Technical Appendix 1: Landscape Visual Appraisal

Kingston Solar Farm

07/02/2022

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CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. As evidenced throughout this LVA, no *significant* effects (in context of material considerations) are predicted on any landscape character types or landscape designations within the study area. Of particular note, the site is located in the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and in context of its prevailing wooded character interspersed with rides and areas of open land, the Proposed Development would generally conserve its integrity and associated rural quality.

1.2. Short term *significant* visual effects are only predicted during the early operational phase (i.e. year 0) at viewpoints 3 and 5; as both viewpoints are located on recreational routes within or within very close proximity to the site, nearby views of the arrays and associated infrastructure would tend to remain highly visible until mitigation planting matures. In the longer term however, no *significant* effects are predicted at any of the assessment viewpoints, or on the users of any recreational routes in the locality.

1.3. The very limited nature of *significant* effects identified in this LVA is largely due to the implementation of the Landscape Strategy and associated parts of the LEMP that as detailed in Section 6, would deliver significant new additional hedgerows and new native woodland. Of particular relevance, all of the woodland mitigation planting would include a good proportion of mature tree and scrub specimens to help ensure that the Proposed Development benefits from an effective screen during the early operational phases. Most of the new hedgerows would also be mature plantings, in order to provide an instant dense hedgerow at year 0. As demonstrated by the findings of the Viewpoint Assessment (see Section 7), these extensive mitigation measures would help to protect the countryside experience that the existing network of recreational routes currently provide.

1.4. Although some views of the Proposed Development from nearby recreational routes are inevitable, particularly through intervening vegetation during winter months and CCTV poles above hedgerows, this LVA has clearly demonstrated that visibility in practice is very localised and from almost all of the wider study area, including main settlements and roads, the Proposed Development would be screened from view by dense mature woodlands that surround the site, and intervening built development and landcover in the wider landscape.

1.5. In relation to the landscape policy context therefore, (see Section 4), the findings of this LVA demonstrate that the Proposed Development:

- is sensitively sited with a design and layout that positively integrates with its local context;
- conserves and enhances local landscape character;
- protects and enhances Green Infrastructure;

- protects the landscape setting of listed cultural features (e.g. Listed Buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens);
- protects the openness and characteristics of the Green Belt; and
- is not visually intrusive, whilst protecting the visual amenity of any residents and users of public rights of way.

2. INTRODUCTION

Background

2.1. This report sets out a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) in support of Full Planning Permission for a proposed solar farm and associated infrastructure (herein called the Proposed Development), located on lands circa 1.3km south of Gotham and c. 0.75km northwest of East Leake, Nottinghamshire.

2.2. The LVA has been undertaken by Douglas Harman Landscape Planning (DHLP), on behalf of Neo Environmental Ltd. Douglas Harman is a sole practitioner and Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI).

2.3. The primary purpose of this LVA is to identify any likely adverse effects predicted during the operational phase of the proposed development on the landscape and visual resources of the site and surrounding landscape. Where any adverse effects are identified, appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed, and where practicable, embedded within the design of the proposed development.

Overview of Approach

2.4. Although the planning application is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report, the approach taken to assess landscape and visual effects broadly follows that of a typical EIA development. As such, the methodology (see Chapter 2) is primarily based on the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*[1] and other current best practice guidance where relevant.

2.5. As an overview, the objectives of the LVA are to:

- describe the methodology and criteria used to inform the assessment process;
- identify any relevant landscape related policy and guidance;
- identify and assess the landscape and visual baseline conditions;
- identify design principles and other mitigation measures embedded into the design of the project to help minimise any likely *significant* adverse effects; and
- identify and evaluate any residual landscape and visual effects, including direct and indirect, based on the worst-case parameters as currently known.

[1] Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), *The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, version 3*.

2.6. This LVA has been informed by a desk-based analysis of existing data and other information gathered through a comprehensive field survey. Based on a 5 km radial study area, the appraisal identifies the baseline against which the effects of the proposed development are assessed, and concentrates on predicting the likely adverse effects during the operational phase. Although inter-related, landscape effects are assessed separately to the effects on views and visual amenity.

2.7. Landscape effects consider the fabric, character and quality of the site and surrounding landscape/seascape and are concerned with:

- landscape elements (e.g. hedgerows, trees and woodlands);
- landscape character (local and regional distinctiveness); and
- special interests and values (e.g. designations, conservation areas and cultural associations).

2.8. Visual effects are primarily concerned with the changes in people's views through intrusion or obstruction and whether important opportunities to enjoy views may be improved or reduced.

Proposed Development

2.9. As an overview, the Proposed Development consists of the construction of a 49.9MW solar farm with bi-facial solar photovoltaic (PV) panels mounted on metal frames, new access tracks, underground cabling, perimeter fencing with CCTV cameras and access gates, two temporary construction compounds, substation and all ancillary grid infrastructure and associated works.

2.10. As illustrated on the Site Location Plan (see **Figure 1 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings**), the Proposed Development Site comprises of 16 agricultural fields (See **Figure 3 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings** for field numbers), split into two separate compartments; north and south.

2.11. As detailed in the Planning Statement (see Volume 1), the Proposed Development consists of the following components:

- 4,421 module racks, 114,946 modules, with 35,368 pile driven poles;
- 1 x Grid Substations - (62m(L) x 49.5m(W)= 3069.0m^2);
- 2 x Equipment Containers - (2.4m(L) x 12.2m(W)) = 58.6m^2);
- 20 x Inverter Substations - (16.0m(L) x 6.0m(W)) = 1,920m^2);
- 15 x Inverter Substation Hardstanding Areas hardstanding areas (16.00m(L) x 16.0m(W) = 3,840m^2);
- 9.88km of deer fencing with 3,294 posts at 3m spacing, c. 0.03m^2 footprint each: 98.8m^2. Fence is 2.4m high with a 0.1m gap at the base;

- 106No. CCTV Posts at 3.5m in height = 67.8m^2;
- Road is 4.5m wide and will involve an average of 300mm depth of soil removed. Local widening at turns for access reasons. Occasionally a geosynthetic reinforcement or soil stability will be used to reduce depth. Total length approximately 5.42km (21,680m^2);
- Cable trenches are circa 1m deep and up to 1m wide and approximately 6,000m length. (Estimated at 6,000m^2);
- 2No. 50m x 60m temporary construction compounds = 6,000m^2
- Structural landscape planting and ecological enhancement measures (See **Figure 1.14 of Technical Appendix 1 (LVA) within Volume 3: Technical Appendices**).

2.12. Overall, the proposed footprint constitutes a relatively small percentage of the total area of the Application Site (80.65ha):

- 42,568.63m^2 for infrastructure (c. 5.28% of the Application Site area); and
- 381.76m^2 for piling (c. 0.05% of the Application Site area).

2.13. The total ground disturbance area resulting from the Proposed Development is therefore **42,950.39m^2** or c. **5.33%** of the Application Site area.

Supporting Information

2.14. As referenced throughout, the following illustrative figures support this LVA:

Appendix A:

- Figure 1.1: Landscape Character;
- Figure 1.2: Landscape Designations;
- Figure 1.3: PRoW Plan;
- Figure 1.4: Viewpoint Locations;
- Figure 1.5: ZTV with Woodland;
- Figure 1.6: Viewpoints 1 & 2;
- Figure 1.7: Viewpoints 3 & 4;
- Figure 1.8: Viewpoints 5 & 6;
- Figure 1.9: Viewpoints 7 & 8;
- Figure 1.10: Viewpoints 9 & 10;

- Figure 1.11: Viewpoint 4 - year 0 & year 10;
- Figure 1.12: Viewpoint 6 - year 0 & year 10;
- Figure 1.13: Viewpoint 7 - year 0 & year 10; and
- Figure 1.14: Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP).

3. METHODOLOGY

Approach and Guidance

3.1. This LVA follows the approach as set out in the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (GLVIA) [2] and other current best practice guidance where relevant[3]. It aims to identify, predict and evaluate the key effects of the proposed development on the landscape and visual resources of the study area. In line with best practice, landscape and visual effects are considered separately throughout.

3.2. As a brief overview, the assessment involved a combination of desk study, computer analysis, field work and interpretation using professional judgement. The site and surrounding area have been visited to gain a clear understanding of the landscape and the likely effects of the Proposed Development. Fieldwork was undertaken during a period of good visibility during August of 2021, by a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.

The Study Area and Viewpoint Selection

3.3. To ensure the extent of any potential adverse effects are fully considered, the assessment is based on a study area radius of 5km. In selecting assessment viewpoints, a map showing the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV), based on computer manipulation of a digital terrain model, was prepared. This indicates areas from which the Proposed Development may theoretically be seen and enabled the assessment to be focused upon those locations that are most likely to be affected.

3.4. The ZTV, as illustrated on **Figure 1.5: Appendix A**, is based solely on topography (50m contours) and identifies the maximum theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development. When interpreting the ZTV, it is important to bear the following points in mind:

- the ZTV accounts for ground topography on the basis of a model made from Ordinance Survey Terrain 50 data in the form of 3D points data on a 50m grid;
- the ZTV does not account for any other features, including infrastructure, woodland, trees and hedgerows, and existing built forms;
- the ZTV is based on 61 targets points to a height of 2.8m (max. height of panels);
- the ZTV portrays the extent of visibility of the Proposed Development on the basis of if a target point is visible within a given 50m grid square

[2] Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013), '*The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, version 3'.*

[3] 1) Countryside Agency and SNH (2002), '*Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland'.*

- the map does not take the orientation of the viewer into account, for example when travelling in a vehicle; and
- the map does not convey the likely nature or magnitude of visual effects of the proposed development, which can only be determined by further assessment, including fieldwork.

3.5. As a result, the visibility shown on the ZTV map is more extensive than would actually be visible on the ground and therefore reflects a worst-case scenario, but where the ZTV indicates no visibility, the Proposed Development would not be seen.

3.6. The viewpoints used for this assessment (see **Figure 1.4: Appendix A** and **Table 1-11**) were selected according to the criteria set out in the best practice guidance where relevant. Note that not all these criteria necessarily apply to all viewpoints:

- publicly accessible;
- reasonably high potential number of viewers or being of particular significance to the viewer(s) affected;
- range of viewing distances (i.e. short, medium and long-distance views) and elevations;
- range of viewing experiences (i.e. static views, for example from settlements, recognised viewpoints, car parks or points along sequential views, for example from roads, walking and cycling routes);
- range of view types, (e.g. panoramas, glimpses);
- views with different extents of the development visible; and
- locations with potential cumulative views of the proposed development and other relevant development(s).

3.7. Informed by desk and field work, the viewpoints have been discussed and agreed with the Landscape Officer at Rushcliffe Borough Council, and were selected to offer the clearest view within the vicinity of the chosen point where potentially significant effects are likely to occur. Viewpoints have been excluded where the ZTV indicates that the proposed development would not be visible, or where the viewpoint is too distant for any potentially significant effects to occur.

Landscape Resources

3.8. Landscape resources within the study area that could be affected by the Proposed Development include:

- physical resources, such as landform, landcover, tracks, watercourses, etc.;
- landscape character types/areas;
- landscape designations e.g. National Parks, local landscape designations; and
- other important recreational, natural or cultural heritage interests that contribute to landscape character.

3.9. The Landscape Baseline appraisal (see Section 5) establishes the physical components of the landscape that may be directly affected by the Proposed Development (i.e. those within the site), as well as the landscape resources within the wider study area from which the proposed development could be visible. The ZTV analysis and field assessment studies have been used to check the potential visibility of the landscape resources within the study area.

Visual Resources

3.10. Visual receptors are defined as those individuals or groups of people within the study area who may have views towards the site and are likely to be affected by the Proposed Development.

3.11. The Visual Baseline (see Section 5) establishes the parts of the study area from which the proposed development may be visible; the viewpoints from which different groups of people may experience views of the proposed development, and the approximate number of people who will be affected by the changes in views or visual amenity.

Assessment of Predicted Effects

3.12. Having established the baseline conditions, the assessment of landscape and visual effects was then undertaken. Initially, the assessment focused on a Viewpoint Assessment to establish the potential effects on the landscape and visual resources experienced at specific locations. The field work was informed by a range of maps, photographs, the ZTV analysis and computer-generated photomontages.

3.13. Existing and predicted views from each of the viewpoints were assessed in order to identify, predict and evaluate the potential effects arising from the Proposed Development. Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified and the prediction of magnitude and assessment of significance of the landscape and visual effects is based on pre-defined criteria in order to provide greater consistency. Note that these criteria are not used as prescriptive tools, and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location allows for the exercise of professional judgement. In practice, all factors need to be considered in combination and applied using careful judgement, particularly in terms of the relative weight given to each. In some instances, one criterion may be considered to have a determining effect.

3.14. In addition to the Viewpoint Assessment (see Section 7), field work was also undertaken to inform the general assessment of the landscape and visual receptors as identified in the

Baseline Assessment. The findings of the detailed Viewpoint Assessment were also used to inform the general assessment of landscape and visual effects within the wider study area.

3.15. The criteria used in this assessment have been based upon paragraph 3.26 of the GLVIA, which recommends that factors affecting the sensitivity of the receptor (susceptibility and value), and those affecting the magnitude of the effect (size, extent, duration and reversibility) are each assessed separately. The description of effects takes account of changing seasonal conditions and the effects of on-going changes to the landscape over time, such as the predicted growth of vegetation or woodland operations.

Duration and Reversibility of Effects

3.16. As described within the Planning Statement, the construction phase is anticipated to take place over a 6-month period. Effects due to construction are therefore considered to be short-term, whilst effects arising during the operational phase would be long-term, albeit largely reversible.

Significance of Effects

3.17. Similar to an EIA report, the degree of *significance* (in context of material considerations) of effects on landscape resources and visual receptors is determined from a combined evaluation of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the effect.

Determining Significance of Effects

3.18. The following table shows how the significance of the landscape/visual effect increases from **negligible** to **substantial** with increasing receptor sensitivity and with greater magnitude of effect. The most substantial effects would occur where a receptor of highest sensitivity is affected by an effect of *very large* magnitude. Conversely, *negligible* effects would result where a receptor of lowest sensitivity is affected by an effect of *very small* magnitude. Between these two extremes the significance of effect would vary continuously and the significance of any one effect is determined by professional judgement, taking into account all the relevant factors.

Table 1-1: Significance of Effects

	Sensitivity of receptor		
Magnitude of effect	*High*	*Medium*	*Low*
Very large	substantial	major	moderate-major
Large	major	moderate-major	moderate
Medium	moderate-major	moderate	moderate-minor
Small	moderate	moderate-minor	minor
Very small	moderate-minor	minor	negligible

3.19. The assessment of *significance* of the landscape and visual effects is based on pre-defined criteria. The following assessment tables within this Chapter provide a framework that helps to ensure consistency and transparency in the decision-making process but are not used as prescriptive tools, allowing for the exercise of professional judgement in determining sensitivity, magnitude and significance.

3.20. The assessment of general effects and the detailed viewpoint assessments provide further details of how the significance of effects has been determined in each case where relevant. Where overall effects are predicted to be **moderate-major**, **major** or **substantial**, these are considered to be significant in the context of material considerations (shaded grey in preceding Table).

Positive and Negative Effects

3.21. Negative effects result in a direct loss of physical resources, weaken key characteristics, negatively affect the integrity of landscape designations or result in a reduction in visual amenity. Positive effects occur where a development replaces physical resources, strengthens the landscape characteristics or improves the visual amenity. Effects may also be neutral, where there is no net effect on the landscape or visual resources.

3.22. Changes to undeveloped rural landscapes, for example, that involve the construction of engineered man-made objects of a modest or large-scale generally have a negative effect on character, although this effect can be mitigated by the contribution to the landscape that a development may make in its own right, usually by virtue of good design, even if it is in contrast to the existing character.

3.23. Changes to views and visual amenity can be more subjective, in that people may like or dislike what they see, or may be used to seeing nearby development of similar nature and therefore more ambivalent about them. Whether the visual effect is perceived as positive or negative depends upon individual preferences, the context in which a person experiences the view, and upon their attitude towards this type of development in general. It should be recognised therefore that some people may be more neutral or ambivalent in their opinions about the proposed changes in views.

Direct and Indirect Effects

3.24. Direct effects result directly from a Proposed Development itself, such as the loss of woodland to development. Indirect effects are consequential changes resulting from a development, such as changes in rural character of a landscape character type/area that would result from the introduction of an industrial development located in its setting, for example.

Acceptability of Effects

3.25. In theory, a proposed development may be considered by some to be an unacceptable intrusion in the landscape, but could be seen as an essential contributor to the local economy. It is not

the effects on the landscape that change but the judgements about the acceptability of those effects.

3.26. Acceptability is therefore a matter for the decision maker to determine, taking into account the overall balance of environmental benefits and effects of the proposed development, on the basis of all the available evidence. The GLVIA notes in paragraph 2.17 that "*it is for the competent authority to judge the balance of weight between policy considerations and the effects that such proposals may have*."

3.27. There are no specific accepted, legal requirements or published criteria to use as a basis on which to judge whether a change in the landscape, or in a view, is acceptable. Nor is there any published guidance on establishing a threshold, beyond which further changes should be prevented. This LVA sets out, in an impartial way, the nature and extent of landscape and visual effects that are likely to result from the proposed development and does not draw conclusions as to acceptability.

Landscape Effects

3.28. Landscape effects arise from changes to the physical components of the landscape, its character and how this is experienced. The GLVIA indicates that landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of proposal and the value attached to the landscape.

3.29. Best practice guidance[4] states that "*Sensitivity is related…to landscape character and how vulnerable this is to change…Landscapes which are highly sensitive are at risk of having their key characteristics fundamentally altered by development, leading to a change to a different landscape character i.e. one with a different set of key characteristics. Sensitivity is assessed by considering the physical characteristics and the perceptual characteristics of landscapes in the light of particular forms of development*."

3.30. These aspects of sensitivity distinguish one Landscape Character Type (LCT) from another, but it is important to recognise that sensitivity can also vary across a particular LCT. Some landscape assessments provide information concerning the sensitivity of LCTs to different types of development although in the case, no information is available.

3.31. This LVA therefore includes an assessment of factors affecting the susceptibility of the landscape to the changes brought about by the Proposed Development. The following Table sets out attributes of landscape character that have been considered in assessing susceptibility, adapted from best practice guidance.

[4] Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Agency (2004), '*Techniques and criteria for judging capacity and sensitivity*'.

Landscape Susceptibility

Table 1-2: Landscape Susceptibility

Susceptibility	*Lower*	*Higher*
Scale	Large-scale or vast	Intimate or small-scale
Landform	Flat, smooth, regular, rolling, gently undulating, or flowing landform	Dramatic, steep, mountainous, rugged, or complex landform with prominent peaks or ridges
Diversity	Simple or uniform, e.g. Moorland or forestry plantations	Complex or diverse, variety of land cover
Landcover pattern and line	Sweeping lines, or indistinct or irregular patterns	Strong and regular linear features, geometric or rectilinear patterns, or planned landscapes
Settlement and infrastructure	Frequent masts, pylons, industrial elements, modern buildings, infrastructure, settlements or main roads	No obvious modern settlement, buildings, infrastructure or main roads
Perception of landscape change	Modern or clearly dynamic showing obvious land use changes	Little or no land use changes, or with obvious historical continuity
Tranquillity	Busy, with evidence of human activity, noise or regular movement	Remote or tranquil with strong sense of stillness or solitude
Settings and skylines	Low lying areas that do not tend to feature in views from populated areas or main transport routes	Areas with topographic features that define the setting, backdrop, outlook or skyline of populated areas or main transport routes

3.32. The assessment takes as its starting point the recognised value of the landscape, for example, as identified by landscape designations. In addition, the assessment considers the following factors, in order to identify how the relative landscape value may vary at the local scale. The factors set out in the following Table are adapted from paragraphs 5.28-5.31 of the GLVIA and other guidance (Scottish Natural Heritage and Countryside Agency 2004 Figure 1b).

Landscape Value

Table 1-3: Landscape Value

Factors affecting Landscape Value	
Condition /intactness	The degree to which the landscape is unified or intact.

Scenic quality	The extent to which the landscape appeals, primarily to the visual senses.
Perceptual aspects	The degree to which the landscape is recognised for perceptual qualities, such as its sense of remoteness.
Rarity	The presence of unusual elements or features in the landscape or the presence of an unusual LCT.
Representativeness	The degree to which the landscape contains important examples of elements or features, or is of a particular character that is considered important.
Conservation interests	Cultural or natural heritage interests that add to the value of the landscape and/or are of value in themselves.
Recreational value	Evidence of recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important, such as recognised scenic routes.
Associations	Recognised cultural or historical associations that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the landscape.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

3.33. Each effect on landscape receptors is also assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. This is judged using the factors set out in the following Table.

Size or Scale of Landscape Effect

Table 1-4: Size / Scale of Landscape Effect

Class	Criteria
Very large	Highly obvious change, affecting the majority of the key characteristics and defining the experience of the landscape.
Large	Obvious change, affecting many key characteristics and the experience of the landscape.
Medium	Noticeable but not obvious change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape.
Small	Minor change, affecting some characteristics and the experience of the landscape slightly.
Very small	Little perceptible change.

3.34. The geographical area over which the landscape effects would be experienced (regional, local or restricted to the site) is also taken into account. This is distinct from the scale of the change. For example, a small change to the landscape over a large geographical area could be comparable to a very large change affecting a much more localised area.

Visual Effects

3.35. Visual effects result from the changes in the content or character of views and visual amenity, due to changes in the landscape. The assessment of visual effects takes account of both the sensitivity of the visual receptors (individuals or groups of people) and the magnitude of the change on their views and visual amenity.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

3.36. The sensitivity of each visual receptor is assessed in terms of susceptibility to change in views or visual amenity as well as the value attached to particular views. People generally have differing responses to views and visual amenity depending on the context (e.g. location, time of day, degree of exposure), and their purpose for being in a particular place (e.g. whether for recreation, travelling through the area, residence or employment). Susceptibility to change is therefore a function of:

- the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view or visual amenity; and
- the extent to which their attention or interest may be focused on the landscape around them.

3.37. The following table sets out some examples of the relative susceptibility of some of the key visual receptors within the Study Area. Note that different individuals or groups of people at one location may have different levels of susceptibility.

Examples of Susceptibility to Change in Views or Visual Amenity

Table 1-5: Examples of Susceptibility to Change in Views or Visual Amenity

High	Medium	Low
Residents within dwellings or curtilage.	People at their place of work, where views are an important part of the setting, such as a countryside ranger.	People at their place of work whose attention is likely to be focused on their work or activity, not on their surroundings.
Users of recognised footpaths paths, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape or on particular views.		People engaged in active outdoor sports or recreation and less likely to focus on the view.
Road and ferry users where appreciation of the landscape is an important part of the experience, such as recognised scenic routes.	Road users likely to be travelling for other purposes than just the view, such as commuter routes.	
Visitors to heritage assets or to other attractions, such as recognised		

High	Medium	Low
beauty spots, where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience.		

3.38. Judgments are also be made about the value attached to views, based on the following considerations:

- recognised value – such as views from heritage assets or designated landscapes;
- inclusion in guidebooks or on tourist maps, the facilities provided for visitors or references to the view in literature or art; and
- the relative number of people who are likely to experience the view.

3.39. People that are more susceptible to change at viewpoints of recognised value are more likely to be significantly affected by any given change.

Magnitude of Visual Effect

3.40. The magnitude of the visual effect resulting from the Proposed Development is evaluated in terms of size or scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility. This is based on the interpretation of a combination of a range of factors, described in the following Table. Some of these are largely quantifiable and include:

- distance and direction of the viewpoint from the proposed development;
- extent of the proposed development visible from the viewpoint;
- scale of the change in the view, including the proportion of the field of view occupied by the proposed development;
- degree of contrast with the existing landscape elements and characteristics in terms of background, form, pattern, scale, movement, colour, texture, mass, line or height;
- the relative amount of time during which the effect would be experienced and whether views would be full, partial or glimpses; and
- orientation of receptors in relation to the proposed development, e.g. whether views are oblique or direct.

Size or Scale of Visual Effect

Table 1-6: Size / Scale of Visual Effect

Class	Description	Appearance in field of vision
Very large	Dominant	- commanding, controlling the view - creation/removal of a dominant visual focus - highly uncharacteristic elements or pattern introduced - most of the view affected
Large	Prominent	- major change to the view, striking, sharp, unmistakable, easily seen - creation/removal of major visual focus - uncharacteristic elements or pattern introduced - large proportion of the view affected
Medium	Conspicuous	- noticeable change to the view, distinct, clearly visible, well defined - creation or removal of a visual focus that may compete - some elements of the Development fit the existing pattern - some of the view affected
Small	Apparent	- minor change to the view but still evident - little change to focus of the view - fits intrinsic visual composition - little of the view affected
Negligible	Inconspicuous	- no real change to perception of the view - weak, not legible, hardly discernible

4. LANDSDCAPE POLICY CONTEXT

4.1. As detailed in the Planning Statement (see Volume 1), the development plan relevant to this application consists of the *Rushcliffe Local Plan* (Parts 1 and 2, Adopted 2014) and within this context, the Planning Policies that are relevant to the landscape and visual considerations of this application, are summarised as follows.

Rushcliffe Local Plan, 2014 (Part 1)

POLICY 16: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, LANDSCAPE, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

4.2. The policy states:

> *"A strategic approach to the delivery, protection and enhancement of Green Infrastructure will be taken, through the establishment of a network of primary Green Infrastructure corridors and assets (as shown on the Key Diagram), together with corridors and assets of a more local level which will be defined through Local Development Documents.*
>
> *"The approach will require that….Landscape Character is protected, conserved or enhanced where appropriate in line with the recommendations of the Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment. Criteria for the assessment of proposals and any areas of locally valued landscape requiring additional protection will be included the Local Plan Part 2 (Land and Planning Policies)."*

Rushcliffe Local Plan, 2014 (Part 2)

POLICY 1: DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

4.3. For all proposed development, Policy 1 states:

> *"Planning permission for new development will….. be granted provided that the following (landscape-related) criteria are met:*
>
> *1. there is no significant adverse effect upon the amenity, particularly residential amenity of adjoining properties or the surrounding area, by reason of the type and levels of activity on the site, or traffic generated;….*
>
> *3. sufficient space is provided within the site to accommodate the proposal together with ancillary amenity and circulation space;….*
>
> *7. there is no significant adverse effects on landscape character; and*

9. there is no significant adverse effect on any historic sites and their settings including listed buildings, buildings of local interest, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, and historic parks and gardens…."

POLICY 16: RENEWABLE ENERGY

4.4. In relation to landscape, Policy 16 states:

"*Proposals for renewable energy schemes will be granted planning permission where they are acceptable in terms of:*

b) landscape and visual effects;

f) open space and other recreational uses;

g) amenity of nearby properties;

i) form and siting;

j) mitigation; and

l) cumulative impact with existing and proposed development."

POLICY 21: GREEN BELT

4.5. As stated in Policy 21 "*Applications for development in the Green Belt will be determined in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*" and although the Green Belt is not specifically a landscape designation, the NPPF states:

"The government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence."

4.6. Within this context therefore, the effects identified in this LVA provide some evidence concerning the *'essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness'.*

POLICY 28: CONSERVING AND ENHANCING HERITAGE ASSETS

4.7. Although an assessment upon specific heritage assets is beyond the scope this LVA, the effect on their landscape settings are considered, with the following policy therefore partially relevant:

"Proposals that affect heritage assets will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of the assets and their settings, identify the impact of the development upon them and provide a clear justification for the development in order that a decision can be made as to whether the merits of the proposals for the site bring public benefits which decisively outweigh any harm arising from the proposals."

POLICY 34 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE ASSETS

"The following Green Infrastructure assets will be protected from development which adversely affects their green infrastructure function (or their contribution to a wider network) unless the need for the asset is proven to no longer exist and the benefits of development, in that location, outweigh the adverse effects on the asset:

- *….Amenity Space and Semi-Natural Green Space;*
- *….Rights of Way; and*
- *….Woodlands and Traditional Orchards.*

Development that protects, enhances, or widens their Green Infrastructure importance will be supported, provided it does not adversely affect their primary functions.

Where a proposal would result in the loss of Green Infrastructure which is needed or will be needed in the future, this loss should be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of its usefulness, attractiveness, quantity and quality in a suitable location. Replacement Green Infrastructure should, where possible, improve the performance of the network and widen its function.

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect access to open spaces and opportunities should be sought to protect or enhance the rights of way network and, where applicable, its open environment."

Policy Aims

4.8. A key objective of the *Rushcliffe Local Plan* is to conserve and enhance Rushcliffe's unique landscape character and local distinctiveness. In doing so, the landscape-related policy framework sets out a clear suite of criteria in which to assess the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, in the context of wider social and economic material considerations. In summary therefore, the Proposed Development should:

- be sensitively sited with a design and layout that positively integrates with its local context,
- conserve and enhance landscape character;
- protect and enhance Green Infrastructure;
- protect the landscape setting of listed cultural features (e.g. Listed Buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens);
- protect the openness and characteristics of the Green Belt; and
- not be visually intrusive, whilst protecting the visual amenity of any residents and users of public rights of way.

5. BASELINE ASSESSMENT

5.1. The baseline assessment establishes the existing landscape and visual resources against which the effects of the Proposed Development are predicted. It describes the site and its setting, including landscape character and any designated landscapes in the wider landscape, along with an assessment of sensitivity to change. Visual receptors such as residents, road users and those undertaking recreational activity, are also assessed. Following on from this, a selection of viewpoints is identified to help inform the subsequent assessment of landscape and visual effects.

The Site and its Setting

5.2. As illustrated on the Site Location Plan (see **Figure 1 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings**), the site is located on lands circa 1.3 km south of Gotham and c. 0.75 km north-west of East Leake. Consisting of 16 agricultural fields and additional ancillary areas, the Site measures c. 80.65 hectares (ha) in total, with c. 55.65 ha set out to accommodate the proposed solar arrays. The 16 Fields comprise of two main development compartments, (north and south), separated by Leake New Wood. Both compartments lie on elevated, gently undulating land, ranging between 87 – 96 m AOD.

5.3. The northern compartment extends across several rectilinear agricultural fields, largely contained by mature mixed woodlands. These include Gotham Wood to the north, Cuckoo Bush to the east, Leake New Wood to the south and Crownend Wood to the west. The southern compartment is also largely surrounded by blocks of woodland including Oak Wood, Crow Wood and Ash Spinney. Collectively, these mature woodlands provide a sense of strong sense enclosure to the surrounding composition of open fields and from the wider landscape, they tend to screen most of the site from view, particularly from lower-lying parts.

5.1. The Application Site is in an area with an existing industrial presence. A telecoms mast is located on the southwestern boundary of Field 7, a wood pole line along the boundary between Fields 7 and 8 and within the southern section of Fields 4 and 5, with overhead lines located along the southern boundary of Field 16 and the eastern boundary of Field 15. Charnwood Truck Services (a brownfield site), is located directly southwest of the Field 4 and British Gypsum industrial grounds are located circa 0.49km northeast of Field 11. Additionally, there is a large-scale power station located beyond the A453, circa 1.58km north of the site which can be seen from Bridleway 12 currently (see **Figure 16 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings**).

5.2. The site and surrounding local landscape also accommodate a well-connected network of recreational routes, including a number of Bridleways (BW) which cross or lie adjacent to the Site. These include Gotham BW No. 10, 11 and 12 and West Leake BW's No. 5 and 13. West Leake BW No. 5, also known as the Midshires Way, is also a Long-Distance Walking Association (LDWA) Route bordering the southern boundary of Fields 15 and 16.

5.3. Although dense mature woodlands enclose much of the site, there are some relatively long-distance views looking south-east from Field 15 towards East Leake and from Field 13, views south-west over-looking West Leake. Most other views to the north, east, south and west tend to be curtailed by surrounding woodlands.

5.4. In contrast to the relatively well-settled and busy landscapes in the wider study area, the Site and its immediate surroundings exhibit a largely rural and undeveloped character, with a sense of peace and seclusion. From some sections of footpath/bridleway, nearby broadleaved woodlands contribute to a semi-natural experience.

Landscape Character

5.5. The landscape character of the site and surrounding landscape was initially mapped based on information contained within the *Nottinghamshire Landscape Character Assessment*, (2009) although as information on the key characteristics of all Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) is not freely available, the appraisal has been supplemented with more detailed information based on Landscape Character Units (LCUs), as mapped and described in the *Melton and Rushcliffe Landscape Sensitivity Study: Wind Energy Development,* (2014).

5.6. As illustrated in **Figure 1.1: Appendix A**, the site is entirely located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU that forms part of the larger scale *Nottinghamshire Wolds* LCA. Forming part of the *South Nottingham Farmlands* LCA, the *Ruddington Alluvial Farmland* LCU extends across the lower-lying to the north-east of the site, with the *Soar Valley* LCU (part of the *Trent Valley* LCA) located to the south-west.

Key landscape characteristics

5.7. **Table 1-7** sets out the key characteristics of each LCU (and LCA where relevant) and based on an assessment of susceptibility to change and landscape value, its overall sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

Table 1-7: Landscape Character

LCU (LCA)	Key characteristics	Sensitivity
Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps LCU (part of *Nottinghamshire Wolds* LCA)	• Series of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus. • Hills are the dissected northern extent of a low boulder clay plateau extending from Leicestershire traditionally known as 'The Wolds'. • Rural character although urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the landscape. • Kingston Brook is a localised feature on low ground between hills characterised by riparian woodland and some grazing pasture at its margins.	Medium-high

LCU (LCA)	Key characteristics	Sensitivity
	• Land use is a mixture of woodland, arable and pasture. Arable is on the lower and more gentle slopes, pasture close to rivers, settlements and scarp grassland where the land is steeply sloping precluding machinery from working the land. • Field pattern is mostly modern although pockets of older field systems such as irregular geometric and geometric and those reflecting open fields are present. • Field pattern in places sweeps down the slopes and is a distinctive feature. • Field boundaries are mostly hedgerows on the slopes with fences often present on higher ground. • Woodland is generally on high ground across the hills although there are smaller pockets of woodland on lower ground as establishing scrub and along village fringes/areas of former quarry. • Prominent extensive woodland plantation covers the slopes and high ground, often on steep scarps. • Rides and areas of open land are interspersed between plantation woodland. • Wooded tracks with spring flowering understorey planting along tracks up hills. • Large commuter settlements such as Gotham and East Leake and smaller settlements such as West Leake are nestled at the base of the hills on the fringes of the character area. • Infrequent individual farms within the character area often on the slopes or high ground. A row of individual modern houses is present along Ash Lane. One distinctive red brick and pantile roof farmstead on Bunny Hill is set within gardens with a small orchard. • Buildings are mostly red brick with older properties having red pantile roofs. • Church towers and spires are prominent within a uniform village skyline. • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills. • Small former spring (Wheldon Spring) on Gotham Hill is a localised feature characterised by a depression in the ground and establishing scrub. • Enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across towards Nottingham City and beyond from high ground.	
Ruddington Alluvial Farmland LCU (part of *South Nottingham Farmlands* LCA)	• Large expanse of flat alluvial land characterised by arable farming; low-lying alluvial land subject to waterlogging. • Frequent streams such as Fairham Brook, drainage ditches and dykes often with engineered uniform banks. Ditches are mostly in straight lines and form field boundaries. • Rural farming character although there are frequent urban elements such as urban fringe at Clifton and large villages visible within the landscape.	Low-medium

LCU (LCA)	Key characteristics	Sensitivity
	• Large-scale arable farming with large sometimes expansive monotonous modern field patterns. • Most field patterns are of modern origin although there are older patterns close to Barton Moor which are semi-regular and irregular geometric patterns. • There is a small amount of pasture used as horse present close to village fringes such as the edge of Bunny. • Infrequent woodland, where present, tends to be small geometric plantations or coverts along streams, the railway or around village and farm fringes. Where present woodland is prominent. • Close to Bunny there are frequent ash, willow and poplar trees close to farmsteads and along hedgerow field boundaries. • Field boundaries are either drainage ditches, dykes or hedgerows which are generally fragmented or the remnants of former field patterns. • There is limited built form comprising a few farmsteads which are large in size. • Nucleated villages such as Gotham, Bunny and Bradmore are on the fringes of the LCU on higher ground. These are characterised by older distinctive cores, prominent church spires and scrub along their fringes. • Bunny contains a cluster of distinctive red brick buildings such as Bunny Hall, the Old Vicarage, Ivy Cottage, the Rancliffe Arms public house, the Post Office and the former Schoolhouse within its centre all designed by the same architect Sir Thomas Parkyns which creates a uniform and distinctive character. • Red brick and red pantile roofs are common building materials. • Inaccessible character with few tracks or roads through the character area. • Lanes and roads within the area are often bordered by drainage ditches and rough grassland which emphasises the expansive and open character. • There are open expansive views across the character area due to the general lack of trees, built form and infrequent hedgerows to filter views. • Views are enclosed by a series of hills to the west at Gotham and West Leake, south at Bunny and north at Sharphill Wood and Mickleborough Hill. • Overhead lines are prominent vertical features within the landscape	
Soar Valley LCU (part of *Trent Valley* LCA)	• Low-lying narrow floodplain bordering the River Soar. • Land rises on either side of the valley creating a strong sense of enclosure.	Medium

LCU (LCA)	Key characteristics	Sensitivity
	• The River Soar is a prominent and distinctive feature within the landscape. The river has a meandering channel and gentle often grassed meadow banks and riparian tree planting. • Remote character created through a lack of built form. Woodland, scrub and hedgerow trees reduce the scale and frequency of built form within views. • Urban fringe character in places conveyed by frequent views towards urban edges, the railway embankment, horse paddocks and other fringe uses. • Land use is almost all pasture including rough grazing, rough grassland and horse paddocks. • Mostly an area with intact historic field enclosures. Most are semi-regular and reflect open field systems which are some of the oldest enclosures in Nottinghamshire. • Fields are bounded mostly by hawthorn hedgerows which are often species-rich with frequent hedgerow trees which are mostly ash. • Infrequent woodland, which where present tends to be clustered around village fringes as small • copses and linear belts along field boundaries. • Frequent clusters of hedgerow trees, mostly ash or willow, along the river, tracks and field boundaries create a wooded impression. • Regular pockets of riparian vegetation along the fringes of the River Soar which become more frequent and larger in extent where the land is pasture. • Very little built form on low ground; villages are on higher ground with woodland and mature • trees softening their appearance. • Church spires are prominent features of rooflines e.g. Church of St Michaels. • Built form includes distinctive 'estate' villages at Sutton Bonington and Kingston on Soar. • Built form at Sutton Bonington is set on high ground with a group of conifers on the highest land around a prominent manor house. • Views are channelled along the river valley to higher ground on the valley fringes around Sutton Bonington and Kegworth. • Urban elements become more frequent in views towards the north of the LCU with Ratcliffe on Soar power station and adjacent quarrying prominent. • Overhead lines form prominent vertical features across the landscape often following the line of the river. • The railway is a prominent man-made element set on a raised embankment which provides a local contrast to the surrounding flat land.	

LCU (LCA)	Key characteristics	Sensitivity
Lowland Village Farmlands LCA	Not assessed – outside of ZTV	N/A

Landscape Designations

5.8. There are no statutory landscape designations covering the site or its immediate surroundings although as illustrated in **Figure 1.2: Appendix A**, there are three Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs) and one Country Park within the wider landscape to be considered.

Registered Parks and Gardens

5.9. RPGs are nationally important landscapes whose grounds are consciously laid out for artistic effect and due to their national significance, they are assessed as having a *high* sensitivity to change and are protected through *Policy 28* of the *Rushcliffe Local Plan* (Part 2).

5.10. The following Table sets out a summary description of all landscape designations within the study area.

Table 1-8: Landscape Designations

Designation	Overview	Sensitivity
Kingston Park Pleasure Grounds RPG	Located approximately 1.6 km to the south-west of the site at its closet point, the RPG is situated along the eastern side of the lower reach of the River Soar, close to its confluence with the Trent; this broad sweep of alluvial land forms part of the natural floodplain of the river. The level ground is interrupted by outcrops of Mercia Mudstone, which exist as low hills rising up to ten metres above the floodplain. Kingston Hall, the principal building, is located on the top of one of the hills, commanding views to the south, west and east.	High
Stanford Hall RPG	Stanford Hall and its park lie immediately north of the village of Stanford on Avon, 10km north-east of Rugby. The Hall lies on low, level ground on the west bank of the River Avon, here the county boundary with Northamptonshire. The river forms the principal boundary down the eastern side of the park. East of the Hall the boundary line diverts east of the river, here dammed to form a lake, to follow a minor road into Stanford. Although now only a small hamlet principally south of the church, earthworks north-east of the church show that the village was once far more extensive. Local roads also define the northern and southern limits of the park; otherwise its perimeter follows field edges and streams.	High
Rushcliffe Country Park	Located approximately 4.5 km to the north-east of the site, the park is set in scenic countryside, just south of Ruddington. With a network of over 8 kilometres of footpaths, it provides a wealth of recreational activities; the park won its first Green Flag Award in	Medium

Designation	Overview	Sensitivity
	2007 and has continued this success every year since. This indicates that the park is well-maintained, with excellent facilities.	
Clifton Hall RPG	Not assessed – outside of ZTV	N/A

Settlements

5.11. As a general overview, the site and surrounding landscape is largely unsettled, in contrast to the wider, lower-lying study area, that exhibits a relatively well-settled appearance. To focus the assessment of effects on residents, **Table 1-9** sets out the main settlements within the ZTV that are considered in the LVA. All residential receptors are assessed as having a high susceptibility to change and considering the relatively ordinary scenic quality of their surrounding landscape, a view towards the Site of medium value. Overall sensitivity is therefore *medium-high*.

Table 1-9: Settlements

Settlement	Distance to site (km)	Sensitivity
Gotham	0.7	Medium-high
East Leake	0.75	Medium-high
West Leake	1.0	Medium-high
Ratcliffe on Soar	2.7	Medium-high
Costock	3.0	Medium-high
Kingston on Soar	3.3	Medium-high
Sutton Bonington	3.5	Medium-high
Bunny	3.8	Medium-high
Rempstone	4.1	Medium-high
Clifton	4.5	Medium-high

Recreational Routes

5.12. The site and surrounding local landscape accommodate a well-connected network of recreational routes, including a number of Bridleways (BW) which cross or lie adjacent to the Site. These include Gotham BW No. 10, 11 and 12 and West Leake BW's No. 5 and 13. West Leake BW No. 5, also known as the Midshires Way, is also a Long-Distance Walking Association (LDWA) Route bordering the southern boundary of Fields 15 and 16. Given the relatively large number of people using these routes, recreational users are assessed as having a ***high*** sensitivity.

Table 1-10: Recreational Routes

Route	Distance to site (m)	Sensitivity
BW 1	0	High
BW 3	0	High
BW 5	5	High
BW 8	1100	High
BW 9	700	High
BW 10	5	High
BW 11	5	High
BW 12	5	High
BW 13	5	High
BW 14	0	High
BW 16	5	High
FP 2	600	High
FP 6	5	High
FP 8	600	High
FP 13	400	High

Roads

5.13. Although the wider study area accommodates a well-connected network of busy local, minor and main roads, taking into the account the screening effect of mature woodlands that surround most of the site, an appraisal of each route is not considered necessary as part of this LVA.

Assessment Viewpoints

5.14. Based on the Zone of Theoretical Visibility of the Proposed Development (see **Figure 1.5: Appendix A**) and the preceding identification of landscape and visual receptors, the following ten viewpoints have been agreed with Rushcliffe Borough Council and were selected to undertake an assessment of landscape and visual effects. These represent the typical views experienced by a variety of visual receptors, at varying distances across the study area.

5.15. The viewpoints have been identified as those which are sensitive to change and where open views towards the site are generally experienced. The locations have been carefully selected to demonstrate the worst-case scenario and in identifying these, a detailed analysis of the surrounding landscape was undertaken to establish the likely visibility of the Proposed Development.

Table 1-11: Viewpoint Selection

VP Location	Distance to site	LANDSCAPE		VISUAL	
		LCA	Sensitivity	Receptor	Sensitivity
1. Gotham	1.0km	Ruddington Alluvial Farmland	Low-medium	Residential	High
2. Near Hillside Farm	10m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
3. PRoW South of Wood Lane	10m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
4. South of Wood Lane	10m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
5. PRoW Near Oak Wood	10m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
6. Midshires Way Near Rushcliffe Golf Course	270m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
7. PRoW near Fox Hill	10m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
8. PRoW Near Grange Farm	400m	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Recreational	High
9. East Leake	2.0km	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Residential	High
10. West Leake	2.1km	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Residential	High

6. DESIGN AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

6.1. As described in detail in the **Design and Access Statement** (**Volume 1**), the design of the Proposed Development has taken into account a range of technical, economic and environmental constraints and as part of this, objectives to minimise adverse landscape and visual effects are of fundamental importance. In working towards a high-quality designed development, a review of relevant policy, landscape character and the findings of a field survey and consultation activities, have all been considered during the iterative design process. This section, supplemented by relevant parts of the LEMP, comprises the Landscape Strategy.

Overview of Initial Key Landscape & Visual Issues

6.2. In taking forward a responsive landscape strategy, the following key issues concerning the initial design (i.e. without any landscape mitigation) were identified:

1. Along the recreational routes that pass in close proximity to the north of the site (i.e. BW 11 passing alongside Fields 6-9), there would be extensive views of the Proposed Development experienced in very close proximity, without any intervening screening. As such, visual effects would be *major* and the recreational experience of users would be significantly affected in the longer term.

2. At the northern point of Field 10, the Proposed Development would also be viewed in very close proximity, without any intervening screening. As such, long term visual effects would be *major* and the recreational experience of users would be significantly affected at this important location.

3. Where existing PRoWs pass through the site, (i.e. BWs 10 and 12), the Proposed Development would extend to the edge of these routes where in places, the arrays and associated fencing and CCTV poles would be highly visible, with *major* effects likely to be experienced without mitigation.

4. At Field 15, the Proposed Development would extend to the open edge of the field and from the adjacent route (BW 5), users would experience extensive views of the Proposed Development in very close proximity, without any intervening screening. As such, visual effects would be *major* and the recreational experience of users would be significantly affected in the longer term.

5. At Field 13, the Proposed Development would extend to the open edge of the field and from a nearby section of BW 3, users would experience views of the Proposed Development in very close proximity. Without any mitigation, the recreational experience of users would be significantly affected in the longer term.

Strategic Aims

6.3. In response to the preceding key landscape and visual issues, the following strategic aims have been adopted and embedded into the concept of the landscape mitigation strategy:

1. To help minimise the potential for adverse effects on the wider landscape, the selection of a site that benefits from the enclosure and screening effect of mature surrounding woodlands.
2. When travelling along the network of footpaths and bridleways in and around the site, protect the recreational experience and enjoyment of the countryside that the landscape currently provides to a relatively large number of people.
3. In developing any landscape mitigation measures, conserve and enhance the intrinsic landscape character of the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU, most notably, its prevailing wooded character and the sense of enclosure this provides to composition of intervening open grasslands and fields.

Strategic Measures

6.4. To help ensure that the Proposed Development integrates with its sensitive landscape setting, the following landscape design and mitigation measures have been adopted and embedded into the design of the project.

1. Along the northern edge of Fields 7-10, the Proposed Development has been set back from the route by 20m and illustrated in **Figure 14 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings**, a generous 10m grassland strip would line the route beyond which, a 10m buffer of native woodland and scrub would separate recreational users from the Proposed Development. A similar wooded buffer is also proposed at the northern corner of Field 5.
2. At the northern part of Field 11, a triangular parcel of land would be retained as open grassland (as opposed to solar panels) and along BW 10 to the south, new hedgerow planting is proposed (see **Figure 14: Vol 2**) that would provide some physical separation and visual screening from nearby parts of the Proposed Development.
3. At Field 13, the Proposed Development has been set back from the western field boundary by approximately 180m and as illustrated in **Figure 14 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings,** new hedgerow planting is proposed along the visible western edge.
4. At the north-east corner of Field 15, the footprint of the Proposed Development has been set back from adjacent BWs and along BW 5, the arrays have been set back from the path by a minimum of 25 m, along with intervening new hedgerow and tree planting (see **Figure 14: Vol 2**). Conversely, open views of the countryside from East Leake would also be conserved.

6.5. As detailed in the LEMP (see **Figure 1-14: Appendix A**), the following landscape mitigation measures are proposed that in addition to providing some screening and landscape buffer to the Proposed Development, would help to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of

the semi-natural character often experienced along the network of footpaths and bridleways that pass across or near to the site.

- Trees and woodland – Heavy standard trees (3.5-4.25m in height) including Alder (Alnus glutinosa), Silver Birch (Betula pundula) and Rowan (Sorbus aucuparia). In addition to these, feathered trees will be planted including Field Maple (Acer campestre), Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and Hazel (Corylus avellana) to provide structural diversity and particularly during the early operational phase, some effective intervening screening at eye level.
- Shrubs/scrub (woodland understorey) – Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), Dog rose (Rosa canina), Elder (Sambucus nigra), Holly (Ilex aquifolium) and Goat Willow (Salix caprea). Similar to tree planting, these shrubs would be planted at varying heights to help provide a diverse habitat and an effective visual screen.
- Hedgerows – mature instant hedging is proposed that at 1.2m tall on planting, would soon provide a dense and robust visual screen from nearby footpaths and bridleways (see **Figure 1.14 of TA 1: LVA**).

Strategic Outcomes

6.6. The delivery of the Landscape Strategy and relevant parts of the LEMP would deliver the following quantitative outcomes:

- Hedgerow loss will total 199.5m, with 2,155 linear m of new and compensatory hedgerow to be planted;
- New native woodland planting totalling 12,652.26m^2; and
- Quantities of infill hedgerow to be determined on site prior to construction (gaps of 1m + to be filled in).

6.7. In relation to more qualitative outcomes, the Landscape Strategy would help to protect the countryside experience that the existing network of recreational routes currently provide. Through adopting and embedding the above mitigation measures into the final design, the Proposed Development would not be overbearing on the views of recreational users travelling along the routes and, overall, the characteristic sense of wooded enclosure with open grassland rides and fields would remain largely intact. Although some views of nearby infrastructure would be inevitable in places, the following assessment of landscape and visual demonstrates that in the longer term, **no significant effects are predicted.**

7. ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

Overview

7.1. The remaining part of this LVA addresses the landscape and visual effects predicted during the construction and operational phase of the Proposed Development, taking into account the embedded mitigation measures as described in the preceding section. This is structured as follows:

- Assessment Parameters and Assumptions;
- Zone of Theoretical Visibility;
- Viewpoint Assessment - static landscape and visual effects predicted during the construction and operational phases;
- Construction Phase - prediction of wider landscape and visual effects; and
- Operational Phase - prediction of wider landscape, visual and cumulative effects.

Assessment Parameters and Assumptions

7.1. The assessment aims to predict the worst-case effects based on parameters as currently known and in assessing all landscape and visual effects, the magnitude of effect is evaluated against a baseline of existing conditions. As detailed in the Methodology (see Section 3), effects can be positive or adverse and although this application is not subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), effects predicted to be *moderate-major*, *major* or *substantial* are considered to be *significant*, in the context of the material considerations (see Section 4).

7.2. In undertaking the assessment, the following assumptions are made:

- Based on 61 target points located across the site, the production of ZTV mapping and photomontages are based on a maximum solar panel height of 2.8m above existing site levels. Although the CCTV poles, substations and a substation tower are not considered in the ZTV, the effects of these are predicted in the assessment.
- In predicting effects, it is assumed that surrounding woodlands would remain largely in situ and/or continue to grow.
- In predicting year 10 effects, it is assumed that the proposed planting of native woodlands and hedgerows would be subject to effective establishment and ongoing long-term management.
- Although the effect of mitigation planting is considered at year 10, it should be recognised that after approximately year 5, the growth of hedgerow and woodland planting should be sufficient to provide effective screening for most parts of any nearby

infrastructure and consequently, most of the *significant* effects predicted during year 0, are likely to become *not significant* at around this time.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

7.3. Figure 1-5: Appendix A illustrates the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) and overall, this demonstrates that more than half of the study area is subject to theoretical visibility. In general, this is concentrated on nearly all of the landscape within 2km of the site, including the settlements of East Leake and West Leake to the south of the site and to the north, Gotham.

7.4. Beyond 5km, the ZTV covers nearly all of the landscape from the southern edge of Clifton (located to the north of the study area), to the south-east at Stanford Hall RPG. Most of the landscape to the west is also within theoretical visibility, including the settlements of Sutton Bonnington and Ratcliffe on Soar.

7.5. In considering the ZTV, it is important to note that this does not take into account the screening effect of minor variations in landform, vegetation, built development, and other manmade features. In practice therefore, the relatively extensive coverage of woodland that encloses much of the site (as illustrated in Figure 1-5: Appendix A) would significantly restrict the opportunity for uninterrupted views towards the site from most areas within the ZTV.

Viewpoint Assessment

7.6. The Viewpoint Assessment, as detailed in the following tables, provides an assessment of the static visual effects and the magnitude of landscape effect/change predicted during the operational phase, at ten viewpoint locations (see Table 1-11 and Figure 1.4: Appendix A). As noted in the Baseline Assessment, the selection of viewpoints aims to represent the typical views experienced by a variety of visual receptors, at varying distances across the study area. The locations have also been carefully selected to demonstrate the worst-case scenario of predicted effects from each locality.

7.7. The accompanying annotated photos and montages (see Figures 1.6 to 1.13: Appendix A) have been prepared at A3 size and illustrate the approximate extent of the Proposed Development that is likely to be visible. At each viewpoint location, the images should be viewed at the recommended distance to replicate the view of the Proposed Development that would be experienced in practice. Although no visibility is predicted from viewpoints 9 and 10 (hence no assessment undertaken), the viewpoint photos (Figure 1.10: Appendix A) have been retained to illustrate this point.

7.8. In addition to providing an assessment from specific locations, the viewpoint findings are also used to inform a wider assessment of landscape and visual effects that follows this Viewpoint Assessment. Where landscape effects are identified at each viewpoint, no conclusion on the overall effect are provided as this requires an analysis of the overall extent of any changes experienced across each landscape receptor that is undertaken as part of the wider assessment on landscape character (see Table 1-12).

VIEWPOINT 1 - Gotham (see Figure 1-6: Appendix A)
Grid reference: E453433, N330053
View direction: South-west
Distance to site: 0.975km
Landscape Character Unit: Ruddington Alluvial Farmland
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: At an elevation of approximately 40m AOD, the viewpoint is located at the end of Hall Drive, on the south-western edge of the village of Gotham. Approximately twelve residential dwellings are located along the southern side of Pygall Avenue (that leads in a westerly direction to the right of view) and from these, residents enjoy some south-facing views over intervening farmland towards the site. From some of these dwellings however, back garden fencing etc. provides some low-level screening. As such, the viewpoint represents the views of several nearby residents (primarily from rear facing upper floor rooms), with no other important visual receptors apparent in the local area.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Ruddington Alluvial Farmland* LCU and factors within the locality that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • a relatively large-scale expanse of flat alluvial land; • frequent urban/urban fringe elements and landuses near to the urban edge of Gotham erode rural character; • fragmented field boundaries and fields, often with a lack of management; • a relatively simple landuse pattern of pastures set within a wider mosaic of arable farmland, with sometimes expansive monotonous modern field patterns. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • views south-west towards a low-lying skyline of wooded hills. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the Proposed Development is assessed as ***low-medium***.
Visual sensitivity: Residents - *high* susceptibility. For a relatively small number of residents, the appreciation of the view is of local value but not subject to any landscape designations– *medium* value. With a *high* susceptibility and *medium value*, the overall sensitivity of residents is assessed as ***medium-high***.
Assessment of predicted effects
Construction activity potentially visible:

VIEWPOINT 1 - Gotham (see Figure 1-6: Appendix A)
During the construction phase, nearly all ground-based activity would be screened from view by intervening dense woodlands in close proximity to the site, most notably, Cuckoo Bush Wood (on skyline in centre of view). Existing hedgerow and trees along Wood Lane would also help to screen most activity taking place in nearby fields. However, some activity taking place in Fields 5 and 6, such as the construction of panels and the substation, as well as construction traffic travelling along Wood Lane, are likely to be visible on parts of the skyline. Some activity taking place on southern parts of Field 11 might also be visible.
Parts of proposed development potentially visible (operational): Similar to construction activity, most parts of the Proposed Development during the operational phase would be screened from view by the composition of dense intervening woodlands that enclose much of the site; in total, 12 of the 15 fields would be entirely screened from view. However, the tops of some panels in Fields 5, 6 and 11, including fencing and CCTV poles, along with the upper parts of the substation in Field 5, are likely to be visible on the skyline to the right and left of Cuckoo Bush Wood, as would the substation mast.
Landscape effects (operational): Once constructed, only a very small part of the Proposed Development would be evident in the backdrop to this lower-lying landscape. Largely screened by intervening woodland, it would not appear prominent, nor adversely affect the scale of the landscape, or the land use pattern. Furthermore, a mix of fragmented landuses in and around the urban edge of the village already notably affects rural character and considering the presence of existing prominent overhead lines in the surrounding landscape, the Proposed Development would be much less apparent than other elements of an industrial nature. Initially therefore, the Proposed Development would only result in a minor change, affecting some characteristics and the experience of the landscape slightly and the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small to very small*** at year 0. As boundary vegetation along Wood Lane continues to mature and any gaps planted up as part of the LEMP also grow, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***very small*** at year 10.
Visual effects (operational): The Proposed Development would occupy a moderate proportion of the horizontal view although at this distance, only a very small part of the vertical view. In places, the tops of the panels and associated fencing and CCTV poles would be apparent on parts of the skyline, and possibly the substation roof. The mast would be also be evident on the skyline. However, with the site set back from Wood Lane and most of the Proposed Development screened from view by intervening woodland, the arrays and associated infrastructure would not appear visually prominent, especially when compared to the scale of surrounding woodlands and intervening landuse pattern.

VIEWPOINT 1 - Gotham (see Figure 1-6: Appendix A)		
In general, there would be no change to focus of the view, with little of the view affected. The proposed development fits the intrinsic visual composition and views to the distinctive landform of Winking Hill would be unaffected. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of visual effect is assessed as ***small to very small*** and as intervening boundary vegetation and mitigation planting matures, small to ***very small*** at year 10.		
Summary		
Magnitude of landscape effect	Ruddington Alluvial Farmland	Year 0: **Small to very small** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Very small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Residents	Year 0: **Minor** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Negligible** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 2 - Near Hillside Farm (see Figure 1-6: Appendix A)
Grid reference: E452728, N329377
View direction: South
Distance to site: 0.01km
Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: The viewpoint is located on Wood Lane, at the entrance to Field 5 of the site. Hillside Farm is located in close proximity to the north-west, with a residential dwelling located in quite close on lower-lying ground to the north. Forming part of a wider network of well-connected recreational routes, Wood Lane is a well-used bridleway that passes in a north-west to south-east direction, alongside the northern site boundary. As such, the viewpoint primarily represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction along the lane although similar views are likely to be experienced from parts of the nearby farm. From the dwelling further to the north, views towards Field 5 are likely to be mostly screened from view by intervening rising ground.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and • urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • a landfrom of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus; • a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland; • a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character; • enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and • a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed as ***medium-high.***
Visual sensitivity: Recreational users – *high* susceptibility.

VIEWPOINT 2 - Near Hillside Farm (see Figure 1-6: Appendix A)

For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along Wood Lane, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value.

With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is assessed as ***high***.

Assessment of predicted effects

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, some ground-based activity in Field 5, including the construction of the upper parts of the substation and construction compound, would be visible although due to rising ground that forms a nearby open skyline, most activity in Field 5, as well as activity in the nearby Fields 1-4 and 6, would also be screened from view. Construction traffic would however be visible along parts of Wood Lane.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

In the foreground, some parts of the array would be visible in Field 5 beyond intervening woodland and scrub mitigation planting. In the centre of view, the mast and upper parts of the substation would also be partially visible on the nearby skyline. All other parts of the Proposed Development within other fields, including southern parts of Field 5, would not be visible from this location.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, only a very small part of the Proposed Development would be noticeable in close proximity although at this location, the arrays and associated infrastructure would detract from the open skyline to a degree. With an industrial appearance, the Proposed Development would also contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and at this location, the recreational experience along a very short section of Wood Lane.

Overall, there would be a noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape and at year 0, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small-medium.*** As intervening woodland planting in the nearest part of Field 5 matures, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

Parts of the Proposed Development would appear relatively prominent on the nearby skyline and with views of arrays and associated infrastructure experienced in quite close proximity, a moderate proportion of the view would be affected. With the introduction of a new visual focus and uncharacteristic elements, there would be a noticeable change to the view. Intervening trees and shrubs, including some mature specimens, would however provide some effective screening at year 0.

VIEWPOINT 2 - Near Hillside Farm (see Figure 1-6: Appendix A)		
Furthermore, it should be recognised that open views towards the Proposed Development would only be experienced from a very short section of this part of Wood Lane, as dense mature hedgerows that run along most of the southern edge of Field 5 would tend to screen/heavily filter most views of nearby infrastructure. The long-distance views glimpsed through intervening vegetation to the north of Wood Lane would however be unaffected. At year 0, the magnitude of visual effect is assessed as ***small-medium*** and ***small*** at year 10.		
Summary		
Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Small-medium**(adverse) Year 10: **Small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Moderate to mod-major**(adverse)
		Year 10: **Moderate** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 3 - PRoW South of Wood Lane (see Figure 1-7: Appendix A)
Grid reference: E452991 N328899
View direction: West
Distance to site: 0.01km
Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: The viewpoint is located on a section of PRoW (BW12) that leads in a south-easterly direction from Wood Lane to BW1 , in between Fields 5 and 6. Located within the site, there are 360^0 relatively short-range views over the hedge-lined path and parts of Fields 3-11, towards nearby woodlands. As such, the viewpoint represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction along the path, with similar views experienced along a 200 m section. Despite having a different orientation, similar views over the site are also experienced from a nearby dwelling at Cuckoo Bush Farm, located approximately 250 m to the north.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and • urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • a landfrom of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus; • a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland; • a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character; • enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and • a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the Proposed Development is assessed as ***medium-high***.
Visual sensitivity: Recreational users – *high* susceptibility. For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along the route, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value.

VIEWPOINT 3 - PRoW South of Wood Lane (see Figure 1-7: Appendix A)

With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is assessed as ***high***.

Assessment of predicted effects

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, ground-based activity primarily in Fields 6 and 7, including the construction of a nearby substation and construction compound would be visible in close proximity. Construction traffic along Wood Lane would however be mostly screened from view.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

In all directions, the upper parts of the arrays and intervening fencing and associated CCTV poles in Fields 6 and 7 would be visible above the hedge-lined path. Given the relatively flat landform, any Proposed Development in Fields 3/4 and 8-11 would not however be visible.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be very noticeable in very close proximity and with an industrial appearance, it would notably contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and to some degree, the recreational experience along the PRoW. The sense of wooded enclosure with interspersed open fields would also be interrupted by extensive arrays.

Overall, there would be an obvious change, affecting many key characteristics and the experience of the landscape. At year 0, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***large***, although as field boundary vegetation along the route continues to mature and any gaps planted up as part of the LEMP also grow, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small-medium*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

The Proposed Development would appear relatively prominent in all directions and with views of arrays and associated infrastructure experienced in very close proximity, a very large proportion of the view would be affected. With the introduction of a striking visual focus and uncharacteristic elements introduced, there would be a major change to the view.

However, as the path-lined hedgerows that run along either side of the path continue to grow in height and density, only the tops of the CCTV poles are likely to be visible above the hedge tops. During winter months however, the solar panel would still be discernible through the vegetation. At year 0, the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be ***large***, reducing to ***small-medium*** at year 10.

Summary		
Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Large** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Small-medium** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Major** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Moderate** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 4 - South of Wood Lane (see Figures 1.7 and 1.11)
Grid reference: E453465 N328728
View direction: South-west
Distance to site: 0.01km
Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: The viewpoint is located at South of Wood Lane (BW 11) that continues in a south-eastly direction from Wood Lane, towards Leake New Wood and The Rushcliffe Golf Club. Located in very close proximity to the site in between Fields 10 and 11, there are 180^0 short range open views over Fields 7-11.The viewpoint represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction along the route, with similar views experienced for approximately a 530 m section. To the north of the viewpoint, there are panoramic views from the route over the lower-lying landscape.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and • urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • a landfrom of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus; • a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland; • a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character; • enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and • a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed as ***medium-high***.
Visual sensitivity: Recreational users – *high* susceptibility. For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along the route, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value. With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is therefore assessed as ***high***.
Assessment of predicted effects

VIEWPOINT 4 - South of Wood Lane (see Figures 1.7 and 1.11)

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, ground-based activity in Fields 10 and 11 would be visible in close proximity. Construction traffic along South of Wood Lane would also be visible.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

In an 180^0 view, nearby parts of the arrays, fencing and associated CCTV poles in Fields 10 and 11 would be visible through intervening woodland and scrub mitigation planting although given the relatively flat landform, any Proposed Development in Fields 7-9 would not be visible.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be quite noticeable in close proximity and with an industrial appearance, it would contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and to some degree, the recreational experience along south of Wood Lane. The sense of wooded enclosure with interspersed open fields would also be interrupted by extensive arrays and associated infrastructure.

Overall, there would be a noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, although as intervening woodland planting continues to mature and any gaps planted up as part of the LEMP also establish, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to reduce to ***small*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

The Proposed Development would be noticeable in a wide view and with views of arrays and associated infrastructure experienced in close proximity, a relatively large proportion of the view would be affected. With the introduction of a new visual focus and uncharacteristic elements, there would be a noticeable change to the view. However, it is important to note that intervening trees and shrubs, including some mature specimens, would however provide some effective screening at year 0.

As intervening woodland continues to mature, only a small part of the fencing and arrays in Fields 10 and 11 would be evident although during winter months, the Proposed Development would remain discernible in places through the intervening woodland. At year 0, the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, reducing to **small** at year 10.

Summary		
Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Small-medium** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Moderate to mod-major** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Moderate** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 5 - PRoW Near Oak Wood (see Figure 1-8)
Grid reference: E454134 N328254
View direction: South-west
Distance to site: 0.01km
Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: The viewpoint is located at a section of PRoW (BW 13) that continues in a south-easterly direction from South of Wood Lane, at the north-east corner of Leake New Wood. Situated alongside an open section of an otherwise relatively well-treed route further to the south-east, there are framed short-range views over part of Field 15 The viewpoint represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction along the path.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and • urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • a landfrom of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus; • a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland; • a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character; • enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and • a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed as ***medium-high***.
Visual sensitivity: Recreational users – *high* susceptibility. For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along the route, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value. With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is therefore assessed as ***high***.
Assessment of predicted effects

VIEWPOINT 5 - PRoW Near Oak Wood (see Figure 1-8)

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, ground-based activity in part of Fields 15 would be visible in close proximity, as would construction traffic.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

Nearby parts of the arrays and intervening fencing and associated CCTV poles in Field 15 would be visible although the majority of arrays would appear out of view.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be noticeable in close proximity and with an industrial appearance, it would contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and to some degree, the recreational experience along the route. The sense of wooded enclosure with interspersed open fields would also be interrupted by extensive arrays and associated infrastructure.

Overall, there would be a noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape. At year 0, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***medium***, although as field boundary vegetation along the path continues to mature and any gaps planted up as part of the LEMP also establish, the magnitude of effect is predicted to be ***very small*** to ***small*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

The Proposed Development would appear in very close proximity at a small open section of the path and with views of arrays and associated infrastructure, a *small-medium* proportion of the view would be affected. With the introduction of a new visual focus and uncharacteristic elements introduced, there would be a noticeable change to the view.

However, as any infill boundary vegetation grows in height and density, only a small part of the fencing and arrays in Field 15 would be discernible through intervening vegetation. It should also be recognised that open views towards the Proposed Development would only be experienced from a very short section of this route, as dense mature hedgerows/trees that run alongside BW13 would tend to screen/heavily filter most views of nearby infrastructure. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be ***medium***, reducing to ***very small to small*** at year 10.

Summary		
Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Medium** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Very small to small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Moderate-major** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Minor-moderate** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 6 - Midshires Way Near Rushcliffe Golf Course (see Figures 1-8 and 1-12: Appendix A)

Grid reference: E454742 N327735

View direction: South-west

Distance to site: 0.267km

Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps

Landscape designations: None

Baseline assessment

Context:

The viewpoint is located at an open section of the Midshires Way (junction of BW 5, 13 & 16), to the south of The Rushcliffe Golf Course Club. Situated at the eastern corner of Field 15 there are relatively short-range views over this field and a small part of Field 16 The viewpoint represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction where to the south-east, there are longer range views towards East Leake and the surrounding landscape, forming the main visual focus.

Landscape sensitivity:

The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include:

- Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and
- urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape.

Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include:

- a landform of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus;
- a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland;
- a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character;
- enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and
- a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource.

Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed as ***medium-high***.

Visual sensitivity:

Recreational users – *high* susceptibility.

For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along the route, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value.

With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is assessed as ***high***.

VIEWPOINT 6 - Midshires Way Near Rushcliffe Golf Course (see Figures 1-8 and 1-12: Appendix A)

Assessment of predicted effects

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, ground-based activity in Field 15 and a small part of 16 would be visible in quite close proximity, as would construction traffic.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

Nearby parts of the arrays, fencing and associated CCTV poles in Field 15 would be visible above intervening hedgerow although the majority of arrays would appear out of view.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be noticeable in close proximity and with an industrial appearance, it would contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and to some degree, the recreational experience along the route. The sense of wooded enclosure with interspersed open fields would also be interrupted by extensive arrays and associated infrastructure.

Overall, there would be a noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, although as intervening hedgerow planting along the eastern edge of Field 15 matures, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

The Proposed Development would appear quite prominent in relatively close proximity, with relatively extensive views of arrays and associated infrastructure occupying a large proportion of the view. With the introduction of a new visual focus and uncharacteristic elements, there would be a noticeable change to the view. The more important long-range view to the south-east overlooking East Leake would however be unaffected.

As extensive mature hedge planting along the entire north-western edge of this field would provide some effective visual screening at year 0, the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, and as boundary vegetation matures, ***small*** at year 10.

Summary

Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Small-medium** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Moderate to mod-major** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Moderate** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 7 – ProW Near Fox Hill (see Figures 1-9 and 1-13: Appendix A)
Grid reference: E453990, N327181
View direction: North-east
Distance to site: 0.01km
Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: The viewpoint is located at an open section of PRoW (BW 5), where it meets with FP6 and from here, there are relatively short-range views over Field 16. The residential properties at Fox Hill are located in quite close proximity to the east although from here, intervening trees and buildings interrupt views towards the site. The viewpoint represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction along the route.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and • urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • a landform of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus; • a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland; • a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character; • enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and • a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed as ***medium-high***.
Visual sensitivity: Recreational users – *high* susceptibility. For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along the route, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value.

VIEWPOINT 7 – ProW Near Fox Hill (see Figures 1-9 and 1-13: Appendix A)

With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is assessed as ***high***.

Assessment of predicted effects

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, ground-based activity in Field 16 would be visible in quite close proximity, as would construction traffic.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

Nearby parts of the arrays and intervening fencing and associated CCTV poles in Field 16 would be visible above intervening hedgerows although the majority of arrays would appear out of view.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be noticeable in close proximity and with an industrial appearance, it would contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and to some degree, the recreational experience along the route. The sense of wooded enclosure with interspersed open fields would also be interrupted by extensive arrays and associated infrastructure.

Overall, there would be a noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small-medium*** although as intervening hedgerow planting along the southern and eastern edges of Field 16 matures, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to reduce to ***small*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

The Proposed Development would appear quite prominent in close proximity, with relatively extensive views of arrays and associated infrastructure occupying a large proportion of the view. With the introduction of a new visual focus and uncharacteristic elements introduced, there would be a noticeable change to the view.

However, the mature hedge planting would provide some visual screening at year 0 and the view to the south-east would be unaffected. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, reducing to ***small*** at year 10 as intervening boundary vegetation matures.

Summary

Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Small-medium** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Moderate to mod-major** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Moderate** (adverse)

VIEWPOINT 8 - PRoW Near Grange Farm (see Figure 1-9: Appendix A)
Grid reference: E453346 N327776
View direction: North-east
Distance to site: 0.395km
Landscape Character Unit: Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps
Landscape designations: None
Baseline assessment
Context: The viewpoint is located at an open section of PRoW (BW 3), to the south-west of Field 13 and from here, there are relatively short-range views to a ridgeline on Field 13. Grange Farm is located in quite close proximity to the east although from here, intervening woodland appears to screen views towards the site. The viewpoint therefore represents the views of recreational users travelling in either direction along the route.
Landscape sensitivity: The viewpoint is located within the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and factors that indicate a *lower* sensitivity include: • Overhead lines are prominent on low ground between hills; and • urban elements such as villages, power station, industry and quarrying are frequent in the surrounding landscape. Factors which indicate a *higher* sensitivity include: • a landfrom of prominent individual hills with steep sometimes scarp slopes and broad plateaus; • a sense of wooded enclosure with rides and areas of open land interspersed between plantation woodland; • a prevailing rural and largely undeveloped character; • enclosed channelled views on low ground between hills with extensive panoramic views across lower-lying landscapes; and • a well-connected network of footpaths and bridleways provide a locally important recreational resource. Taking into account the above factors, sensitivity to the proposed development is assessed as ***medium-high***.
Visual sensitivity: Recreational users – *high* susceptibility. For a relatively large number of walkers and other recreational users travelling along the route, the appreciation of the view is important but not subject to any landscape designations – *medium-high* value.

VIEWPOINT 8 - PRoW Near Grange Farm (see Figure 1-9: Appendix A)

With a *high* susceptibility and *medium-high* value, the overall sensitivity of recreational users is assessed as ***high***.

Assessment of predicted effects

Construction activity potentially visible:

During the construction phase, ground-based activity in part of Field 13 would be visible in quite close proximity above intervening hedgerow although most activity would be screened from view by intervening landform.

Parts of proposed development potentially visible:

Nearby parts of the arrays and intervening fencing and associated CCTV poles in Field 13 would be visible although the majority of arrays in this Field would appear out of view, due to the intervening rising ground across the site.

Landscape effects:

Once constructed, the Proposed Development would be noticeable in close proximity and with an industrial appearance, it would contrast with the prevailing rural character of the local landscape, and to some degree, the recreational experience from a small section along the route. The sense of wooded enclosure with interspersed open fields would also be interrupted by extensive arrays and associated infrastructure.

Overall, there would be a noticeable change, affecting some key characteristics and the experience of the landscape. At year 0 therefore, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, although as intervening hedgerow planting along the western edge of Field 13 matures, the magnitude of landscape effect is predicted to reduce to ***small*** at year 10.

Visual effects:

The Proposed Development would appear quite prominent in quite close proximity, with relatively extensive views of arrays and associated infrastructure occupying a moderate proportion of the view. With the introduction of a new visual focus and uncharacteristic elements, there would be a noticeable change to the view.

However, mature hedge planting along the western edge would provide some visual screening at year 0 when the magnitude of visual effect is predicted to be ***small-medium***, reducing to ***small*** at year 10 as intervening boundary vegetation matures.

Summary

Magnitude of landscape effect	Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Year 0: **Small-medium** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Small** (adverse)
Visual effect	Recreational users	Year 0: **Moderate to mod-major** (adverse)
		Year 10: **Moderate** (adverse)

Construction Effects

Direct

7.9. During the construction phase, the Proposed Development would result in the loss of approximately 55.65 ha of agricultural fields (to accommodate the solar arrays) but as detailed in the LEMP, grassland in between the panels would be subject to ongoing management. The Site would not be subject to any significant ground levelling although as the site exhibits some rural character, the loss of open space would be very noticeable and consequently, direct landscape and visual effects are judged to be Moderate-major (adverse).

Indirect

7.10. As evidenced in the preceding Viewpoint Assessment and associated annotated photos and montages, ground-based activity from most locations would be screened from view by intervening woodland from nearly all locations within the wider study area. However, recreational users travelling along the network of footpaths that traverse parts of the Site and its boundaries would experience relatively extensive views of the construction of the solar arrays and associated infrastructure, occupying a large proportion of their view. Although only temporary, effects on recreational users are judged to be Moderate-major (adverse).

7.11. Visual effects on the residents of up to four dwellings located in close proximity to the Site (namely Cuckoo Bush Farm, Fox Hill Farm, Stone House and The Cottage) are also likely to be *significant*, largely as a result of relatively widespread views of construction activity. From Fox Hill Farm and The Cottage, however, intervening trees would tend to filter views from the main dwelling and as such, significant effects are more likely to be only experienced from parts of the curtilage.

General Landscape and Visual Effects (operational)

7.12. This section sets out an assessment of the likely long-term landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development that are precited during its operational phase. In addition to desk and field work undertaken across the study area, this has been informed by the findings of the preceding Viewpoint Assessment.

7.13. As the Viewpoint Assessment aims to consider the worst-case scenario (through selecting locations where the proposed development is likely to be most visible in the locality), it is unlikely that the magnitude of effect in any locality would be any greater than those predicted in the Viewpoint Assessment.

7.14. Following on from the Baseline Assessment (see Section 5), the following Table sets out an assessment of effects (at year 10) on the main landscape and visual receptors within the wider study area.

Table 1-12: Assessment of General Landscape and Visual Effects

GENERAL ASSESSMENT			
LANDSCAPE			
Receptor	*Sensitivity*	*Magnitude of effect*	*Effect*
Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps	Medium-high	Located within the *Leicestershire Wolds* LCA, most of the LCU is within theoretical visibility although as described elsewhere, dense mature woodlands that surround most of the site would restrict the extent of effects to a relatively small part of this landscape. As detailed in the Viewpoint Assessment, the magnitude of landscape effect from most viewpoints is predicted to be *small-medium* at year 0 although in talking into account the effects of landscape mitigation measures, this would reduce to *small* at year 10. Considering these factors, the overall magnitude of effect at year 10 is judged to be *small to very small*.	*Moderate-minor*
Ruddington Alluvial Farmland	Low-medium	Located within the *South Nottingham Farmlands* LCA, most of the landscape is within theoretical visibility although in taking into account the screening effect of intervening woodlands, most notably Cuckoo Bush Wood, the Proposed Development would be difficult to discern through the trees. As such, the magnitude of effect at year 10 is judged to be very *small*.	*Negligible*
Soar Valley	Medium	Located within the *Trent Valley* LCA, it is very likely that all parts of the Proposed Development would be screened from view by dense woodland that surrounds the site (primarily Gotham Wood and Kingston Spinney) and a wider composition of intervening woodlands and other vegetation. As such, the magnitude of effect at year 10 is judged to be *none.*	*None*

GENERAL ASSESSMENT			
Kingston Park Pleasure Grounds RPG	High	Considering the screening effect of intervening woodlands and that from Kingston Hall, (the principal building located on the top of one of the hills), commands views to the south, west and east, no changes to the landscape setting are likely to be evident.	*None*
Stanford Hall RPG	High	The northern part of the grounds are heavily wooded and no changes to its setting are therefore predicted.	*None*
Rushcliffe Country Park	Medium	At this distance, it is very unlikely that any parts of the Proposed Development would be discernible and as such, no changes are predicted.	*None*
VISUAL			
BW 12	High	At viewpoint 3, a *small* change is predicted along a 200 m section although as there would be no or little visibility from the route to the south, the overall effect is judged to be *small to very small.*	*Moderate-minor*
BW 10	High	From within the site, effects would be similar to viewpoint 4 but in considering the screening effect of intervening woodland from sections to the north of the site, the overall magnitude of effect at year 10 is judged to be *very small.*	*Moderate-minor*
BW 5	High	Viewpoints 6 and 7 are located on this route and a *small* magnitude of effect is predicted from both locations. Considering that visibility from sections to the south of the site is limited, the overall magnitude of effect at year 10 is judged to be *small to very small*.	*Moderate-minor*
BW 11	High	From viewpoint 4, a *small* magnitude of change is predicted although from sections to the east, most or all of the site would not be visible due to screening effect of intervening woodland. Overall, therefore, the magnitude of effect at year 10 is judged to be *small-very small.*	*Moderate-minor*
BW 13	High	Although the long-term magnitude of effect at viewpoint is predicted to be *medium-large*, most of the route benefits from intervening hedgerow and trees and as such, the overall magnitude of effect is predicted to be *small*.	*Moderate*

GENERAL ASSESSMENT			
Settlements	Medium-high	From all main settlements within the wider study area ZTV, (i.e. Gotham, East Leake, West Leake, Ratcliffe on Soar, Costock, Kingston on Soar, Sutton Bonington, Bunny, Rempstone and Clifton), the Proposed Development would be screened from view from nearly locations although from some dwellings, parts might be just discernible where any uninterrupted open views are available.	*Negligible-none*

Residential dwellings

7.1. From up to four residential dwellings at Cuckoo Bush Farm, Fox Hill Farm, Stone House and The Cottage, it is likely that from some upper floor rooms, effects are likely to remain significant in the long term but from lower floors, it is likely that once intervening mitigation planting matures, effects would be *not significant* from most parts of the curtilage. Intervening trees at the Cottage and Fox Hill Farm would also tend to filter views from the main dwelling.

Cumulative Landscape and Visual Effects (operational)

7.2. In relation to cumulative effects, the following proposed solar farms (within a 5km radius) have been identified as having the potential to interact with the Proposed Development:

1. Glebe Farm (ref. 21/02163/SCREIA) – proposed solar farm and battery storage on land 1.5 km east of access track and 0.7 km north-west of access track;
2. Highfields Farm (ref. 21/02318/SCREIA) – proposed solar farm on land 2.5 km to the east;
3. Church Farm (ref. 21/02038/SCREIA) – proposed solar farm on land 1.1 km to the south-west; and
4. Sharpley Solar Farm (ref. 21/00703/FUL) – consented solar farm located 1.2km to the south-east.

7.3. In considering the potential for cumulative effects, it should be recognised that given the early stages of most other project development, the baseline scenario is very uncertain and consequently, the potential for significant effects would be considered in more detail as these projects go forward.

7.4. In any case, taking into account the screening effect of existing woodlands that surround the site and the additional hedge and woodland planting proposed as part of the Landscape Strategy, any combined intervisibility in practice is predicted to be very small and as such, *significant* cumulative effects are considered to be *very unlikely* at this stage.

Post Decommissioning

7.5. The landscape of the Application Site will have returned to its previous use with the proposed planting (which will have matured) retained. This will result in a Minor beneficial landscape effect at the site/local level.

8. CONCLUSION

Summary of effects

8.1. As evidenced throughout this LVA, no *significant* effects (in context of material considerations) are predicted on any landscape character types or landscape designations within the study area. Of particular note, the site is located in the *Gotham and West Leake Wooded Hills and Scarps* LCU and in context of its prevailing wooded character interspersed with rides and areas of open land, the Proposed Development would generally conserve its integrity and associated rural quality.

8.2. Short term *significant* visual effects are only predicted during the early operational phase (i.e. year 0) at viewpoints 3 and 5; as both viewpoints are located on recreational routes within or within very close proximity to the site, nearby views of the arrays and associated infrastructure would tend to remain highly visible until mitigation planting matures. In the longer term however, no *significant* effects are predicted at any of the assessment viewpoints, or on the users of any recreational routes in the locality.

8.3. The very limited nature of *significant* effects identified in this LVA is largely due to the implementation of the Landscape Strategy and associated parts of the LEMP that as detailed in Chapter 6, would deliver 2,155 linear m of additional hedgerows and 12,652.26m^2 of new native woodland. Of particular relevance, all of the woodland mitigation planting would include a good proportion of mature tree and scrub specimens to help ensure that the Proposed Development benefits from an effective screen during the early operational phases. Most of the new hedgerows would also be mature plantings, in order to provide an instant dense hedgerow at year 0. As demonstrated by the findings of the Viewpoint Assessment (see Section 7), these extensive mitigation measures would help to protect the countryside experience that the existing network of recreational routes currently provide.

8.4. Although some views of the Proposed Development from nearby recreational routes are inevitable, particularly through intervening vegetation during winter months and CCTV poles above hedgerows, this LVA has clearly demonstrated that visibility in practice is very localised and from almost all of the wider study area, including main settlements and roads, the Proposed Development would be screened from view by dense mature woodlands that surround the site, and intervening built development and landcover in the wider landscape.

8.5. In relation to the landscape policy context therefore, (see Section 4), the findings of this LVA demonstrate that the Proposed Development:

- is sensitively sited with a design and layout that positively integrates with its local context;
- conserves and enhances local landscape character;

- protects and enhances Green Infrastructure;
- protects the landscape setting of listed cultural features (e.g. Listed Buildings, Historic Parks & Gardens);
- protects the openness and characteristics of the Green Belt; and
- is not visually intrusive, whilst protecting the visual amenity of any residents and users of public rights of way.