the panels. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions (as demonstrated by the proposed montages) may increase slightly as a result of the loss of vegetation cover but is experienced alongside the greater exposure of other visual detractors (buildings, factories, pylons etc).	these will combine and overlap and help to reduce the visual appearance of the panels.	views from this location. At completion there is a expected to be a **moderate adverse** effect on views as the panels are expected to be visible within a part of the Site.	panels, resulting in a **slight adverse**.
7. Close views from the east (Briddlesford Road)	9	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Park Road at a speeds of up to 60mph but also as a cyclist. There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience.	The extent of interest in the landscape and type of view is considered to be **medium**. Briddlesford Road passes along the valley ridge. The roadside hedgerow defines the extent of visibility, which to the northeast is tall and restricts views, whilst to the southwest it is often low enough, offering opportunities to view over the shallow valley and the rural-settled landscape beyond.	The value of the view is considered to be **low**. This is an every-day view with no recognised importance.	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this viewpoint is considered to be **low/ medium**.	The scale of change in the view is considered to be **low**. It is conceivable that some panels and the evergreen hedge may be visible over the series of field hedgerows, given that the panels will be 2.8m in height. Panels are also expected to be visible on the lower ground where open fields can be seen during winter. These are glimpse views and experienced in the context of the Grange Farm solar farm. The proposed substation may also be seen from this view but this would be experienced in the context of the large existing substation beyond.	The extent over which the changes will be felt is considered to be **medium**. Whilst the majority of the development will be concealed from view, glimpses of panels and the evergreen hedge can be expected across a wide part of the view, including at the substation.		Construction: **negligible/low** Completion: **low/medium** After 15 years: **negligible/low** Construction activity is not expected to be visible or only partially visible from this location resulting in a **negligible/low** magnitude. At completion the magnitude is expected to be **low/medium** given the openness of this view providing an expansive outlook but where only glimpses of Development is expected. After 15 years the magnitude would reduce to **negligible/low** as the roadside planting belt would have matured to a height where views to the panels beyond would not be possible but given this elevated position, some panels may still be visible. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting over the panels and lighting to the proposed substation will only be in operation on infrequent occasion when staff or engineers are visiting. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions may increase slightly as a result of the loss of vegetation cover within the valley but will at the same time increase the visibility of other visual detractors (buildings, pylons etc).	An evergreen hedge will be planted as a temporary feature to reduce the visual appearance of the solar panels as viewed from the south. An additional belt of native scrub is also planted along the edge here which supplements the existing hedgerow. In time, once the new native plantings have matured, the evergreen hedge will be removed. Standard native trees will also be planted to hedgerows within the Site. A belt of new tree/scrub planting is also located to the east of the proposed substation thereby concealing the transformers from this direction.	At construction the Proposed Development would introduce a **slight adverse** effect on views from this location. At completion there is expected to be a **moderate adverse** effect on views as the panels, evergreen hedge and substation are expected to be visible within a small part of the Site.	After 15 years, maturing new native planting will combine to reduce the visual appearance of the panels, resulting in a **slight adverse** effect.

		Sensitivity				Magnitude of effect					Significance of effect	
Receptor Group	Viewpoint	Susceptibility: Activity of receptor	Susceptibility: Extent of interest in the landscape and type of view	Value	Overall sensitivity	Scale and contrast of changes	Geographic extent of changes	Duration and reversibility	Overall magnitude	Mitigation / enhancement	Significance and nature	Residual effects
8. Distant view from southeast (Briddlesford Road)	10	The type of user is predominantly as a motorist travelling along Park Road at a speeds of up to 60mph but also as a cyclist. There is no footpath provision in this location for pedestrians. The view is also partly representative of external views from alongside the outer edge of the AONB. The overall susceptibility of the receptor is considered to be **medium** given the largely transient nature of the experience.	The extent of interest in the landscape is considered to be **low** as any motorist would have recently passed the Lynbottom tip and they would be unaware that they are passing along the edge of the AONB. The type of view is considered to be **medium**. As at VP9, Briddlesford Road continues to pass along the valley ridge. The roadside hedgerow defines the extent of visibility, which to the northeast is tall and includes areas of woodland and restricts views in this direction, whilst to the southwest it is often low enough, offering opportunities to view over the shallow valley and the rural-settled landscape beyond.	The value of the view is considered to be **medium**. Despite being an every-day view with no recognised importance, the road here passes along the boundary of the AONB (but outside of the AONB) with views over the non-AONB landscape.	The sensitivity of the receptor to change from this viewpoint is considered to be **medium**.	The scale of change in the view is considered to be **negligible/low**. At this distance and due to the curvature of the valley and intervening hedgerow and tree cover, the Proposed Development is not expected to be visible. Glimpses of some panels may be visible from some locations along the length of the road further to the south but at a distance of nearly 2km.	The extent over which the changes will be felt is considered to be **negligible**. Any visible panels would form a very small part of the much wider view.		Construction: **negligible** Completion: **negligible/low** After 15 years: **negligible** Construction activity is not expected to be visible from this location resulting in a negligible magnitude. At completion the magnitude is expected to be negligible given that the Proposed Development is not expected to be visible. After 15 years the magnitude would remain negligible as the Proposed Development is not expected to be visible and the proposed planting would form part of this wider wooded landscape. The magnitude of effect on night-time views is not expected to change as the Proposed Development does not include lighting and is not expected to be visible. The magnitude of effect in winter conditions may increase slightly as a result of the loss of vegetation cover at completion but will at the same time increase the visibility of other visual detractors (buildings, pylons, Lynbottom tip).	New planting alongside Whiterails Road will further restrict the visibility of the Development from this direction.	At construction the Proposed Development would introduce a **negligible neutral** on views from this location as activities are likely to be barely perceptible. At completion there is a expected to be a **slight adverse** effect on views as the panels are expected to be visible within a small part of the Site.	After 15 years, maturing new planting will combine with existing vegetation to reduce the visual appearance of the panels, resulting in a **negligible neutral**.

Appendix B - figures

SITE LOCATION

LEGEND

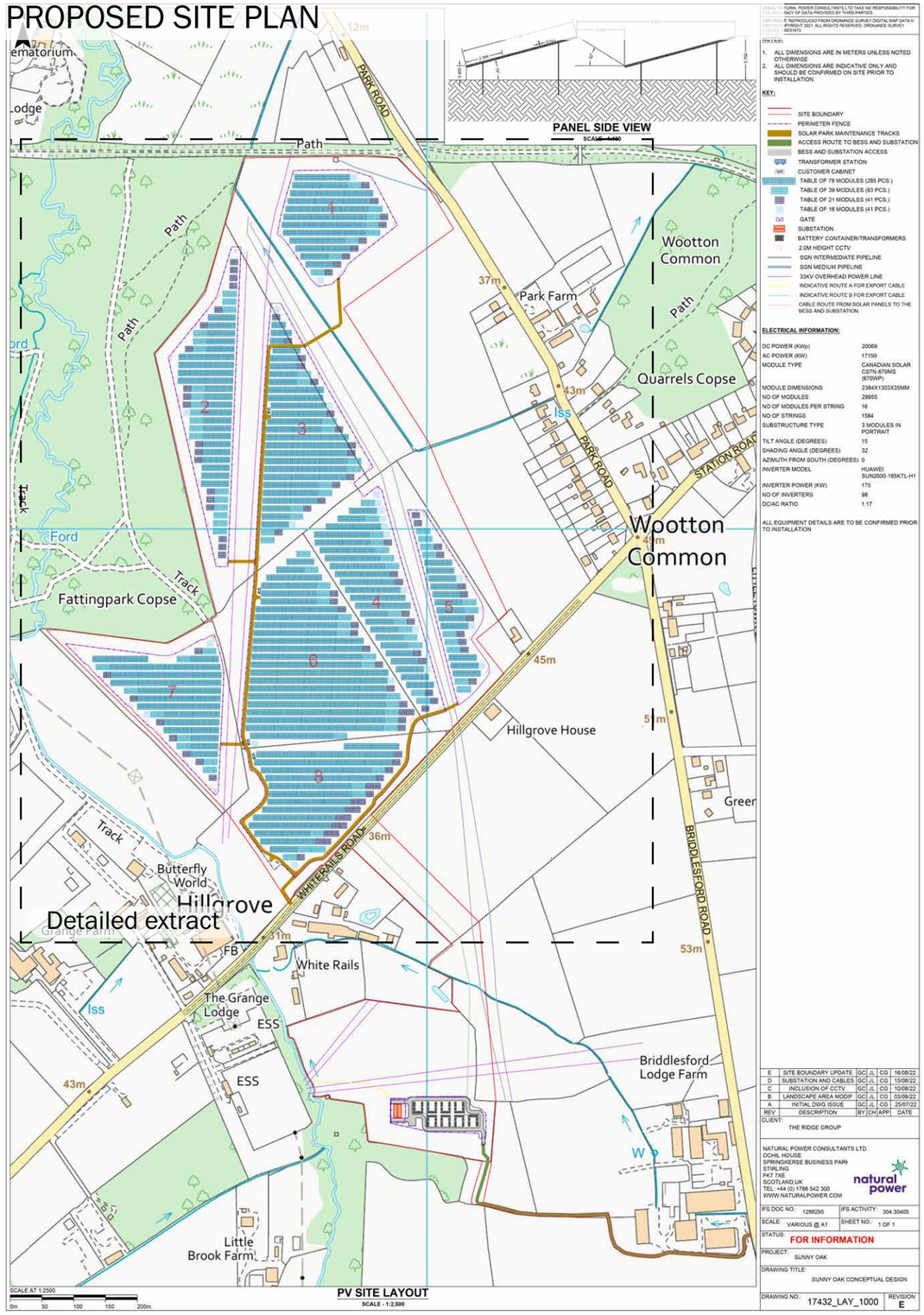
- Application boundary
- Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Radius distance from the centre of the site

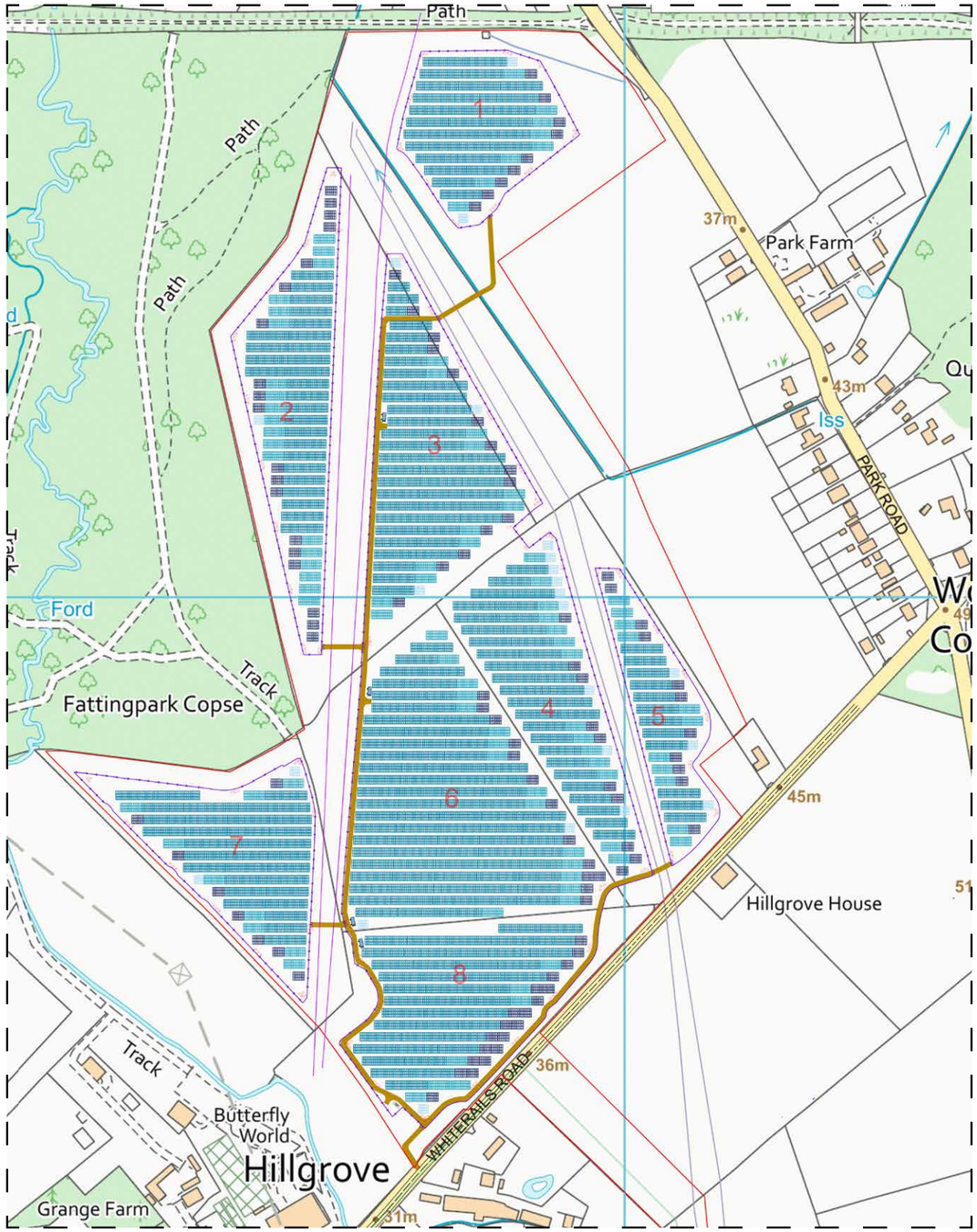
N

0m 100 200 300 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 1	Drg No
Site location	Title
1:25,000	Scale

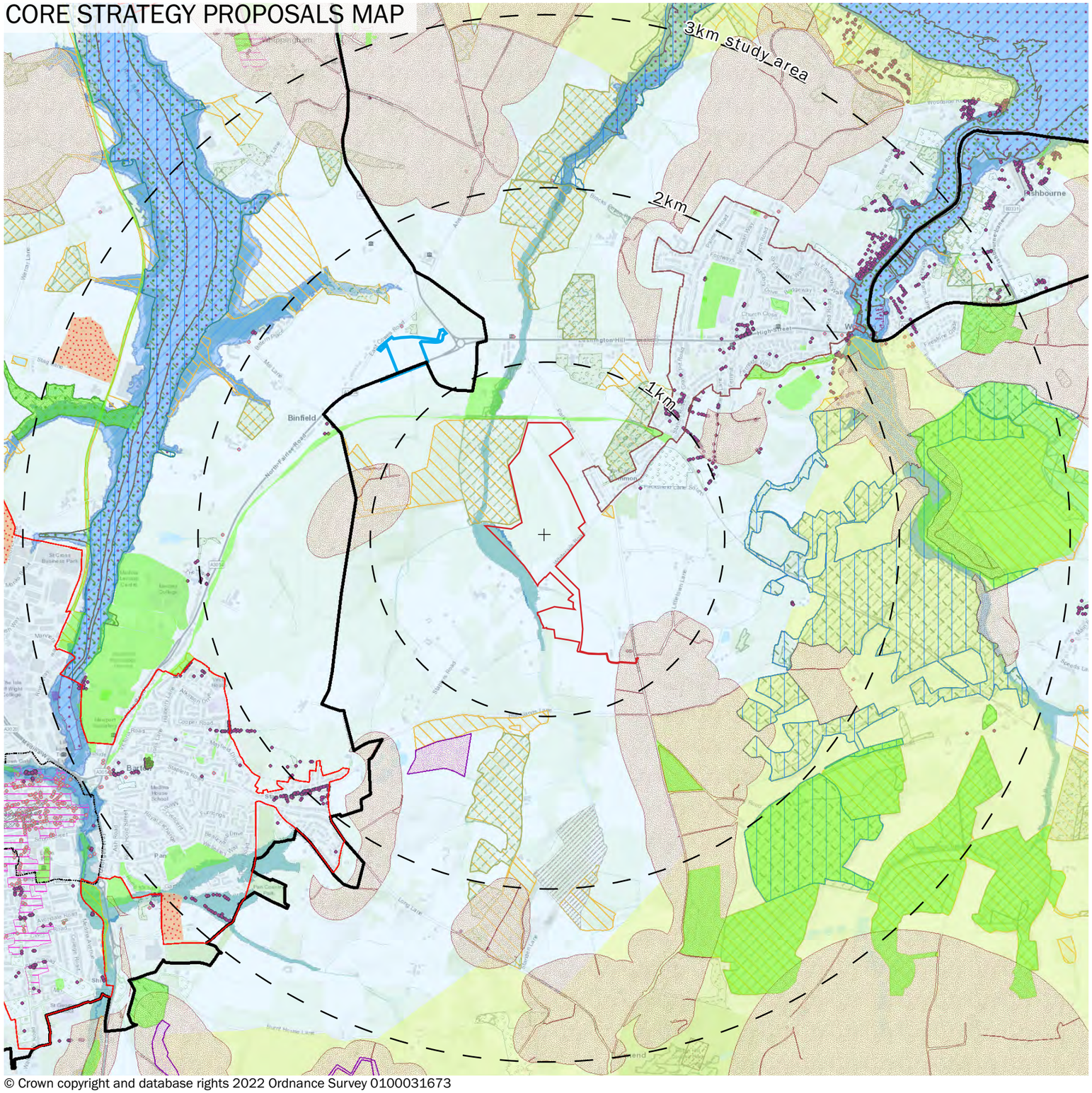
PROPOSED SITE PLAN





Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 2	Drg No
Proposed Site Plan	Title
n/a	Scale

CORE STRATEGY PROPOSALS MAP



LEGEND

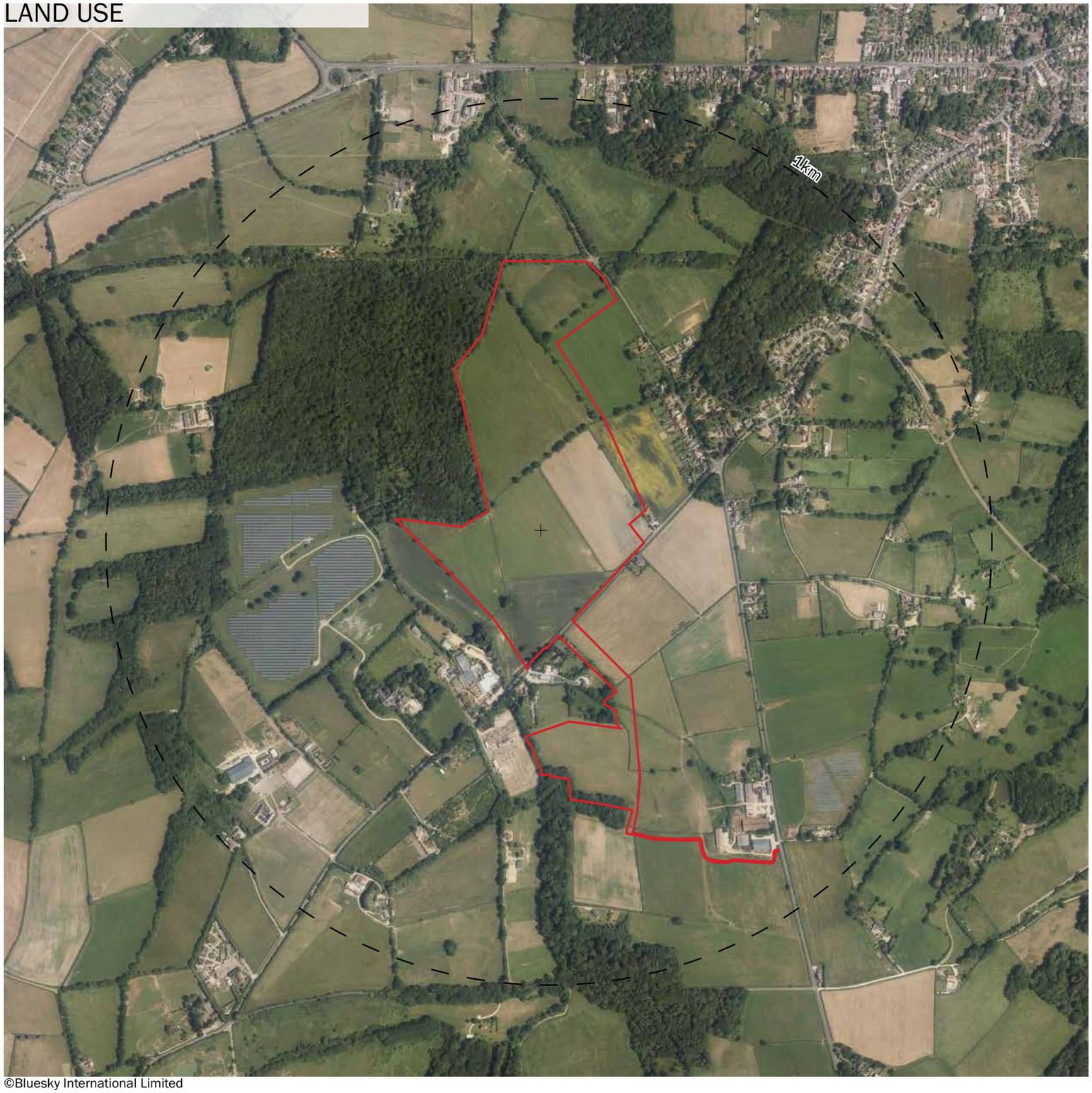
- Application boundary
- Key regeneration settlement boundary
- Key regeneration Area Action Plan boundary
- Open Space (2010 audit)
- RAMSAR
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Ancient Woodland
- Scheduled monument
- Listed building
- Locally listed building, structure or park
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Conservation Area
- Mineral Safeguarding Area
- Flood Zone (SFRA Zone 3 and 2)
- P/01573/17 Proposed football ground, grandstand and floodlights, clubhouse and associated roads and parking (Approved May 2019)

N

0m 100 200 300 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 3	Drg No
Core Strategy Proposals Map	Title
1:25,000	Scale

LAND USE



LEGEND

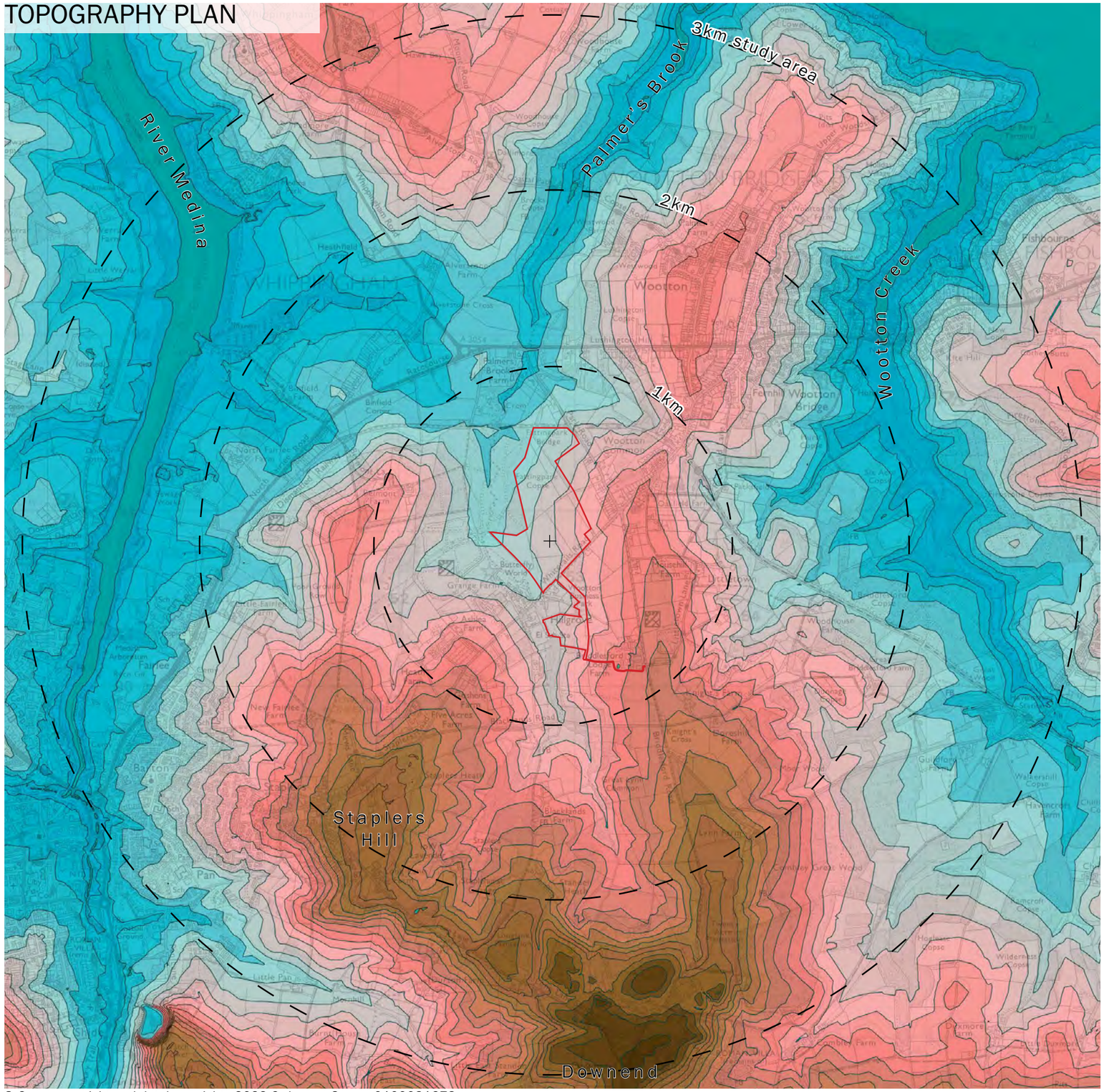
Application boundary

N

50 150
0m 100 250 500

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 4	Drg No
Land Use	Title
1:10,000	Scale

TOPOGRAPHY PLAN



LEGEND

Application boundary

0m
15m
30m
45m
60m
75m
90m
105m

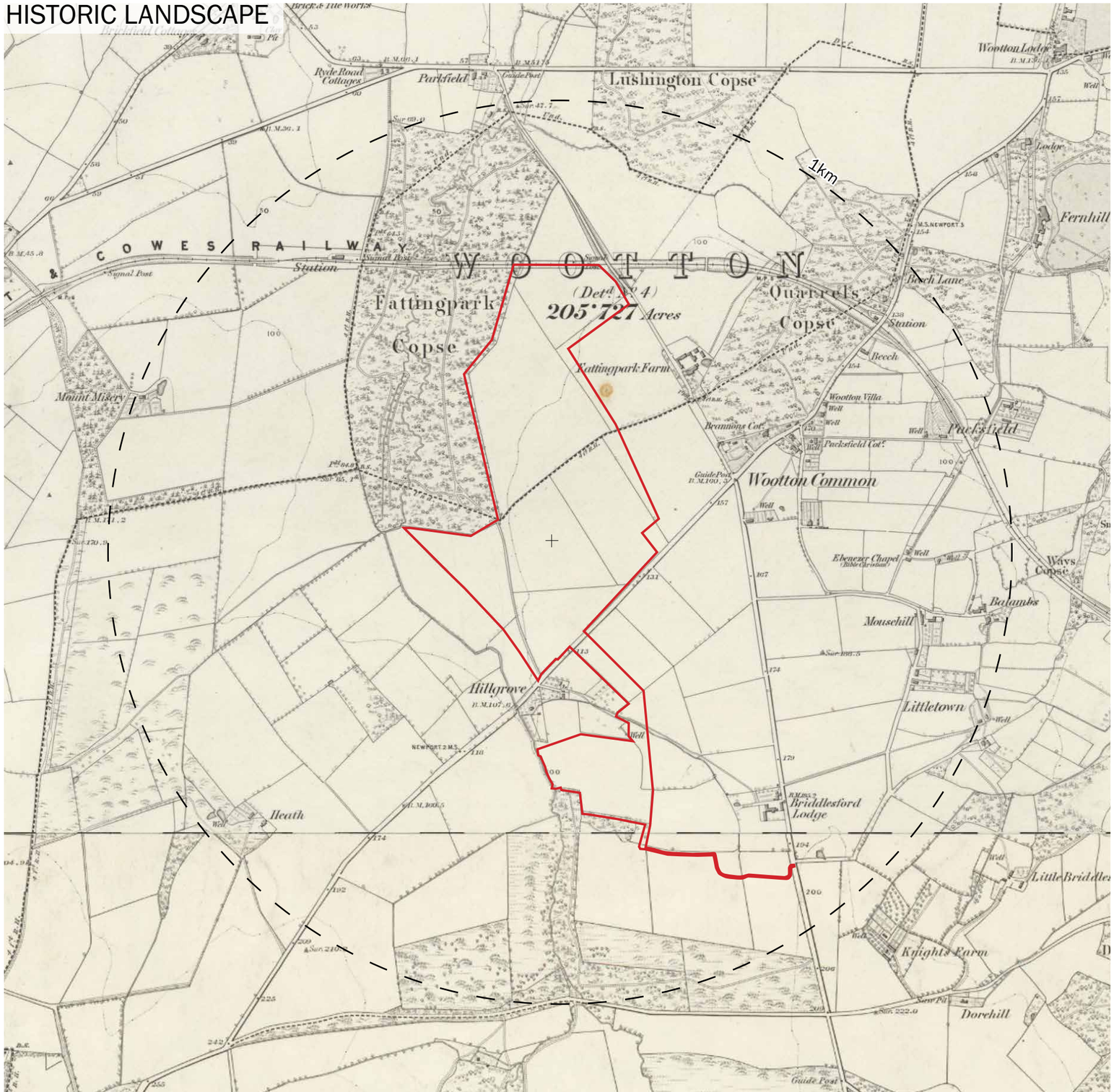
Levels shown in meters as Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)

N

100 300
0m 200 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 5	Drg No
Topography Plan	Title
1:25,000	Scale

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE



LEGEND

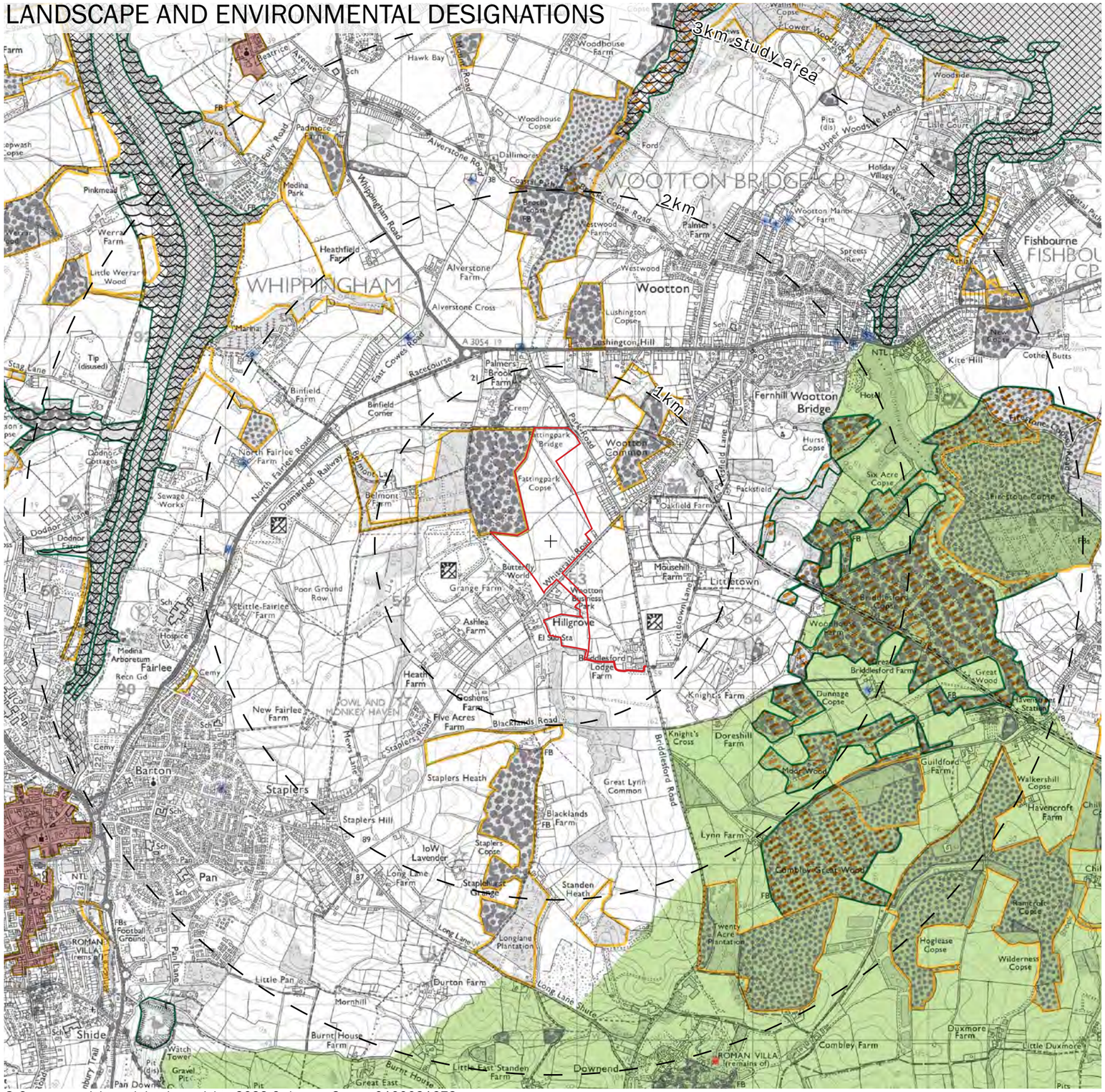
Application boundary

N

0m 50 100 150 250 500

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 6	Drg No
Historic Landscape (1886)	Title
1:10,000	Scale

LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS



LEGEND

- Application boundary

International

- RAMSAR site

European

- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

National

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Scheduled Monument

Local

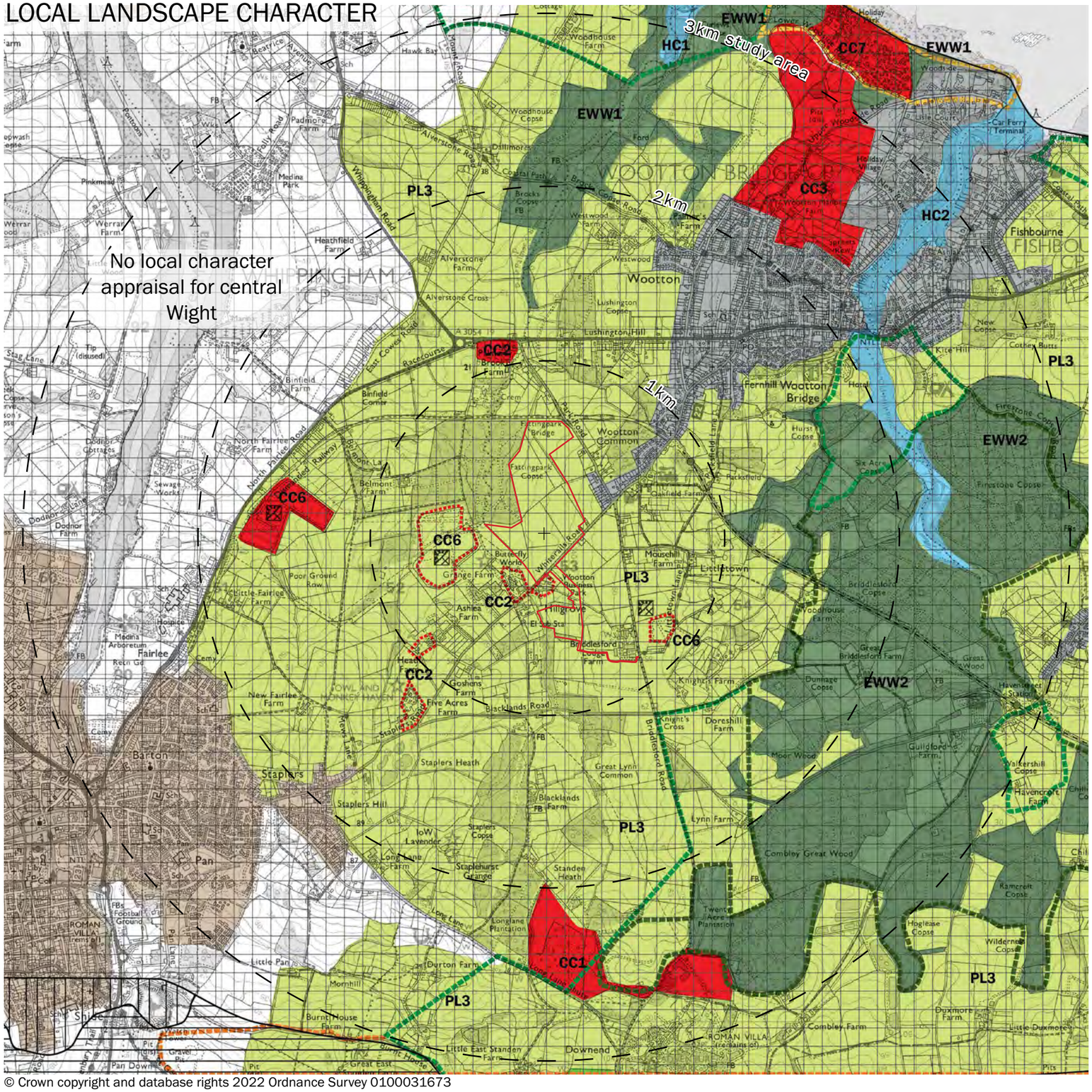
- Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
- Listed building
- Conservation area

N

0m 100 200 300 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 7	Drg No
Landscape and Environmental Designations	Title
1:25,000	Scale

LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER



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LEGEND

Application boundary

East Wight Landscape Character Assessment, 2015

East Wight Woodlands
EWW1: Coastal Woodland
EWW2: Northern Woodland

Harbours and Creeks
HC1: King's Quay
HC2: Wootton Creek

Pasture Land
PL3: North East Pasture Land

Changed Countryside
CC1: Amenity
CC2: Businesss
CC3: Equestrian
CC6: Solar farm
CC7 Tourism

The assessors suggested additional areas of 'changed countryside' since the assessment was published in 2015.

Urban areas

Settlement

The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC), 2008

Northern Lowlands

West Wight Chalk Downland

South Wight Sandstone and Gravel

Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024

Traditional enclosed pasture

Northern woodland

Landscape improvement zone

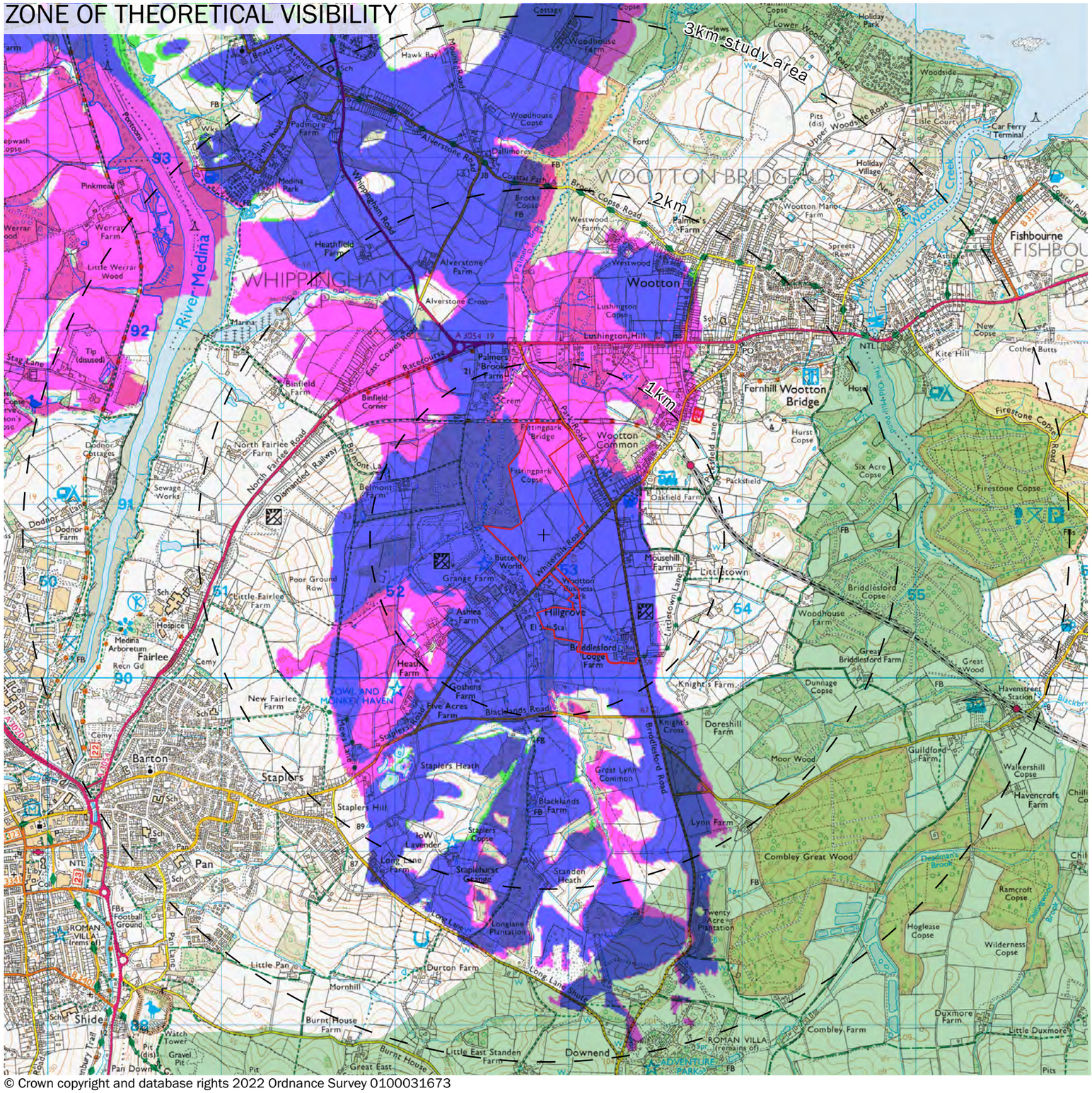
Sandstone hills and gravel ridges

N

0m 100 200 300 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 8	Drg No
Local landscape character	Title
1:25,000	Scale

ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY



LEGEND

- Application boundary
- Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of both the PV panels & transformer visible
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of the PV panels only
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) of transformer only

PV panels are modelled at 3m elevation.
The substation is modelled at 6m elevation (BESS units at 3.5m elevation were not modelled as they sit immediately adjacent to the substation and are of a lower height).

Data used: EA LIDAR 2m DTM data with 1.6m viewer height.
30 Target point spread across PV site/1 point for transformer.

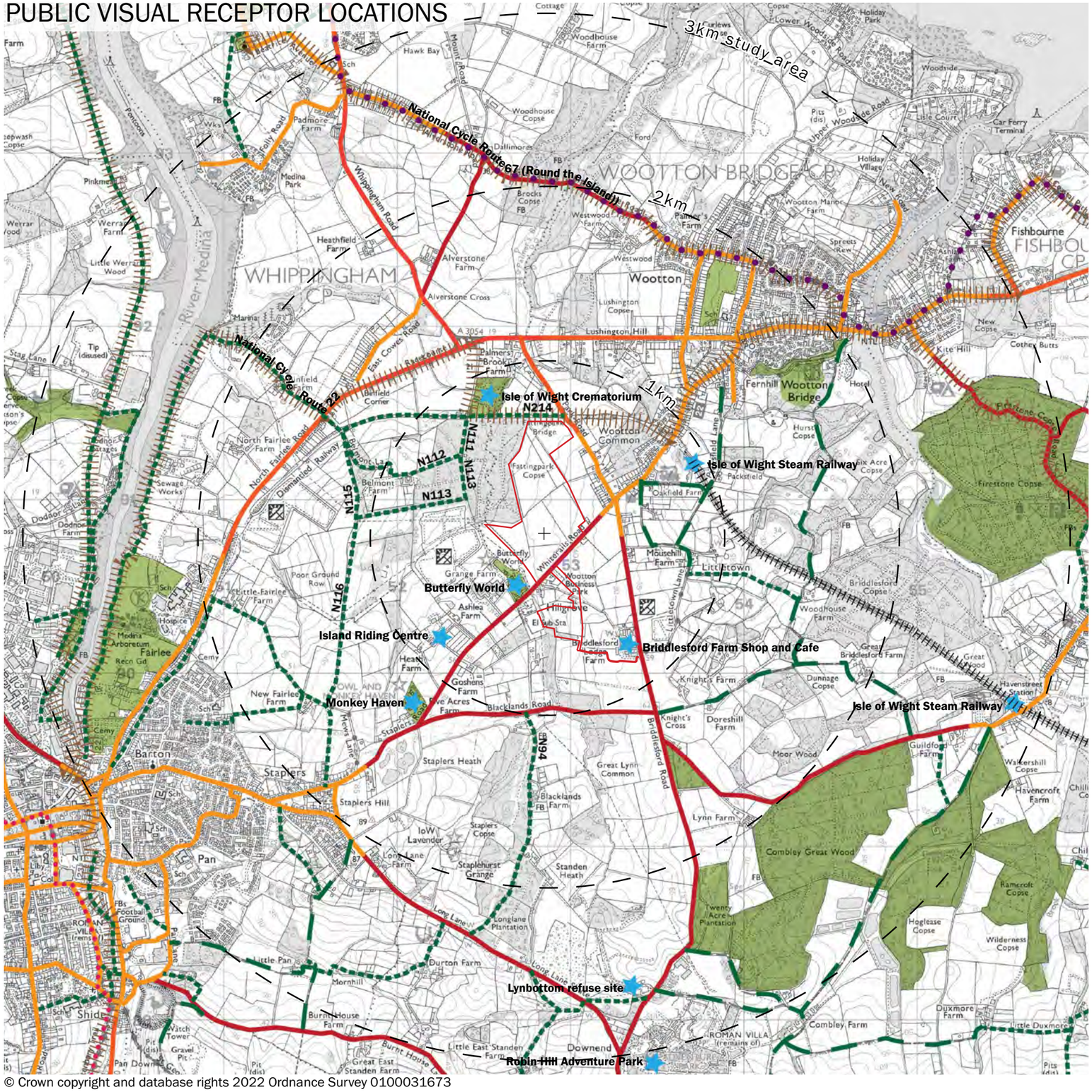
ZTV produced by MSEnvironmental Ltd.

N

0m 100 200 300 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 9	Drg No
Zone of theoretical visibility	Title
1:25,000	Scale

PUBLIC VISUAL RECEPTOR LOCATIONS



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LEGEND

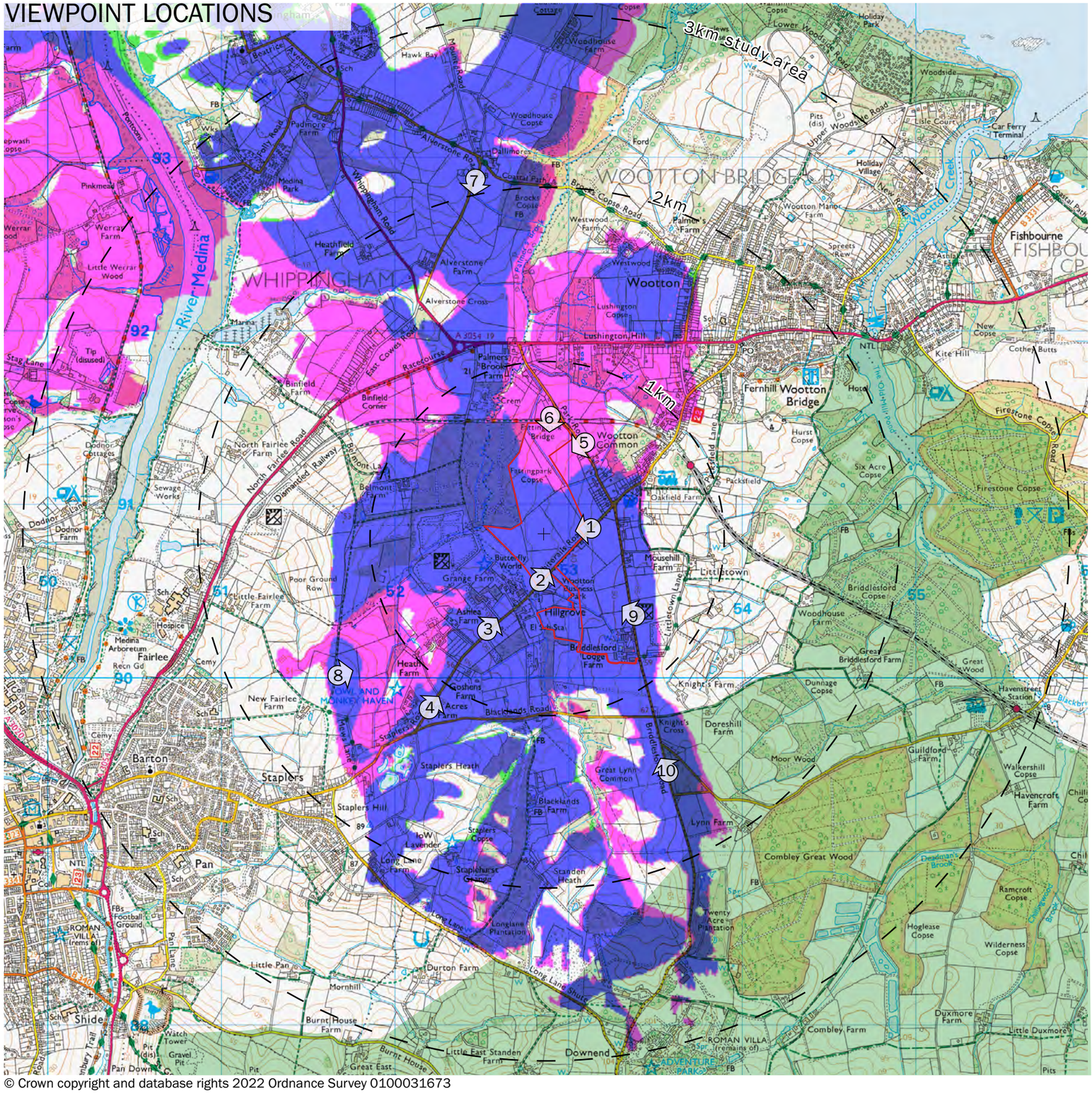
- Application boundary
- Public highway (60mph)
- Public highway (50mph)
- Public highway (40mph)
- Public highway (30mph)
- Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- Public footpath
- Public bridleway
- Long Distance Footpath (Isle of Wight Coastal Path)
- Cycle route
- ‘Recreational open space’ (Island Plan Core Strategy, 2012) - not all publicly accessible land
- Public attraction / amenity

N

100 300
0m 200 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 10	Drg No
Public visual receptor locations	Title
1:25,000	Scale

VIEWPOINT LOCATIONS



LEGEND

- Application boundary
- Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- 9 Viewpoint locations

VP	GP	Location (inc distance to nearest built element and direction of view)	Receptor
1	1	Whiterails Road, 50m, to the southwest	Motorist, cyclist, bus user
2		Whiterails Road, 50m, to the northeast	Motorist, cyclist, (and nearby private residences), visitor to the Butterfly World tourist attraction
3	2	Staplers Road, 430m, to the northeast	Motorist, cyclist, bus user, visitor to the Butterfly World tourist attraction
4		Staplers Road, 900m, to the northeast	Motorist, cyclist, bus user, visitor to the Monkey Haven tourist attraction
5	3	Park Road, 130m, to southwest	Motorist, cyclist, (and nearby private residences)
6	4	Newport - Wootton cycleway, public right of way N214, 40m, to south	Cyclist, horse rider, runner, local walker, leisure walker
7	5	Alverstone Road, 1.4km, to south	Motorist, cyclist
8	6	Public right of way N116, 1.2km, to northeast	Local walker, leisure walker
9	7	Bridlesford Road, 320m, to west	Motorist, cyclist, bus user, visitor to the Briddlesford Farm
10	8	Bridlesford Road, 980m, to north	Motorist, cyclist, egde of the AONB

VP = Representative viewpoint location.
GP = Visual receptor group (viewpoints representing a similar visual experience).
Distances shown from edge of application boundary.

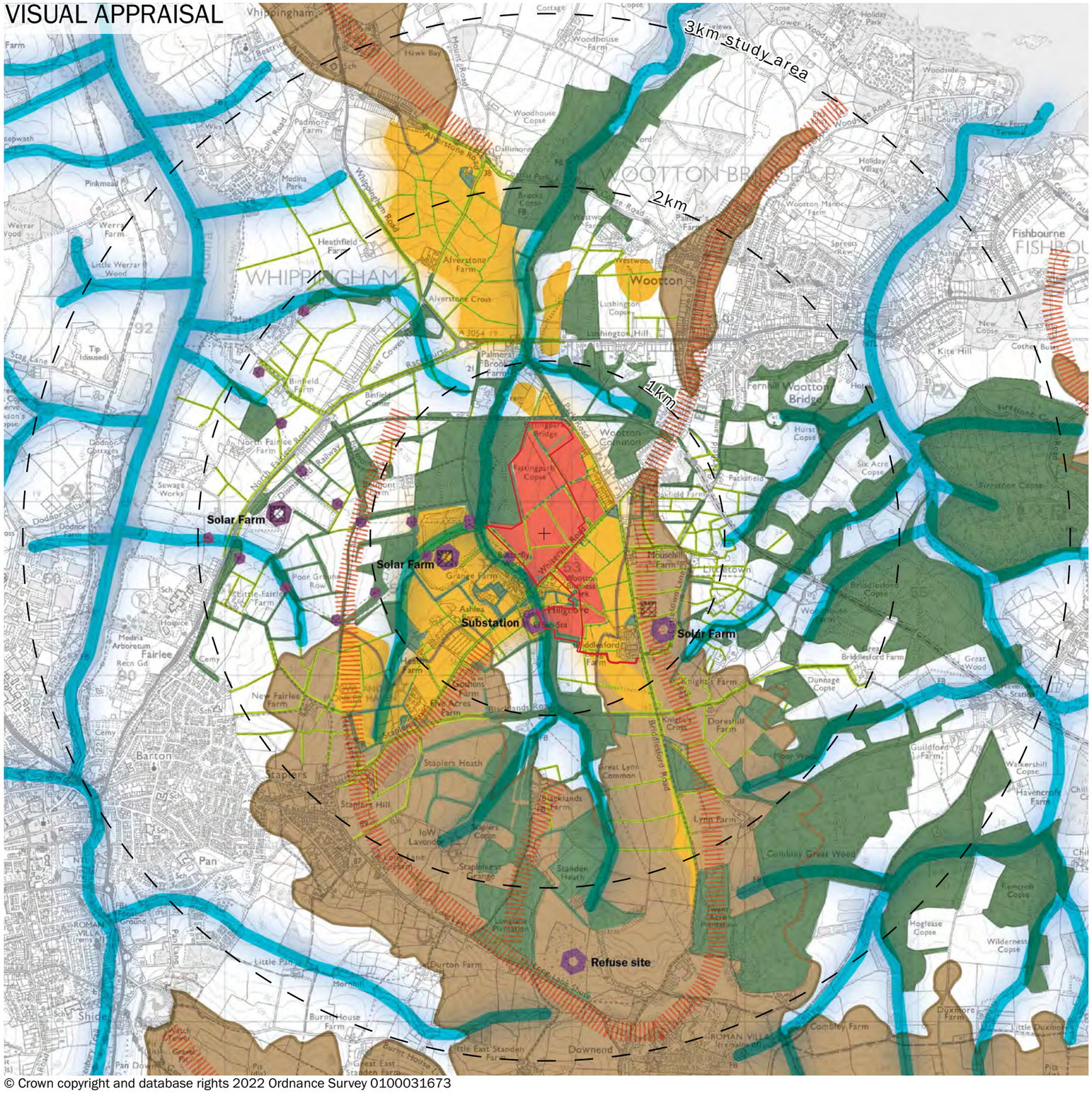
ZTV produced by MSEnvironmental Ltd.

N

100 300
0m 200 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 11	Drg No
Viewpoint locations	Title
1:25,000	Scale

VISUAL APPRAISAL



LEGEND

- Application boundary

Landscape features

- Hedgerow corridors often with trees (within 2km of the Site) restricting views
- Significant woodland blocks / tree belts (within 2km of the Site) restricting views
- Built up areas restricting views or as visual detractor
- Hill top (above 50m AOD) offering partially elevated views over the landscape (where possible)
- Natural ridge obscuring views beyond
- Valley floor identifying the lower ground
- Man made elements (high voltage pylons unless where noted)

Appraised resulting approximate visibility

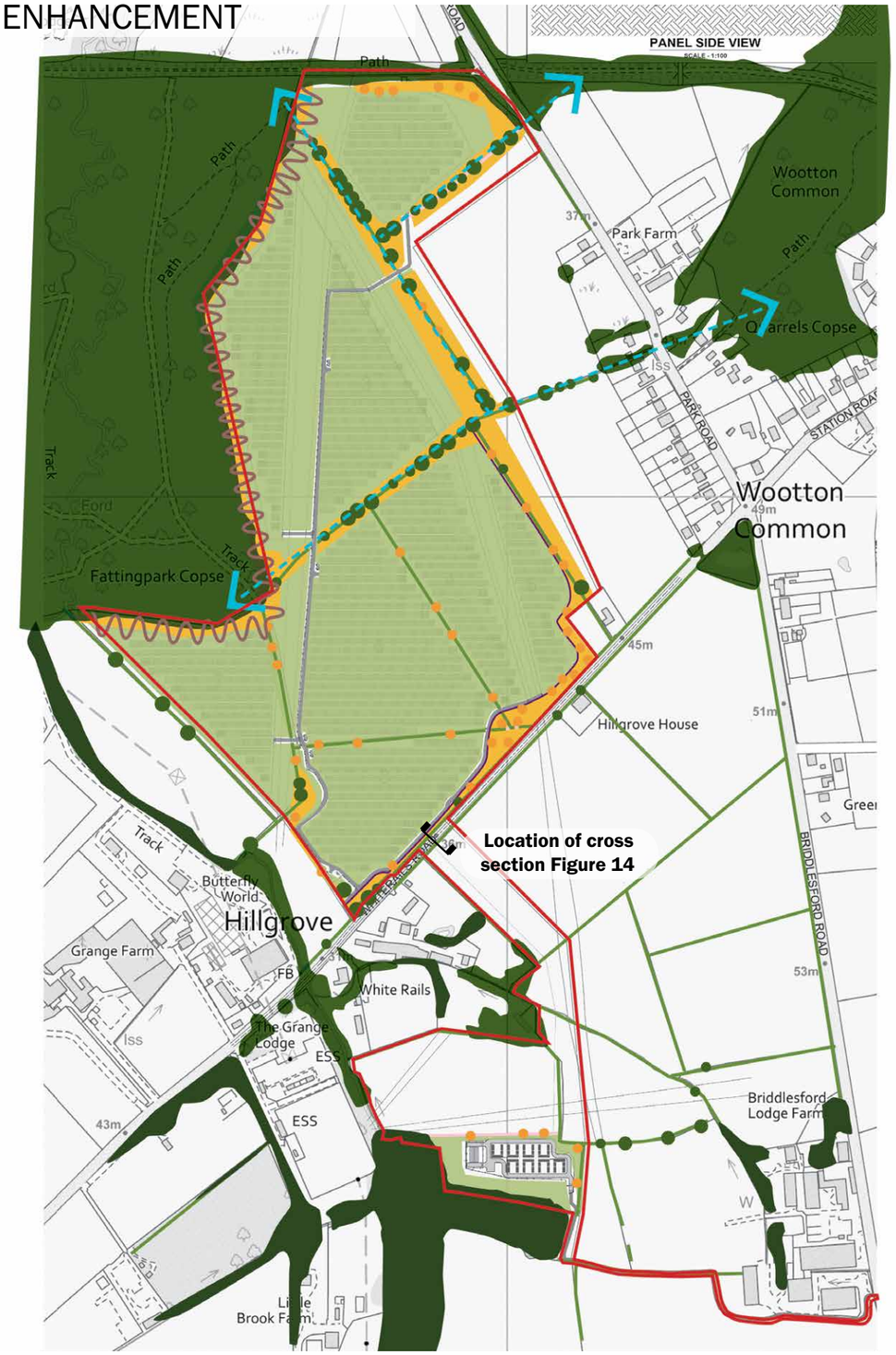
- Primary visibility with clear, open views of all or the majority of the Site
- Secondary visibility with filtered, glimpse views of part of the Site

N

0m 100 200 300 500 1000

Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 12	Drg No
Visual Appraisal	Title
1:25,000	Scale

LANDSCAPE MITIGATION / ENHANCEMENT



LEGEND

- Application boundary

Existing landscape features to be retained and enhanced (limited to works within the application boundary - shown elsewhere for context)

- Woodland/tree groups
- Trees
- Hedgerow (where appropriate within the Site, gaps to be filled with non-hawthorn species and hedge allowed to grow to ~3m high)

Proposed enhancement strategies

- Woodland connector as movement / foraging corridor
- Ancient woodland 15m buffer with scrub and meadow grassland

Proposed additional landscape features

- Locally native specimen trees (planted 3m in height)
- Mixed native hedgerow
- Temporary evergreen hedge
- Native scrub woodland mix
- Wildflower meadow and species rich grassland

Proposed additional ecological initiatives (prepared in conjunction with E3S Consulting Ltd):

- Refugia log piles and deadwood features to the ancient woodland buffer.
- Bat boxes to existing trees.
- Gaps under fencing to allow for animal movement.

Notes:

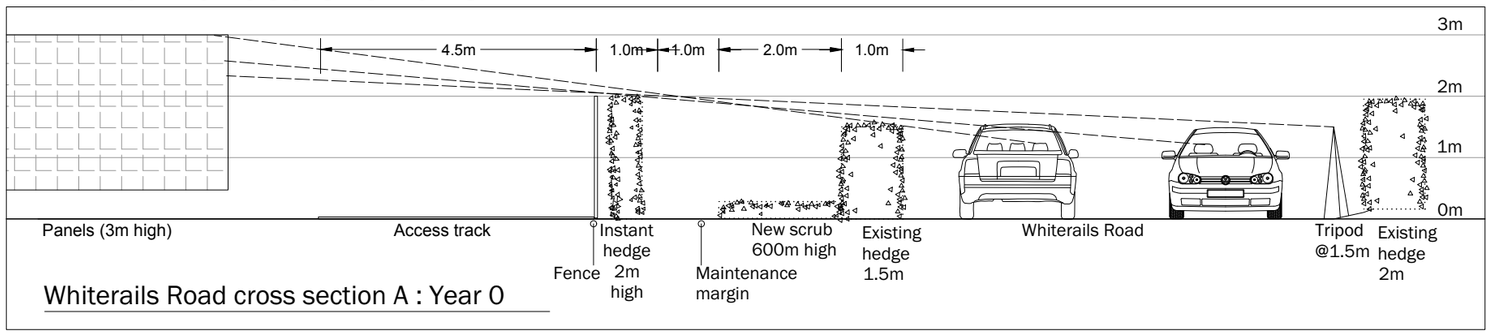
Tree and scrub planting to be in accordance with SGN's requirements around the gas pipeline. No trees to be planted within certain distances of the gas main (distance dependant on species). Scrub and hedgerow can be planted over the gas main on the premise that it would need to be removed in the unlikely event that access is required.

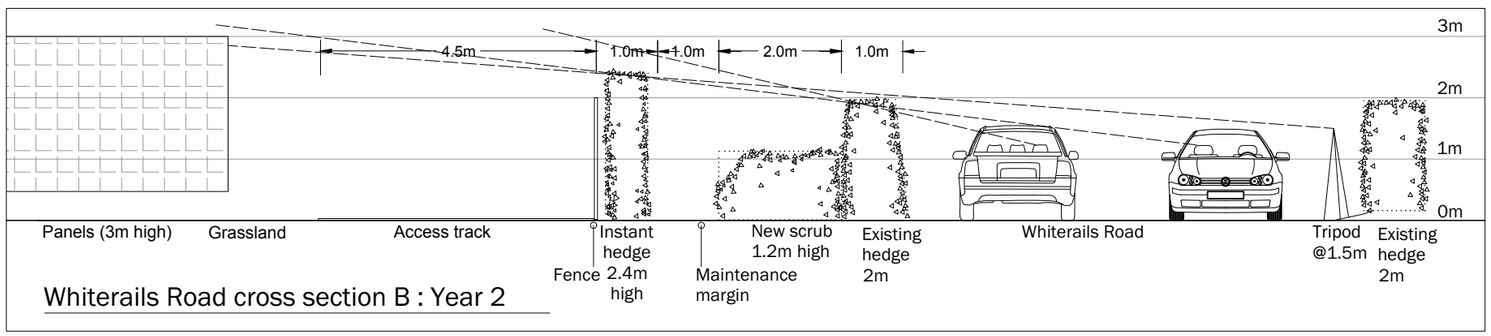
Proposals to be read alongside the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) contained in Appendix F of the LVIA.

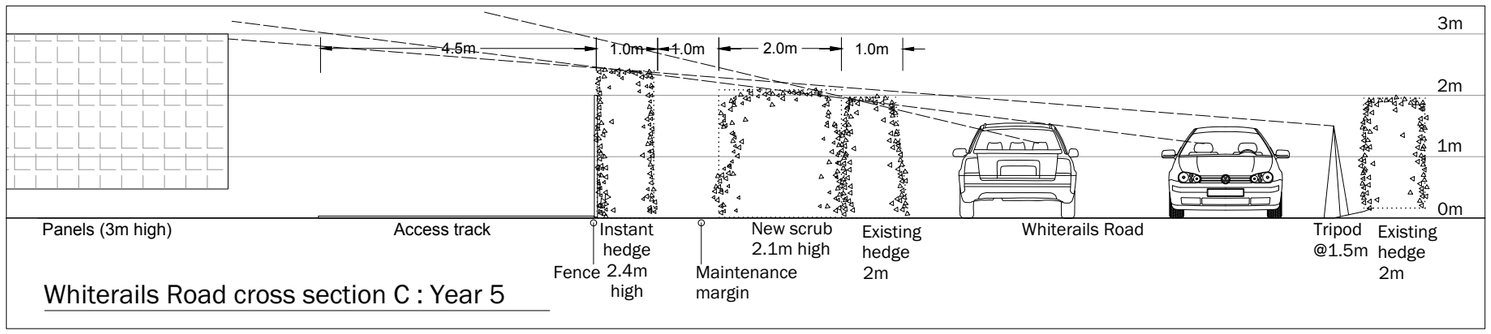
Proposed works are limited to those shown within the extents of the applicaiton boundary.

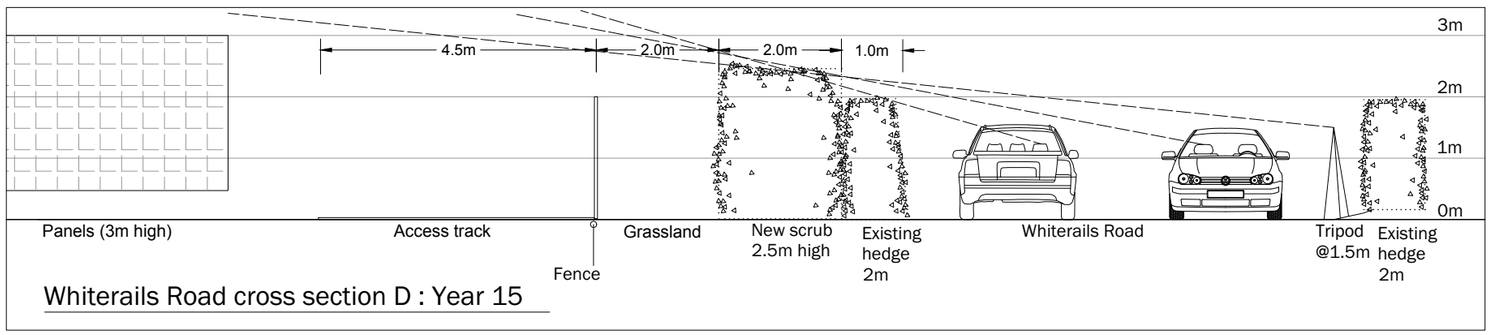
Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 13	Drg No
Landscape mitigation / enhancement	Title
N/A	Scale

WHITERAILS ROAD TYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS







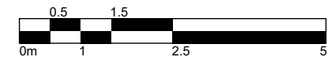


NOTES:

- Refer to Figure 13 for location of cross section taken through the narrowest area of planting as a 'worst case'. Further to the north the scrub planting is wider and up to 35m in width.

-Motorist eye height in standard car recognised as being 1.05m (Department for Transport, Manual for Streets, 2007).

- Camera tripod eye height of 1.5m to accord with TGN06/19 considered to be representative of a pedestrian (despite there being no pedestrian receptors along the road here).



Ridge Clean Energy	Client
Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park	Project
Figure 14	Drg No
Whiterails Road typical cross sections	Title
1:100	Scale

Appendix C - viewpoint photosheets

Appendix D - LVIA methodology

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

1.0 Introduction

1.1. The purpose of the Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIa) process is to identify and assess the likely effects of a proposed development on the landscape resource and visual amenity. This methodology has at its core the guidance and recommendations made in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), published jointly by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in March 2013.

1.2. The Isle of Wight Council confirmed through the EIA Screening Opinion that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) would not be required. A LVIA (assessment) or LVIa (appraisal) is carried out either as part of the EIA process or in this case, as a contribution to an 'appraisal'. In both cases, the general principles and approach are the same. GLVIA3 confirms that "*the principles and processes of LVIA can also be used to assist in the 'appraisal' of forms of land use change or development that fall outside the requirements of the EIA Directive and Regulations*". Whether an LVIA is an 'assessment' or an 'appraisal', the key purpose is to ensure that any likely effects on the environment are considered during the development control process.

1.3. In summary, as explained further in the following sections, this LVIa process involved:

- describing the baseline condition of the landscape character, landscape resource and visual amenity of the Site and the surrounding landscape;
- assessing landscape and visual receptor sensitivity (as a combination of susceptibility to change and value);
- assessing the landscape and visual receptors ability to receive development change (magnitude of effect);
- determining the significance of effect (as a combination of the sensitivity and magnitude of effect);
- describing the primary mitigation measures that have been incorporated within the development proposals and whether there would be any change to the significance of effect after 15 years (residual effects); and
- appraising whether there are any cumulative effects (to assess whether the baseline condition would be altered and whether this would change any of the effect conclusions).

1.4. The UK remains a signatory of the European Landscape Convention (ELC), the first international treaty dedicated to protecting, managing and planning all landscapes in Europe. Article 1 of the ELC defines 'landscape' as:

"*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.*"

1.5. The key principle established by this definition is that landscape is a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity but it requires a holistic assessment approach that is based on the nature of the proposed development and the characteristics of the area in which it is proposed.

1.6. The ELC also makes the distinction that 'landscape' applies to natural, urban and peri-urban areas of land, inland and marine areas, which might be considered outstanding, in addition to everyday or degraded landscapes.

2.0 Terminology

2.1. The LVIa appraisal makes a clear distinction between 'impact', which is the action being taken (such as vegetation loss), and 'effect', which is the (beneficial or negative) result of that action (GLVIA3). The terminology used in this methodology is the same as that used throughout the LVIa. It is explained here as defined in GLVIA3:

- **Cumulative effects** – The additional effects arising from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other reasonably foreseeable actions (e.g. planning applications, land allocated for development).
- **Direct (or primary) effect** – An effect that is directly attributable to a development.
- **Indirect (or secondary) effect** – An effect that results indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effect, often occurring away from the Site or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects.
- **Landscape character** – The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse than another.
- **Landscape effects** – Development effects on the landscape character and resource in its own right.
- **Landscape receptors** – Defined aspects of the landscape that could be affected by a proposal.
- **Landscape resource** – The combination of elements that contribute to landscape character and value, which include landscape features (eye-catching elements, such as church spires or wooded skylines) and landscape elements (such as trees, hedges, watercourses and the ground itself).
- **Landscape value** – The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society. It is recognised that a landscape may be valued by different people or groups for a variety of reasons.
- **Magnitude (of effect)** – A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible, and whether it is short term or long term in duration.
- **Mitigation** – Measures including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for the adverse environmental impact or effects of a development.
- **Photomontage** – A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
- **Residual effects** – Potential environmental effects remaining after mitigation.
- **Sensitivity** – A term used to define landscape and visual receptors that combines judgements on value and susceptibility to accept or absorb change. It is used in assessments of significance of effect.
- **Significance (of effect)** – A measure of the importance or gravity of the environmental effect arrived at by considering the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of effect. Whether an effect should be considered significant is not absolute and requires professional judgement.

- **Susceptibility** – The ability of a defined landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the specific proposed development without undue negative consequences.
- **Type or nature of effect** – Whether an effect is direct or indirect; temporary or permanent; positive (beneficial), neutral or negative (adverse); or cumulative.
- **Visual amenity** – The value of a particular place in terms of what is seen by visual receptors, taking account of all available views and the total visual experience.
- **Visual effects** – Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.
- **Visual receptors** – Individuals and/or defined groups of people who could be affected by a proposal.
- **Visual value** –The overall value attached to a view by society in general, which may have some cultural or environmental interest and/or protection. A view may have visual value for different people and groups for a variety of reasons and at different levels.
- **Zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV)** – The area within which a proposed development may have an influence or an effect on visual amenity.

3.0 Guidance and Approach

3.1. Although this application does not require an EIA (as confirmed by the screening exercise with the Isle of Wight Council), the approach taken for assessing the landscape, visual and cumulative effects followed the robust methods used in a typical LVIA. As noted, this was based on the approach set out in GLVIA3, which provides detailed guidance on the process of assessing the landscape, the visual effects of developments and the significance of those effects.

3.2. Consideration was also given to the following guidance documents:

- Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019)
- Landscape Character Assessment – Technical Note 08/2015 (Landscape Institute, 2015)
- Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations – Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (Landscape Institute, 2021)
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Natural England, 2018)
- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (Department of Energy and Climate Change), 2011
- Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy), 2021

3.3. GLVIA3 states that there is no standard methodology for quantifying landscape and visual effects and that a formulaic approach should be avoided. Therefore, the methodology needs to be appropriate and proportionate to the specific site and it must incorporate the necessary degree of professional judgement. Matrixes and tables are not used to determine judgements; rather, they are provided to assist in communication and to validate conclusions.

3.4. This appraisal considered effects on:

- the character of the Site and surrounding landscape;
- the physical landscape resource of the Site and its immediate surroundings; and
- the visual amenity of publicly accessible views towards the Site.

3.5. The appraisal focused on "*how the surroundings of individuals or groups of people may be specifically affected by changes in the content and character of views as a result of the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or introduction of new elements*" (GLVIA3). Where appropriate, the appraisal also acknowledged the presence of private receptors (often as views from private residential dwellings), and how the Proposed Development would be perceived, by providing representative or illustrative viewpoint photography (see paragraph 4.5). However, this LVIa does not specifically assess the sensitivity or the significance of effect of private receptors – this has been dealt separately through the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) which accompanies this planning report.

3.6. The methodology consists of three stages, which are explained in more detail in the following sections (4.0 - 5.0). In summary, firstly, the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor was considered. The magnitude and the nature of the effect was assessed. Finally, the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of effect were combined to identify the significance of the effect. The appraisal process also considered ways to:

- eliminate, reduce or mitigate any significant adverse landscape or visual effects; and
- maximise opportunities for landscape and visual enhancements.

3.7. Effects may be positive or negative, direct or indirect, and short term, medium term or long term in duration. The medium-long-term (or residual) effects that are likely to result from the proposals (those that remain after establishing mitigation measures) are presented at the end of the appraisal.

3.8. GLVIA3 does not provide absolute criteria for evaluating landscape and visual impacts, so this evaluation is based on the experience and professional judgement of the chartered landscape architect, using assessment matrixes and a methodology that conforms to the guidelines. To provide a structured and consistent approach, the criteria used in this appraisal are set out in Section 5.0, with matrixes provided to assist with communicating these matters.

3.9. To assist with clarity of assessment, the terms 'negligible', 'low', 'medium' and 'high' are used to describe the susceptibility, value, sensitivity and magnitude of effect. The terms 'negligible or no effect', 'slight', 'moderate', 'substantial' and 'very substantial' are used in relation to significance. The nature of effect is judged to be 'beneficial', 'neutral' or 'adverse'. Where a conclusion is not definitive, and if appropriate, a combination of terms are used for susceptibility, value, sensitivity and magnitude of effect but for clarity, the terms for significance are not combined.

4.0 Evaluation of the Existing Environment (Baseline Appraisal)

4.1. The baseline appraisal was undertaken through a desk-based study followed by a site survey to verify the findings.

Desk-based study

4.2. The existing mapping, legislation, policy documents and other written, graphic and digital data relating to the proposal and the broader study area were reviewed. A desk-based study also established the main users of the area, the key viewpoints and the key features, thus defining the visual baseline that needed to be verified on the Site. The potential visual receptors were identified and classified according to their associated use (settlements, footpaths, roads, etc.).

The aim of a baseline review of visual resources is to ensure that an appropriate range of viewpoints was included in the visual appraisal. A desk-based study informed subsequent site work, which allowed for the confirmation of any landscape character types and landscape character areas identified.

4.3. The potential extent of visibility of the Proposed Development was identified in the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV). The ZTV is used as a tool for initially identifying the potential visual receptors. The ZTV was prepared using a digital terrain model of the earth's surface (based on LIDAR Digital Terrain Model at 2m spatial resolution). This represents the 'worst case' area of theoretical visibility (where the Proposed Development may theoretically be seen). The ZTV is based entirely on topographic factors and does not account for any screening changes provided by vegetation, buildings, minor variations in landform or climatic factors (such as light conditions).

4.4. In the initial stages of the desk study, viewpoints were selected to represent the views experienced from a variety of visual receptors, within different landscape character areas/types and at a variety of distances from the Proposed Development where the view may be apparent. Viewpoints were not selected from locations outside the ZTV or where it was highly unlikely that there would be an available view (as result of a significant block of woodland or hedgerows, or in built-up areas). This viewpoint-selection process was determined by the assessor's local ingrained understanding of the Island landscape and through the use of Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, aerial photography and Google Earth Pro.

4.5. Each viewpoint was identified as one of the following types:

- **Representative** – These viewpoints are selected to represent the experiences of different types of user; for example, a viewpoint representative of views from a certain public footpath or a number of public footpaths. This is often the most common type of viewpoint appraised.
- **Specific** – These viewpoints are chosen because they are key and sometimes promoted viewpoints in the landscape; for example, visitor attractions or stand-out views of noteworthy landscape features.
- **Illustrative** – These are chosen to demonstrate limited and specific issues that are not representative of a typical public view; for example, visual experiences with limited visibility or private views.
- **Sequential** – These are chosen to accompany specific representative viewpoints to illustrate the varying visual experience along a particular route; for example, along a public footpath, a road, or in the same vicinity.

4.6. A study area centred on a 3km radius from the centre of the Site was used for the appraisal of landscape, visual and cumulative effects. Given the relative scale of the Proposed Development and the character of the settled landscape, significant effects are very unlikely to be experienced at distances further than 3km.

Site survey

4.7. Field survey work was carried out between March and July 2022 to verify the landscape character areas/types identified within the study area and gain a full appreciation of the relationship between the Proposed Development and the landscape. Seasonal survey work was undertaken during late winter and summer to understand how the changing vegetation cover effects views across the study area and those directed towards the Site. Furthermore, the baseline visual

resource was verified at this time by recording existing views at each of the identified viewpoint locations. As noted, because the ZTV is based on a digital terrain model, it does not capture localised undulations, physical structures and vegetation. In some cases, a viewpoint that is provisionally selected from an analysis of the ZTV does not offer a view of the Site due to intervening natural and/or built structures (which are not included within the ZTV), and these locations are subsequently discounted. It is also important to ensure that the viewpoints remain a representative selection of views that are chosen proportionally in relation to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development; that is, the selection should not include every possible available view.

4.8. In this case, 10 representative views were selected from public locations within the ZTV, often representing the worst-case scenario along any receptor group. The selected viewpoints represent the available views of residents close to the Site, travellers (using a variety of modes) and leisure users of public rights of way. Additional sequential views were photographed to support the analysis of the different representative viewpoints. No specific views were identified, although VP10 was selected because it is located on the edge of the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). No additional viewpoints were selected from the AONB due to the lack of public receptor locations from which views can be appreciated and because of the intervening woodland and tree cover (it is also noted that this edge of the AONB is dominated by the Lynbottom civic amenity tip). Photography was taken in both late winter and during the summer to illustrate the changing seasonality of vegetation cover and its effect on views across the landscape.

4.9. The appraisal also includes 4no. photomontages illustrating the Proposed Development and how the changes would be perceived during the winter. The locations chosen for the montages are considered to be the more sensitive; located close to the Site and from a distant public right of way.

4.10. All photography used for the photomontages was undertaken with a full frame sensor camera with a 50mm lens on a levelled tripod, using a panoramic tripod head adjusted to avoid parallax. The images were taken with a 50% overlap between frames to allow a 360-degree panorama to be captured. The camera position was calculated using global navigation satellite system (GNSS) antennae with real-time kinematic (RTK) correction to give accuracy down to 1cm. The 3D model was built in Rhino3D, with the Proposed Development and existing landscape features geo-referenced to ensure that the views rendered by the photography and the 3D model rendered views aligned perfectly. All of this work was carried out and presented to comply with LI TGN 06/19[1] Type 4 accuracy, with (where appropriate) photo-realistic visualisations accompanied by a technical methodology. All other viewpoint photography followed the LI TGN 06/19 guidance for Type 1.

4.11. It should be noted here that unless where stated, where a distance measurement is given between a landscape or visual receptor and the Proposed Development, this should be taken as the nearest distance between the location of the receptor (or its boundary) and a vertical built element within the Proposed Development i.e. a solar panel or BESS storage (and not to the Site boundary).

[1] Visual Representation of Development Proposals – Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019)

Review

4.12. The analysis and reporting of the baseline resource took place after the desk-based study and site surveys were complete. A baseline review provides a robust description of the landscape and visual resource from which to assess the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development and to advise, in landscape and visual terms, on the Proposed Development's acceptability in principle and on its siting, layout and design. This involves providing advice, where appropriate, to make suggested changes to the Proposed Development (in terms of massing, siting and scale) and introduce primary mitigation measures (see paragraphs 5.21–5.22).

5.0 Assessing Landscape and Visual Effects

Landscape sensitivity

5.1. The sensitivity of a landscape receptor to a particular proposed development is determined by considering the landscape receptor's landscape value and landscape capacity or susceptibility to the changes identified as the result of a particular proposed development.

5.2. The LVIa assesses the landscape effects on:

- the landscape resource; and
- the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings.

5.3. The evaluation of effects on the landscape resource first considers the sensitivity of the landscape. Landscape receptors are elements (or groups of elements) that would be directly or indirectly affected by the proposals. These elements consist of natural and cultural factors and include topography, vegetation, watercourses, public rights of way, buildings, historic features and land use, and the effects that these have on the character of the Site.

5.4. The landscape resource evolves over time and is largely a result of human interventions in the landscape or townscape. The interaction of these various factors leads to the creation of a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape, which combine to form the landscape character.

5.5. The existing landscape character of the Site and the surrounding area has already been assessed and recorded in a number of published documents[2]. A landscape character appraisal starts on a wide scale, by reviewing the National Character Areas identified by Natural England, which cover the whole of England; it then moves on to, where appropriate, county or regional and local landscape character area studies. If applicable, other character studies carried out as part of a national designation (such as an AONB) are also included in the landscape appraisal.

5.6. The key relevant documents are summarised in the LVIa text. These documents:

- provide an understanding of the wider landscape context within which the Site is located;

[2] Natural England, *National Character Area 127 Isle of Wight* (2014)
Brownscombe, *East Wight Landscape Character Assessment* (2015)
Basford, *The Isle of Wight Historic Landscape Characterisation* (2008)
The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership, *Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024*, 2019

- provide a starting point for identifying and understanding the important landscape features and characteristics embodied in the Site and its relationship to its wider surroundings;
- identify any particular values or sensitivities that are relevant to the Site in respect of landscape character; and
- may inform any appropriate mitigation strategies required for the Proposed Development.

5.7. Depending on the size of the development area and the complexity of the landscape, a site-specific landscape character area assessment may be undertaken if there are changing characteristics across the Site. For this appraisal, this was not deemed necessary given the relatively small size of the Site and limited variation across it.

5.8. Therefore, more emphasis was placed on information contained in the local level appraisal and, in particular, the character designations that apply to the Site. The appraisal validates the conclusions of the published study areas and confirms, if applicable:

- whether the Site shares the same characteristics as the written descriptions; or
- whether there are any discrepancies and, if so, what the Site's true characteristics are.

5.9. Where appropriate, different character types are identified as different landscape receptors, which are each assessed separately to determine the effects of the changes brought about by the Proposed Development on their identified baseline characteristics. If applicable, character types from different studies which share the same or similar descriptions will be grouped for the purposes of appraisal.

5.10. As described, the sensitivity of the landscape is determined by combining judgements about the susceptibility of the landscape to receive change and the value attached to the landscape. The manner in which the value and susceptibility are combined to determine the overall landscape sensitivity is a matter for informed professional judgement.

5.11. GLVIA3 defines landscape susceptibility to change as "*the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation*…" by virtue of its particular physical, visual or perceptual characteristics. Generally, landscapes with the highest susceptibility to the proposed change will have the least capacity to accommodate that proposed development. Conversely, landscapes with the lowest susceptibility to the proposed change are likely to have the greatest capacity to accommodate the proposed development. The susceptibility considers the attributes of the landscape in relation to the following: scale; enclosure; vegetation and tree coverage; landform; diversity; landcover pattern and line; settlement and infrastructure; perception of landscape change; tranquillity; and setting and skylines. The susceptibility of the landscape to change is assessed as being 'low', 'medium' or 'high' as described below.

Table 1.1 Landscape susceptibility to change

Susceptibility	Description
High	Elements or combinations of characteristics such as of small-scale landscapes with strong topographical variation or distinctive landform and complex patterns, which are essentially intact and susceptible to development. Susceptibility to alteration of regionally/locally valued or distinctive skylines, views, vistas and skylines with historic landmarks. Open and exposed landscape.
Medium	Elements or combinations of characteristics such as medium to large scale landscapes with more open, simple landform and patterns with some capacity for development. A partially

	enclosed landscape offering some visual containment and filtering of views and moderate levels of intervisibility with visual connection across the landscape.
Low	Elements or combinations of common characteristics such as large- scale and simple/uniform landscapes, with an absence of topographical variety/featureless/flat landform where similar development is already part of the baseline character and there is capacity for development. A heavily enclosed landscape which contains or strongly filtered views with a corresponding limited visual relationship with the surrounding landscape.

5.12. The importance or value attached to a landscape is often used as a basis for designation or recognition that expresses a national or local authority consensus on its special qualities or attributes, which considers its rarity, condition and role. Landscape character areas that are protected through a national designation inherently have a higher value than those that are within a degraded landscape or are located close to built-up areas. Guided by the methodology methodology set out in Table 1 of LI TGN 02/21[3] the value of the landscape is assessed as being 'low', 'medium' or 'high' as described below.

Table 1.2 Landscape value

Value	Description
High	Nationally or regionally recognised and protected landscape receptors of high importance (such as AONB or National Park) based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Limited potential for substitution.
Medium	Locally important landscape receptors of medium importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Capable of substitution.
Low	Landscape receptors of low importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Potential for landscape improvement and creation.

5.13. As outlined, the overall sensitivity of the landscape to receive the type of change is derived from combining the judgements on the susceptibility of the visual receptor value of a view as being 'low', 'medium' or 'high' (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3 Overall landscape sensitivity

		Susceptibility		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Value	**High**	High	Medium/high	Medium
	Medium	Medium/high	Medium	Low/medium
	Low	Medium	Low/medium	Low

Visual sensitivity

5.14. The sensitivity of each visual receptor was assessed by combining judgements in terms of susceptibility of the receptor to visual change and the value attached to each baseline view (see

[3] Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations – Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (Landscape Institute, 2021)

Table 1.6). The manner in which the value and susceptibility are combined to determine the overall visual sensitivity is a matter for informed professional judgement.

5.15. In general, people have differing responses to views and visual amenity depending on the context (e.g. the location, time of day or degree of exposure), why they are in a particular place (e.g. for recreation, to travel through, or to live or work) and what they can or cannot see (e.g. a closed, flat landscape dominated by woodland blocks versus an elevated, open hill-top ridge).

5.16. Susceptibility to change is therefore a combination of:

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view or visual amenity (the type of user); and
- the extent to which people's attention or interest may be focused on the landscape around them, which is often defined by the extent to which the landscape can be appreciated (defined by intervening vegetation, buildings or landform).

5.17. For example, a leisure walker who has an appreciation of the wider landscape and is passing through rural countryside with far-reaching open views may have a high susceptibility to change, while a motorist who is driving along a busy A-road enclosed by trees and landform may have an inherently low sensitivity to any changes in the landscape. The susceptibility of the visual receptor to change is assessed as being 'low', 'medium' or 'high' as described below.

Table 1.4 Visual receptor susceptibility to change

Susceptibility	Description
High	Receptors in this category would generally include residents, tourists/visitors, walkers, cyclists and horse riders, either stationary or travelling through the landscape, and/or undertaking outdoor recreational activities where the focus of the activity involves an appreciation of the landscape, and where there are uninterrupted open views.
Medium	Receptors in this category would generally include people travelling through the landscape on road, rail or other transport routes as rail passengers and road users and people undertaking recreational and sporting activities where it is likely that their surroundings have some influence upon their enjoyment (e.g. running and cycling). Receptors might also be within a landscape which contains hedges and trees, or is gently undulating offering some opportunity to view over the landscape but where a full appreciation would be limited.
Low	Receptors in this category would generally include people for whom their surroundings are unlikely to be a primary concern or affect how they undertake their current activity. Receptors are likely to include people at their place of work, people travelling on main roads through built up areas, dual-carriageways or motorways or taking part in activities not involving an appreciation of the landscape (e.g. playing team sports). Receptors may be located within a closed landscape which offers little opportunity to view over the landscape due to intervening buildings, vegetation and or topography.

5.18. Judgements are also made about the value attached to visual receptor groups and the interest or reason a receptor has in experiencing a view and the value that they can reasonably attach to it. This is based on the following considerations:

- Whether the view has a recognised value, which may apply to views from heritage assets or designated landscapes.
- Inclusion in guidebooks, tourist maps or facilities provided for visitors, or referred to in literature or art.

- The relative number of people who are likely to experience the view.

5.19. The value attached to each receptor group can again be described as being 'low', 'medium' or 'high' as described in the table below.

Table 1.5 Visual receptor value

Value	Description
High	Views from recognised viewpoints of national or regional importance which are identified on maps or in guidebooks, which might be popular tourist attractions, or views which form a key part of the attraction or route. Also views that may have cultural associations through paintings or literature. Views from nationally recognised landscapes such as National Parks, AONB or Heritage Coast or that form part of the setting of a nationally important heritage asset.
Medium	Views from recognised viewpoints of local importance which are from local visitor attractions or public open space and where the visual amenity forms an important part of the attraction. Also views that may have local cultural associations through paintings or literature. Views that might be in the context of a locally important heritage asset.
Low	Views associated with every-day locations or routes that do not benefit from any designation or cultural association.

5.20. As described, the overall visual sensitivity is derived from combining the judgements on the susceptibility of the visual receptor value of a view.

Table 1.6 Visual sensitivity

		Susceptibility		
		High	**Medium**	**Low**
Value	**High**	High	Medium/high	Medium
	Medium	Medium/high	Medium	Low/medium
	Low	Medium	Low/medium	Low

Description of development and primary mitigation

5.21. This stage of the appraisal involves identifying and describing the Proposed Development, most particularly the aspects that may affect the landscape character and resource or the visual amenity of the Site and the surrounding landscape. It also involves describing the primary mitigation that has been incorporated into the scheme design as an integral part of the proposal. Primary mitigation includes design responses that have been introduced early to mitigate any identified adverse effects. These responses may include modifications to siting, access, layout, form, heights, massing, ground modelling and planting.

5.22. The appraisal of landscape and visual effects considers any design and mitigating measures included as an integral part of the Proposed Development. These measures avoid, reduce and, if possible, remedy any significant adverse effects. Mitigation is not solely concerned with 'damage limitation' but also considers beneficial environmental improvements, such as landscape enhancement and recreation. In general, mitigation measures are more effective if they are incorporated as an integral part of an iterative design process.

Magnitude of effect

5.23. The sensitivity of the receptor to change resulting from the Proposed Development was considered in relation to the magnitude of effect (negligible, low, medium or high; see Table 1.7 and Table 1.8).

5.24. The criteria for assessing the magnitude of effects are based on:

- the degree of physical change that will occur as a result of the Proposed Development;
- the compatibility of these changes with the overall trends for change within the existing landscape; and
- the consequential effects that these changes may have on the landscape and visual amenity.

5.25. The effect on landscape and visual receptors was assessed in terms of the scale of the Proposed Development, the contrast it creates and the geographical extent of the change. The appraisal considers the extent to which landscape features were lost or new buildings and structures were introduced, and what effect these changes had on the existing baseline. The duration and reversibility of the effects were also considered; that is, whether a permanent change is expected or whether a change may be temporary and short term with reversible landscape effects.

5.26. For this solar farm, the appraisal also considers the landscape and visual magnitude of effect during the following phases:

- Construction (short-term, temporary).
- On completion of the construction (medium-term, reversible).
- 15 years after completion, when mitigation is fully established (medium-long term, reversible residual effects).

5.27. Residual effects consider mitigation measures, such as the growth and establishment of native trees and shrubs that are planted. The maximum height at planting would be approximately 2–3m for trees and 0.3–1m for shrubs. After 15 years of growth (the period after which residual effects are assessed), the height would be up to 12m for trees and 6m for shrubs (assuming a growth rate of 0.6m per year for trees).

Table 1.7 Magnitude of effect on landscape character and resource

Magnitude	Effect
High	Total loss of or major alteration to key characteristics / features, and the introduction of new, completely uncharacteristic elements to the receiving landscape. The overall landscape receptor will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features, and the introduction of new elements that would be evident but not necessarily uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. The overall landscape receptor will be obviously changed.
Low	Limited loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features, and the introduction of new elements that would be evident or characteristic to the receiving landscape. The overall landscape receptor will be perceptibly changed.
Negligible or no effect	Very minor or no alteration to one or more key characteristics / features, and the introduction of new elements that would be characteristic to the receiving landscape. The overall landscape receptor will be minimally changed or would receive 'no change'.

5.28. In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude of visual change is outlined in Table 1.8 and described by referring to:

- the distance of the viewpoint from the Proposed Development;
- the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible;
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
- the nature of the view in relation to the sequence of views experienced in arriving at the viewpoint;
- the scale of change in the view resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the Proposed Development;
- the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and
- the duration and nature of the effect, whether it is temporary or permanent, intermittent or continuous.

Table 1.8 Magnitude of effect on visual amenity

Magnitude	Effect
High	The proposal will result in a large and immediately apparent change in the view, resulting in a dominant, new and/or incongruous feature in the landscape.
Medium	The proposal will result in an obvious and recognisable change in the view and will be readily noticed by the viewer.
Low	The proposal will constitute a minor component of the wider view or a more recognisable component that reflects those that are apparent in the existing view. Awareness of the proposal will not have a marked effect on the overall nature of the view.
Negligible or no effect	Only a very small part of the proposal will be discernible or it will not be discernible at all, and it will have very little or no effect on the nature of the view.

Significance of effect

5.29. The significance of the effect was determined by combining the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the predicted changes to conclude whether the significance would have no or negligible, slight, moderate, substantial or very substantial effects during the construction phase, on completion and (as residual effects) after a 15-year period of establishment.

5.30. The greatest significance is likely to be a major loss, across an extensive area, of landscape features or characteristics that are important to the integrity of a nationally valued landscape. Short-term effects on landscape features or characteristics over a restricted part of a landscape of lower value are likely to be of least significance.

5.31. Visual effects are more likely to be significant for people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity, people who experience effects at recognised and important viewpoints, and people who experience effects from recognised scenic routes. Large-scale changes that introduce new, discordant or intrusive elements into the view are also more likely to be significant than small changes or changes that involve features that are already present in the view.

5.32. Table 1.9 is not used as a prescriptive tool but illustrates the typical outcomes, allowing for the exercise of professional judgement.

Table 1.9 Significance of effect

		Magnitude of change			
		High	**Medium**	**Low**	**Negligible**
Receptor sensitivity	**High**	Very substantial	Substantial	Moderate	Negligible or no effect
	Medium	Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible or no effect
	Low	Moderate	Slight	Slight	Negligible or no effect
	Negligible	Negligible or no effect	Negligible or no effect	Negligible or no effect	Negligible or no effect

5.33. Where the effect is classified as very substantial or substantial these are considered to be significant in the context of material considerations so they can be considered through the planning process. Where moderate effects are predicted, professional judgement is applied to consider whether or not the effects are considered to be significant. The term significant used here as part of this appraisal is not be confused with the same when assessing significant effects as part of an EIA in accordance with the requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017.

5.34. The nature of the effect is also considered, with an assessment on the positive and/or negative elements of the Proposed Development in comparison to the existing Site and its surroundings. The nature of change can be identified as being adverse, beneficial or neutral (see Table 1.10).

Table 1.10 Nature of effect

	Visual	**Landscape**
Adverse	The Proposed Development would result in an effect where the Development will introduce elements that are discordant with the visual context or detract from the existing condition in a detrimental way.	The Proposed Development would result in an effect where the Development will introduce elements that are discordant with the existing landscape resource/character or detract from the existing condition in a detrimental way.
Beneficial	The Proposed Development would result in an effect where the Development will complement or contribute to the visual context, strengthening it or adding positive qualities and characteristics that were previously poorly expressed or not present.	The Proposed Development would result in an effect where the Development will complement or contribute to the existing landscape resource/character, adding positive qualities and characteristics that were previously poorly expressed or not present.
Neutral	The Proposed Development would result in an effect where the Development will neither contribute to nor detract from the receptor or view, but will be comfortably assimilated into the existing visual context.	The Proposed Development would result in an effect where the Development will neither contribute to nor detract from the existing landscape resource/character, but will be comfortably assimilated into the existing landscape context.

Cumulative effects

5.35. The cumulative appraisal is based on the same landscape and visual baseline and receptor groups as the main LVIa. The methodology is also the same in terms of forming and expressing judgements about any change to the significance of effect as a result of any reasonably foreseeable proposed developments in the study area.

5.36. GLVIA3 defines cumulative landscape and visual effects (as extracted from GLVIA2) as those that:

"*result from additional changes to the landscape or visual amenity caused by the proposed development in conjunction with other developments (associated with or separate to it), or actions that occurred in the past, present or are likely to occur in the foreseeable future*."

5.37. This appraisal focuses on "*actions [...] likely to occur in the foreseeable future*" (GLVIA3), which are interpreted as live or approved planning applications, or sites that are allocated in the adopted local authority's Development Plan. Existing built and operational developments (e.g. new buildings and structures, solar and wind farms, or highway schemes) are considered as part of the baseline study area and within the reporting of overall landscape and visual effects.

5.38. Cumulative effects on landscape receptors arise from combined direct and/or indirect effects on the same receptor; for example, two developments in the same character area, or one development in a designated area and another development visible from the same area.

5.39. Cumulative effects on visual receptors arise either from two (or more) developments being visible from the same place or from sequential views as people travel.

Post-design secondary mitigation and significance of effect

5.40. Where significant effects were identified, this stage describes the secondary mitigation measures included that were "*not built into the final Development proposals and are considered in relation the assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the scheme"* (GLVIA3).

5.41. Secondary mitigation measures were not considered a requirement of this Proposed Development because primary mitigation measures were included as part of the earlier iterative design process and the final design solution, which responds to the sensitivities and issues identified through the process of this appraisal.

Appendix E - relevant landscape planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework

The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised on 20 July 2021 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Chapters 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16 of the Framework include landscape matters.

Chapter 14 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change' at para 155 states that in increasing the supply of renewable and low carbon energy, development plans should maximise "*the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts)".* Para 158 states that when determining renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should "*approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable".*

Chapter 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' is more landscape focused and at paragraph 174, states that "*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;…".*

176 states that "*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas*.".

177 states that "*When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest*…."

Chapter 16 focuses on conserving and enhancing the historic environment, and states at 199 "*When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance*.".

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) brings together planning guidance on various topics and was launched in March 2014. Guidance on the 'Natural Environment' was published in January 2016 and updated in July 2019. At paragraph 36, it states that "*The National Planning Policy*

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

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

Further guidance in relation the setting of National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty is provided at paragraph 42 stating that "*Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development* can *do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account*.".

PPG guidance on 'Renewable and low carbon energy' was published in 2015. Paragraph 013 states that large scale solar farms "*can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes*", but *"the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively*".

Para 013 goes on to set out 'particular factors' that will need to be considered specifically in relation to solar farms:

- *encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- *where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays;*
- *that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;*
- *the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare (see guidance on landscape assessment) and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;*
- *the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;*
- *the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;*
- *great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset;*
- *the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;*
- *the energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including, latitude and aspect.*

It also acknowledges that "*in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero*".

Further UK government planning guidance in relation to solar farms is provided in the 'Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy' (EN-1), 2011 and the 'Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure' (EN-3), 2021. These National Policy Statements (NPS) provide guidance on nationally significant infrastructure and specific advice on the location, siting, design and mitigation of solar farms and the preparation of landscape and visual impact assessments (at EN-1 5.9 and EN-3 section 2.51).

The Isle of Wight Core Strategy

The Island Plan Core Strategy was adopted by the Isle of Wight Council on 21 March 2012. The Proposals Map is shown at Figure 2 with relevant 'landscape' policies listed below.

Policy SP5 Environment

"*The Council will support proposals that protect, conserve and/or enhance the Island's natural and historic environments. All development proposals will be expected to take account of the environmental capacity of an area to accommodate new development and, where appropriate and practicable, to contribute to environmental conservation and enhancement.*

The project proposals will be expected to protect the integrity of international, national and local designations, enhance their features of interest wherever possible, and respond to the emerging evidence from the Solent Disturbance and Mitigation Project. Policy SP5 states that: "Habitats important to the biodiversity of the Island will be protected in accordance with the following hierarchy of nature conservation designations:

(i) International – Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites;

(ii) National – Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserves (NNR);

(iii) Local – Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), other Ancient Woodland not identified in (ii) above.

The Council will identify and manage an accessible network of connected and multifunctional open spaces that covers the Island through the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy Supplementary Planning Document. This will be the way in which the Council will identify appropriate levels of mitigation associated with development proposals as well as provide opportunities to enhance and increase the coverage and connectivity and multifunctionality of the Island's GI network. Development that has a demonstrable adverse impact on the Island's natural, historic and built environments should be avoided.

In order to conserve and enhance the quality of the natural environment, the Council will regularly review existing SINCs. As a result of this process, some boundary changes will be proposed and some new SINCs will be brought forward.

The Council will support proposals that positively conserve and enhance the special character of the Island's historic and built environments. Development that has an adverse impact on the Island's historic and built environments should be avoided. All development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have taken into account the historic and built environment.
In order to conserve and enhance the quality of the built and historic environment, the Council will continue to undertake Conservation Area Appraisals to identify the potential for new conservation areas, undertaken reviews of existing conservation areas and develop Conservation Area Management Plans. As a result of this process, some boundary changes will be proposed and some new conservation areas will be brought forward".

SP6 Renewables

"*A range of renewable energies will be encouraged across the Island to meet its target of up to 100 MW installed capacity as the on-shore contribution to becoming self-sufficient in renewable electricity production.*

The Council supports domestic and medium scale, localised provision across the Island and recognises the need for large-scale, grid-connected renewable energy schemes. These schemes will be expected to contribute to the economic development and regeneration of the Island and help it meet its target of becoming self-sufficient in renewable electricity production.
The Council believes the renewable energy target can be met through the following potential minimum contributions from a range of proven technologies:

- *At least 22.5 MW from wind*
- *At least 15 MW from photovoltaics*
- *At least 7.4 MW from waste*
- *At least 6 MW from biomass*

It is expected that the remaining 50 MW capacity will be met from a combination of smaller scale and domestic installations, schemes granted permission but not yet built and schemes using imported fuels.

It is accepted that a range of new technologies, other than those listed above, are likely to emerge and these will be considered on their own merits in-line with national planning policy and the policies of the Core Strategy.

Within areas of protected and sensitive landscapes, development should generally be small scale or community-based. It is expected that large-scale wind and photovoltaic schemes will be located outside of the AONB (and grade 1-3a agricultural land for photovoltaics) and other designated environmental assets, although schemes within the AONB will be considered when there are no alternative sites outside of the AONB and where a considerable community benefit is demonstrated and considered to outweigh the landscape impact.

The Council will support large-scale heat projects where they can demonstrate sufficient benefit to the Island and/or help to reduce the carbon emissions from existing housing and commercial buildings."

DM2 Design Quality for New Development

"The Council will support proposals for high quality and inclusive design to protect, conserve and enhance our existing environment whilst allowing change to take place. A robust design process with the use of skilled designers and pre-application discussions will be promoted.

Relevant information according to the site's size, location and context will be required in order for the Council to determine planning applications properly and quickly. All new development should respond to a clear understanding of physical, social, economic, environmental and policy context.

Development proposals will be expected to:
1. Provide an attractive, functional, accessible, safe and adaptable built environment with a sense of place.
2. Optimise the potential of the site but have regard to existing constraints such as adjacent buildings, topography, views, water courses, hedges, trees, wildlife corridors or other features which significantly contribute to the character of the area.
3. Be appropriately landscaped to provide an attractive setting for the development that integrates with the surroundings.
4. Complement the character of the surrounding area, particularly in Conservation Areas and AONB, as defined in Conservation Area Appraisals, Village Design Statements or other Supplementary Planning Documents that define locally distinctive areas.
5. Minimise the consumption of natural resources and the production of waste or pollution.

Development proposals which preserve or enhance a Heritage Asset or the setting of a Heritage Asset will be supported."

Policy DM12 Landscape, Seascape, Biodiversity and Geodiversity

"*The Council will support proposals that conserve, enhance and promote the landscape, seascape, biodiversity and geological interest of the Island. Development proposals will be expected to:*

1. Protect the integrity of international, national and local designations relating to landscape, seascape, biodiversity and geodiversity and the reasons for these designations and the weight given to them and enhance their features of interest wherever possible.

2. Ensure new development avoids both direct and indirect adverse effects upon the integrity of designated sites and, if necessary, provides appropriate mitigation measures.

3. Promote the maintenance and enhancement of the links between designated sites, especially through the provision of, and/or enhancement to, Green Infrastructure and appropriate local designations.

4. Reflect the aims and objectives of the AONB [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty] Management Plan, the Council's Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation and any further relevant landscape assessment.

5. Positively contribute to meeting the aims and objectives of the Isle of Wight's Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Geodiversity Action Plan.

6. Minimise the threats and promote the opportunities arising from climate change on the Island's landscape, seascape, biodiversity and geodiversity".

Policy DM13 Green Infrastructure

"The Council will support proposals that protect, enhance and manage a diverse network of multi-functional Green Infrastructure (GI) assets across the Island. Development proposals will be expected to:

1. Protect and enhance the integrity and connectivity of the Island's GI network as identified in the Isle of Wight Green Infrastructure Mapping Study.

2. Provide opportunities to enhance and increase the coverage, connectivity and multifunctionality of the Island's GI network. Where on-site provision is not possible, contributions will be sought to make appropriate GI provision and/or enhancement off-site.

3. Provide appropriate mitigation measures for the loss of GI assets, where it is shown that the loss of the asset is unavoidable in securing appropriate development.

4. Ensure that development within the Key Regeneration Areas delivers the appropriate levels of GI provision.

5. Ensure that the areas which separate the key settlements of Cowes/Newport, East Cowes/Newport, Ryde/Wootton and The Bay/Brading are appropriately protected to prevent settlement coalescence. These areas will be further defined within the Area Action Plans.

As part of the GI network, the Council has identified sites which are important for open space, sport and recreation and these are shown on the Proposals Map. The Council will support proposals which protect, enhance and increase the coverage of these sites by:

a. Ensuring that new development provides opportunities to enhance existing sites and/or increase the provision of new sites as a network, where appropriate, in line with the local provision standards set out in the Council's Open Space Audit.

b. Preventing the loss of an existing site unless:

i. an alternative site of equivalent or better quality and type is available or can be provided at an equally accessible location to comply with the Open Spaces Audit local provision standards; or

ii. a significant enhancement to the nature and quality of an existing facility will result from the redevelopment of an appropriate proportion of the site for alternative uses".

References

Isle of Wight Council *Island Plan Core Strategy (including Waste and Minerals) and Development Management development Plan Documen*t (2012)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Policy Framework* (2021)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Practice Guidance* (2019)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *National Planning Practice Guidance* (2015)

Department of Energy and Climate Change, *Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)* (2011)

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, *Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)* (2021)

Appendix F – outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Sunny Oaks Renewable Energy Park, Isle of Wight

Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

1.1. The following sets out the outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the different landscape components, as identified on Figure 13 of the LVIA in Appendix B, primarily during the operational years (and separate to the Construction Environmental Management Plan)

Management aims

1.2. The main management aims are to:

- Enhance ecological value of the site biodiversity by improving connectivity and creating new grassland, scrub and tree and hedge habitats.
- Reinforce local landscape character, with particular note to the guidelines as set out within the East Wight Landscape Character Assessment (EWLCA), 2015 which identifies the Site falling within the 'PL3 Northern Clay Pasture Land' local landscape character area (including "*Conserve and enhance the hedgerows, hedgerow trees*", "*Conserve the ancient woodland, copses and field trees*", and "*Conserve and enhance grasslands*").
- Retain high level open views across the Site to wooded edges and across the valley by limiting the height of new and existing hedge and scrub plantings.
- Ensure existing hedges and trees are safeguarded and their habitat and diversity improved over the long-term.
- Protect the existing ancient woodland to ensure its long term survival. This involves creating a 15m tiered 'soft' woodland edge (to be managed as 'new woodland scrub mix' as below) as a protection buffer to the ancient woodland that also improves its habitat value.

Existing trees

1.3. Years 0-1

- Tree works will be carried out as recommended in the AIA, retaining standing dead trees and aerial deadwood wherever appropriate. Dead wood to be left in piles at the base of the tree in its original position (in the shade where possible), to the field margins where space allows.
- Dead limbs to be left attached unless removal is required on safety grounds.
- Install tree protection fencing to BS5837:2012 and other tree protection measures as detailed in the Tree Protection Plan & Arboricultural Method Statement to ensure trees are protected during the construction stage.

1.4. Years 1-40

- Allow continued natural growth and ageing.
- Continue to monitor the structural stability of the trees and limbs.
- If a tree naturally dies, suffers storm damage or removal is required on safety grounds, a replacement like-for-like species tree will be planted in its place.

Existing hedgerows

1.5. Years 0-1

- Plant mixed native hedge species during the autumn/winter months to fill gaps within existing hedgerows. Hand dig to remove weeds (spot use of herbicide only where absolutely necessary). Plant with biodegradable guard, stake and mulch.
- Allow hedges to grow out at the base and at the top with the long-term aim of establishing an 'A' shape hedgerow to optimise health and landscape value.

1.6. Years 1-40

- Hedges to be cut annually to an 'A' shape during January-February (outside of the nesting season and delaying trimming to retain berry crop).
- Allow hedge to increase in height at rate of 0.5m per annum and trim back until an eventual height and shape is achieved. No hedge to exceed 3m.
- Remove weeds around new plantings. Check stakes and guards and re-firm as necessary. Top up mulch.
- Replace hedge species which did not take.
- Continue to fill gaps and improve species diversity.
- Stakes and guards to be removed if no longer required.

New locally native specimen trees

1.7. Years 0-1

- Plant locally native tree specimens (including oak, lime, service berry, field maple) within or immediately adjacent to existing hedgerow to diversifying the tree age ranges and creating a more sustainable tree stock. Plant during autumn/winter months. Hand dig to remove weeds. Plant with stake, tie and mulch.
- Water as necessary during the first summer to ensure successfully established.
- Carry out formative pruning as necessary to promote single apical dominance with a view to achieving a mature tree form that is structurally stable.

1.8. Years 1-40

- Remove weeds around new plantings. Check stakes and re-firm as necessary. Top up mulch.
- Allow trees to take their natural shape and form.
- Tree stakes to be removed if no longer required for support.

New mixed native hedgerow

1.9. Years 0-1

- Plant new mixed native hedge species in staggered row in locations as indicated during the autumn/winter months. Hand dig to remove weeds (spot use of herbicide only where absolutely necessary. Plant with biodegradable guard, stake and mulch.
- Water as necessary during first summer.

1.10. Years 1-40

- When ready, hedges to be cut to form an 'A' shape during January-February (outside of the nesting season and delaying trimming to retain berry crop).
- Allow hedge to increase in height at rate of 0.5m per annum and lightly trim back until an eventual height is achieved. No hedge to exceed 3m.
- Remove weeds around new plantings. Check stakes and guards and re-firm as necessary. Top up mulch.
- Replace hedge species which did not take.
- Stakes and guards to be removed if no longer required.

New temporary evergreen hedgerow

1.11. Years 0-1

- Plant new temporary evergreen hedge in pre-dug trench following guidance from the supplier. Works over the gas main should be carried out under the supervision of Southern Gas Networks. Ideally to be carried out during autumn/winter months to avoid additional watering requirements. If planting is carried out during the spring/summer regular irrigation will need to be carried out, especially during periods of dry weather.
- Water as necessary during first summer.

1.12. Years 1-5

- Hedges to be cut to a rectangular box shape during mid-late August (at the end of the bird nesting season and timing the trimming to remove the immature fruits which cannot be taken by birds, thereby preventing seed dispersal).
- Allow hedge to increase in height at rate of 0.5m per annum and trim back until an eventual height is achieved. Hedging to not exceed 2.5m in height.
- Remove weeds around new plantings.
- Replace hedge species which did not take.
- Regular monitoring to ensure no seed dispersal or spread is taking place. Hand dig and eliminate as necessary.

1.13. Year 5 (or once the new scrub planting to Whiterails Road has reached its optimum height)

- Phased removal of hedge species. Specimens to be felled and roots grubbed out.
- Plants to be put through a chipper and waste removed from site and composted by thermophilic methods to kill seeds.

New scrub woodland mix

1.14. Years 0-1

- Plant new mixed native shrub species on staggered grid at 30cm spacings. Hand dig to remove weeds. Plant with biodegradable guard, stake and mulch.
- Water as necessary during first summer.

1.15. Years 1-40

- Allow plants to grow naturally to form a natural scrub edge.

- Do not allow to exceed 3m in height or 2.5m along the edge of Whiterails Road. In locations where scrub is planted alongside existing ancient or established woodland edges, no trimming is required, and plant species can achieve their natural height.
- Remove weeds around new plantings. Check stakes and guards and re-firm as necessary.
- Replace species which did not take.
- Stakes and guards to be removed if no longer required.

New wildflower meadow and species rich grassland

1.16. Years 0-1

- Areas to be seeded with wildflower grassland seed mix from local donor meadows where possible during the autumn or spring. Ground to be prepared using power harrow or similar. Seed spread by machine and firmed in with a roller. There is also scope of involving local community groups including the Green Gym, and the Scouts to hand sow the seeds.
- Cut initial growth in early august and remove first-cut arisings. Compost off-site.

1.17. Years 1-40

- If grazing, introduce stock during the winter and early spring and allow sward to reduce to a height of between 5-10cm. Do not overgraze.
- If cutting, cut annually at the end of the summer and leave arisings for up to 7 days to allow seed dispersal, then remove and compost off-site. If required to maintain a sward height of no more than 5cm, cut again in the late autumn and early spring. At this time remove arisings (no need to leave for 7 days).
- No mechanical operations, cutting or grazing to occur during the flowering or bird nesting season spring to August.
- No herbicide or fertiliser should be used.

Appendix G – MSE Type 4 viewpoint photography (separate document)