STATERA
BALANCING THE GRID

East Claydon Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Environmental Statement

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

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5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL AMENITY

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The Applicant is seeking consent for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) within four agricultural fields on land five hundred metres south of the East Claydon National Grid Substation. The site location is outlined in **Figures 5.1a and 5.1b** (**Appendix 5.1**). This chapter determines the landscape and visual effects that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development alongside proposals for mitigation measures to avoid, prevent, reduce, offset or compensate for any significant negative effects.

Purpose of the Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA)

5.1.2 The main objectives of the LVIA are:

- To describe the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, evaluate its sensitivity to change and, taking into account the magnitude of change, assess the effect that the proposal would have on the local landscape character.
- To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development), evaluate their sensitivity to change and, taking into account the magnitude of change, assess the effect that the proposal would have on visual amenity. Residential visual amenity issue is excluded from this LVIA because the Proposed Development is considered to be sufficiently distant from residential properties that it will not fall into the threshold of requiring an assessment.
- To identify landscape elements associated with the Site, evaluate their sensitivity to change and, taking into account the magnitude of change, assess the effect the proposals would have on landscape elements.
- To identify mitigation measures and opportunities for landscape character and visual amenity enhancement, in order to mitigate, offset or reduce the predicted adverse effects.

5.1.3 The LVIA assesses the effects of the construction phase, the operational phase and the decommissioning phase. The effects are assessed at Year 1, immediately post completion, and at Year 10 and 20 to take into account proposed mitigation and enhancement measures. The assumed vegetative growth is taken as 0.3 m per year.

5.2 Legislative And Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Framework December 2023

5.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. There are three overarching objectives of which (c) is the most relevant in relation to this assessment:

> *" c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy".*

5.2.2 The following Sections provide further guidance:

14, Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and section 15, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment are relevant to the landscape and the proposed development.

5.2.3 Section 14, Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change states:

> Para 159*. "New development should be planned for in ways that: a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards. 160. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should: a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, and their future re-powering and life extension, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed appropriately (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts); b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for colocating potential heat customers and suppliers".*

5.2.4 Section 15, Conserving and enhancing the natural environment states:

Para 180, "*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate. 181. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework62; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries*.

5.2.5 Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is also relevant.

Landscape Designations

5.2.6 There are no international or national landscape designations relating to the application Site or its immediate surroundings. The Site is not in a National Park or an AONB and does not lie within the settings of such areas. Quainton Hill, 4km to the south has a local

designation; Area of Attractive Landscape. The Site and immediate area is classified as Countryside within the Local Plan. Landscape designations are plotted on **Figure 5.4, Appendix 5.1.**

5.2.7 The Site and immediate surroundings are not subject to any Tree Preservation Orders.

Local Plan Policy

5.2.8 The current development plan is the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 – 2033. Policies relevant to landscape and visual issues are listed below with the key points précised:

BE1 Heritage assets

5.2.9 Which states that the historic environment, unique in its character, quality and diversity across the Vale is important and will be preserved or enhanced.

BE2 Design of new development

5.2.10 General development principles including the effect on important public views and skylines.

BE3 Protection of the amenity of residents,

5.2.11 Including an overbearing effect on their view

NE1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

5.2.12 A net gain in biodiversity on minor and major developments will be sought.

NE2 River and stream corridors

5.2.13 Development proposals must not have an adverse impact on the functions and setting of any watercourse and its associated corridor.

NE4 Landscape character and locally important landscape

"Development must recognise the individual character and distinctiveness of particular landscape character areas set out in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), their sensitivity to change and contribution to a sense of place. Development should consider the characteristics of the landscape character area by meeting all of the following criteria:

- *Minimise impact on visual amenity*
- *Be located to avoid the loss of important on-site views and off-site views towards important landscape features.*
- *Respect local character and distinctiveness in terms of settlement form and field pattern, topography and ecological value.*
- *Carefully consider spacing, height, scale, plot shape and size, elevations, roofline and pitch, overall colour palette, texture and boundary treatment (walls, hedges, fences and gates).*
- *Minimise the impact of lighting to avoid blurring the distinction between urban and rural areas, and in areas which are intrinsically dark and to avoid light pollution to the night sky.*
- *Ensure that the development is not visually prominent in the landscape."*

NE8 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands

5.2.14 Development should seek to enhance and expand Aylesbury Vale's tree and woodland resource, including native black poplars.

5.2.15 Developers should aspire to retain a 10m (with a minimum of 5m) natural buffer around retained and planted native hedgerows (100m with a minimum 25 m natural buffer around woodlands) for the benefit of wildlife, incorporating a dark corridor with no lighting.

C3 Renewable Energy

5.2.16 All development schemes should look to achieve greater efficiency in the use of natural resources.

> *"Planning applications involving renewable energy development will be encouraged provided that there is no unacceptable adverse impact, including cumulative impact, on the following issues:*
>
> - *Landscape and biodiversity including designations, protected habitats and species.*
> - *Visual impacts on local landscapes.*
> - *The historic environment including designated and non-designated assets and their settings.*
> - *Residential amenity."*

Summary of Planning Policy

5.2.17 The NPPF sets out overarching aims to ensure development is appropriately located, well designed and sustainable. In summary, the policies set out to improve the overall quality of an area, establish a strong sense of place and create an attractive and comfortable location, responding to the local character. National policies seek to conserve, protect and enhance valued landscapes and provide protection of scenic areas within nationally designated areas such as AONBs.

5.2.18 The Aylesbury Vale Local Plan incorporates strategies to respect and compliment the important features, elements and characteristics of the rural landscape, the visual setting of settlements and important views, avoid visually intrusive development and promote good quality design.

Ecological Designations

5.2.19 No internationally statutorily designated sites were identified within 10km of the Site as part of the desktop study and no statutorily or non-statutorily designated sites were identified within 2km of the Site as part of the desktop study.

5.2.20 Land off Hogshaw Road, Granborough is located west of Granborough, surrounded by arable fields. The Site is bound by hedgerows to the north, east, and south, whilst Claydon Brook runs along the north-western boundary. The wider landscape is dominated by arable fields, with a network of connecting hedgerows, scattered with small villages. The National Grid East Claydon substation is located approximately 0.6km north-west of the Site.

5.2.21 The Site lies within the Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zones (Natural England, 2019) of Sheephouse Wood SSSI and Finmere Wood SSSI. All planning applications including solar schemes with a footprint greater than 0.5ha will require LPA consultation with Natural England on the likely ecological risks associated with the development.

Heritage designations

5.2.22 There are no designated heritage assets on the Site and none in the immediate vicinity. The nearest lie in Granborough (500m to the east) and East Claydon (1.3 km to the west).

5.2.23 A separate assessment of heritage effects has been produced for this ES.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Open Access Land

5.2.24 No PRoW pass through the Site but there is a good network of rural footpaths locally including two which run just outside the hedges which form the northeast and southeast boundaries of the Site. PRoW also traverse the distant high ground which surrounds the Site. The effect of the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of walkers and riders is assessed in this report. The PRoW are identified on **Figure 5.5** by their Definitive Map reference codes.

5.2.25 There are no areas of Open Access land near the Site or within the valley landscape within the ZVI.

5.2.26 Designations are plotted on **Figure 5.4 (Appendix 5.1).**

Current and potential planning consents

5.2.27 Consent has been granted for a large solar farm, known as Land at Tuckey Farm, to the northeast of the Site (19/00983/APP). The closest part of the solar farm will lie 840m northwest of the Site; construction is yet to start. This will also represent a significant area of electrical infrastructure within a rural landscape and so the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the solar farm and the Proposed Development are assessed. The extent of the solar farm is set out in **Figure 5.13: Cumulative effects.**

5.2.28 There is also a proposal for a large 500MW solar farm and battery storage scheme near the Site, known as the Rosefield Solar Farm. The first round of public consultation has begone but this will be a NISC application and a decision is unlikely to be made before mid 2026. For completeness its preliminary extent is shown on Figure 5.13, but given the long determination period it is not assessed as part of the cumulative effects.

5.2.29 HS2 is currently under construction, the route passes to the west of the Site but at its closest point is 5.1km to the southwest. There is no inter-visibility with HS2 but it is a major development within the locality and it potentially has a sequential effect since people moving west through the landscape have to cross it.

Consultation

5.2.30 Screening, scoping and pre-application opinions were sought with Buckinghamshire Council and included a visit to the Site with the case officer and Senior Landscape Officer on the 23rd March 2023. The key points from these consultations were set out in the consultation response dated. They are:

Natural England (NE)

5.2.31 NE made the following points in a letter dated 28th July 2023:

> *The ES should assess the impacts of the proposal on any ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, and the scope to avoid and mitigate for adverse impacts. It should also consider opportunities for enhancement.*
>
> *Cumulative and in-combination effects should be assessed*.

5.2.32 Tree Officer

The following comments were received from the Buckinghamshire CouncilTree Officer:

The level of loss is unlikely to be so significant that it cannot reasonably be compensated for through the provision of new woodland and tree belts to screen the development, but limited information is available within the scoping report.

A major constraint to development would be the presence of veteran or ancient trees within the site, which fall under the parameters of para 180 of the NPPF. An Arboricultural Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment will help inform of the existing constraints to this effect.

Policy NE8 of the VALP states that development must provide a buffer of 5m from hedgerows, which is particularly pertinent to the proposed access track which currently abuts these existing hedgerows.

The location is rural and so species composition should remain largely native and include provision for large maturing species. Any woodland creation or new tree planting must be supported by a management plan to ensure the trees successful establishment, this will include watering requirements.

Land build up (top soil relocation) may be detrimental to the longevity of retained trees and as such should be avoided in the immediate vicinity of the root protection area of these features. Where service routes necessitate tree loss and the trees do not require removal for any other reason, consideration should be given to the use of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), with send/received pits. located outside of the root protection areas of these features; this is key to avoid their fragmentation.

5.2.33 The Proposed Development seeks to be compliant with all the issues raised. No veteran trees have been recorded on the Site.

5.3 Methodology

5.3.1 This assessment has followed guidance set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013). The full method of assessment is presented in **Appendix 5.3.** The assessment seeks to identify effects which are either so beneficial or so adverse that they should be a significant consideration in determining the application. The levels of effect and their significance are set out in **Table 5.1.**

Table 5.1: Levels of effect and their significance

Level of effect	
Major adverse	The Proposed Development will cause substantial degradation of the landscape character/landscape features/existing views. These adverse effects are key factors in the decision-making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national or regional importance that are likely to suffer a most damaging impact and loss of resource integrity. **This is a Significant effect in terms of the ES.**
Moderate – Major adverse	The Proposed Development will cause readily noticeable degradation of the landscape character/landscape features/existing views. These adverse effects are key factors in the decision-making process. These

	effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of national or regional importance, however, a major change in a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category. **This is a Significant effect in terms of the ES.**
Moderate adverse	The Proposed Development will cause a noticeable degradation of the landscape character/elements/existing views. These adverse effects may be important but, are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such factors may influence decision-making if they lead to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor.
Minor adverse	The Proposed Development will cause small degradation of the landscape character/elements/ existing views. These adverse effects may be raised as local factors. They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process.
Negligible adverse	A barely perceptible Adverse change to the landscape/view.
Neutral	Adverse effects are equally offset by Beneficial effects, but the effects must be of a similar nature and/or the resulting effect, while readily noticeable, is unlikely to be perceived as significantly different to the existing situation, for example a rural landscape replaced with a rural landscape.
Negligible Beneficial	A barely perceptible Beneficial change to the landscape/view.
Minor Beneficial	The Proposed Development will cause a small improvement to the landscape character/elements/ existing views.
Moderate Beneficial	The Proposed Development will cause a noticeable improvement to the landscape character/elements/ existing views.
Moderate-Major Beneficial	The Proposed Development will cause a readily noticeable improvement to the landscape character/elements/ existing views. **This is a Significant effect in terms of the ES.**
Major Beneficial	The Proposed Development will cause substantial improvement in landscape character/elements/existing views. In making a decision about the proposal this advantageous effect may be considered to compensate to some degree for other, non-landscape, adverse effects. **This is a Significant effect in terms of the ES.**

Data Collection

5.3.2 Existing background Information on the study area has been sourced from:

- Ordnance Survey – 1:50,000 and1:25,000 scale maps.
- Natural England – Character Map of England.
- Natural England – Countryside Character Initiative Website.
- Magic Website (www.magic.gov.uk).
- Buckinghamshire Council website.
- Google Earth and measuring tools within it.

Limitations to Survey Methods

5.3.3 Site visits have been undertaken on the 18.1.22, 01.02.23, 03.03.23, 03.04.23 and 13.06.23 enabling assessments to be made when the deciduous vegetation is in leaf and out of leaf. At time of the surveys visibility was good. References in the assessment to 'winter' refer to the period when deciduous vegetation is out of leaf (typically December to early-May) and 'summer' when deciduous vegetation is in leaf (Late May to November).

Photography and Imaging

5.3.4 Photographs illustrating views from each viewpoint were taken using a Sony Alpha 7 digital camera with a Sony SEL200F 18 lens, set at a focal length of 50mm. The camera has a full frame sensor, and is set level both vertically and horizontally, 1.5m above ground from publicly accessible locations. For each view two photographs are presented, one a panorama to show the view in context. This is taken as a continuous pan with at a focal length of 50mm set in portrait format.

5.3.5 The second photograph is a single frame shot taken at a 50mm in landscape format. If this image page is printed at A3 the view is of a similar scale and extent to that which the human eye perceives, if the A3 sheet is held 400 – 500m in front of the viewer.

5.3.6 Accurate Verifiable Visualisations have been produced for some views and these have been produced in accordance with Landscape Institute published Technical Guidance Note (06/19) for the 'Visual Representation of Development Proposals' using a Nikon D750 camera with an 18 – 55mm lens, F4. The visualisations are presented in Appendix B.

Determination of the study area

5.3.7 The extent of the study area has been determined by generating a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). The ZTV identifies the potential extent of visibility of the Proposed Development by combining a digital model of the Proposed Development with a digital 3D topographical model. The result is shown in **Figure 5.4, Appendix 5.1** and shows that the Proposed Development will be potentially visible from some areas of the countryside within a less than 5km radius of the Site. The study area for both landscape and visual effects is set at 5km radius from the Site.

5.4 Landscape Baseline Conditions

Description of the Site and the immediate surroundings

The Site

5.4.1 The BESS facility and landscape areas will be located within four fields south of Claydon Brook, which are currently in an arable crop rotation. An underground cable will pass through fields north of Claydon Brook to connect the BESS to the East Claydon Substation (these fields will be returned to agriculture once the cable has been laid). The fields are bounded by substantial trimmed hedges, some of which support mature trees. The northwest boundaries of Fields 2, 3 and 4 border the Claydon Brook and although there are no hedges on the southeast side of the brook, the far bank supports a line of mature trees. The fields are featureless apart from an overhead high voltage electricity line which passes over Field 2. A support tower lies on the northern edge of Field 2. The Field numbers are referred to in the text and are identified on Figures **5.1a** and Figure **5.6.**

5.4.2 Photographs of the four fields are presented in Figure **5.7** and the locations where they were taken are shown on **Figure 6.** Photographs of the fields are presented in **Figure 5.7.**

Land to the west

5.4.3 Farmland lies to the west of the Site and Claydon Brook. It rises up to the top of the valley side where the villages of East Claydon and Botolph Claydon lie. The closest part of East Claydon lies 1.2km to the northwest of the Site and Botolph Claydon 1.5km to the west. A high voltage overhead electricity transmission line runs across the base of the slope just north of the brook, heading southwest from the East Claydon Substation. Sion Hill Farm lies 430m northwest of the Site on the midslope. Three PRoW pass through this area of farmland, including the North Buckinghamshire Way (also part of the Midshires Way). Views from these PRoW are assessed.

Land to the south

5.4.4 The flat arable farmland of the valley floor extends for 2.2km south of the Site before rising up to Quainton Hill, which is mainly grazing land and predominately sheep. The only settlement in this area comprises a few scattered farmsteads and dwelling. The Hogshaw Road, a minor lane, heads east-west through the farmland, 830m south of the Site. Plantations and lines of large stature floodplain trees such as polar and willow are a feature of the landscape. PRoW pass through the farmland to the south and ascend the hills to the south, which afford views over the Site.

Land to the east

5.4.5 The flat arable farmland in the valley floor also continues east of the Site as far as the Hogshaw Road, which in this area is heading northeast towards Granborough. East of Hogshaw Road the land rises slightly to form two local high spots, upon which lie the village of Granborough (0.5km to the east at its closest) and North Marston (2.3km to the southeast). The two villages are linked by the Marston Road, which lies 1km to the east of the Site at its closest point. A few properties on the western edge of Granborough afford views of the Site.

Land to the north

5.4.6 The East Claydon National Grid Substation lies 380m north of the main permanent Site, occupying around 9.5 hectares. It is locally prominent in the landscape. The East Claydon Road lies immediately to the north of it, with farmland continuing north, rising up the side of the valley. Several fields to the north will contain solar panels if the Tuckey solar farm is built out. Apart from a few farmsteads there are no residential properties within this tract of farmland. The town of Winslow lies 2.1km of the northeast of the Site and although it is elevated compared to the Site, only a few dwellings within the town afford views down over the valley towards the Site.

Topography, Water Courses and Soils

5.4.7 The Site lies within the base of the Claydon Valley and all the fields are relatively flat. Field 1 is gently sloping around 90 – 94m AOD. Field 2 is around 88 – 90m AOD, Field 3 90 – 92m AOD. Field 4 89 – 91m AOD. The flat valley floor extends at a similar level for 1.8km to the north, 0.6km to the east and 4.6km to the south. The fields are drained by perimeter ditches which feed into the Claydon Brook.

5.4.8 A tributary of the Claydon Brook defines the northwest boundary of the main permanent Site (and is referred to in this report as the Claydon Brook), flowing northeast before heading northwest, north of the substation. The land rises immediately northeast of the brook and Site, rising to around 127m AOD in the vicinity of Botolph Claydon. Winslow to the northeast lies at around 117m AOD and Granborough to the east at 112m AOD. Three kilometres to the south, Quainton Hill crests at 187m AOD.

5.4.9 The lower parts of the Site adjacent to the Claydon Brook are within a flood zone, restricting development in this area. There is a pond on the eastern boundary of Field 1, but it is overgrown and is not a prominent feature. There is the opportunity to enhance it.

5.4.10 To summarise, the Site lies on the valley floor and is largely level, which in terms of engineering makes it suitable for building large flat BESS compounds, but is surrounded by higher ground, although much of this high ground is distant. Nevertheless, the high ground does afford views over the Site and key views from it are assessed in this report.

5.4.11 The topography of the wider area is illustrated in **Figure 5.3.1,** which clearly illustrates the Ridge and Vale landform and **Figure 5.3.2** shows the topography of the Site and immediate area in more detail.

5.4.12 The soil across the Site is classified as slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. The semi-natural habitat is lowland seasonally wet pastures and woodlands.

Landscape Character

5.4.13 Landscape character is defined as:

> *"A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse."* (Natural England).

5.4.14 Impacts on the landscape may arise where the landscape character of the area is modified by the development. It is important to place the application Site in its landscape context.

National Character Area (NCA)

5.4.15 The National Character Area profile published by Natural England (Natural England 2013) has been reviewed to develop an appreciation of the wider landscape, landscape character and context of the area, although due to its national context, will not be relied upon as a basis to assess effects on landscape character within this assessment.

5.4.16 The application site and the study area lie predominantly within the Upper Thames Clay Vales character area 108. The character area forms a broad belt of gently undulating farmland stretching from Swindon in the south-west to Aylesbury in the north-east. The narrow central spine of the Midvale Ridge Character Area 109 forms a separate upland area within the clay vales.

Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment 2008

5.4.17 The landscape character assessment was carried out by Jacobs on behalf of the Aylesbury Vale District Council and Buckingham County Council and was published in May 2008. The county of Buckingham was divided into 13 Landscape Character Types (LCT). The application site and the majority of the study area lie within the Shallow Valleys LCT which extends south of Buckingham to Haddenum as a series of connected landscape features Landscape Character Areas are plotted on **Figure 5.7**.

5.4.18 This character type is subdivided into eleven geographically specific Landscape Character Areas (LCA). The Site lies within the Hogshaw Claylands LCA which is part of the Shallow Valleys LCT. The key characteristics of this character area and any key issues relevant to the proposed development are as follows:

Hogshaw Claylands LCA

5.4.19 The Site lies within the northern part of this LCA. The 2008 assessment states:

> *"The LCA comprises a gently sloping bowl of low ground in mixed agricultural use. There is very little settlement and access is via narrow lanes and a good network of Public Rights of Way. Hedgerows are good and often have mature oak trees. The main meandering watercourses tend to have trees and shrubs along their banks. Small plantations of mature poplars in a grid are a feature of the area. Views tend to focus on the surrounding higher ground. The two pylon lines through the area are visually intrusive. There is an electricity grid sub-station just to the north of the area, within Claydon Valley LCA 5.6, which these lines join. The sub-station and other pylon lines are visually intrusive in the very north of the area. The area is quiet but not wild or remote.*
>
> *It is predominantly an area of calcareous mudstone (Weymouth Member with a transition to West Walton formation in the south) with alluvium deposits in the valley bottom.*
>
> *There are no major watercourses and a series of minor streams and ditches drain the area. The main tributaries have a meandering course but many of the smaller tributaries are straight and follow field boundaries. There is a scattering of ponds throughout. A mixed agricultural landscape with a slight tendency towards grassland. There are also small areas of woodland and scrub.*
>
> *There is very little settlement within the area just a scattering of farms some with large barns. A disused railway line passes north-south through the area. The woodlands are small with a notable plantation of mature poplars in a grid next to a lane. The tree cover*

within hedgerows is generally better adjacent to roads where there are frequent mature oak trees. Elsewhere the tree cover is good adjacent to streamlines.

The principle habitats of the Hogshaw Claylands are a mix of arable and grassland habitat. The grassland is mostly improved however, some unimproved is present throughout.

The agricultural habitats are relieved by a few fragments of woodland habitat - both broadleaved and coniferous are present the most significant area being associated with the line of the disused railway where scrub also occurs. The broad habitat types of rivers and streams and standing open water are well represented by the streams and the ponds across the area.

The historic landscape of Hogshaw is composed of a mixture of fields types; the greatest extent is made up of pre 18th century regular enclosures and is likely a product of the improvements made by such families as the Verneys at Middle Claydon. The eastern side of the area landscape is made up of parliamentary enclosure fields of Granborough enclosed in 1796. The other types are the changes to field boundaries in the 19th century and presence of 20th century enclosures for pony paddocks. The landscape has no historic settlements of note, only isolated historic farmsteads of Lower & Middle Farm.

Condition

The condition of the landscape is moderate. It has a unified pattern of elements with a strong hedgerow pattern and little settlement and only minor roads. There are considered to be few visual detractors across the area as a whole but the impact of the pylon lines running through the area is significant although the rural integrity of the landscape is maintained. The cultural integrity is variable, there is some good surviving examples of ridge and furrow in the landscape and the hedgerow pattern, is in good condition but the condition of the hedgerow trees is generally mature or over mature. Ecological integrity is weak due to suboptimal connectivity and the low area of designated sites and habitats of District significance present compared to other parts of the District. Overall the functional integrity is considered to be weak.

Sensitivity

The area has a distinct landscape character with a good sense of historic continuity. This gives the area a moderate sense of place. The landform is apparent and the tree cover intermittent with very little in the way of woodland. This produces an area with a moderate level of visibility. Overall the combination of a moderate sense of place and a moderate visibility combine to create a landscape which is considered to be of moderate sensitivity.

Landscape Guidelines

5.4.20 The landscape guidelines for the Hogshaw Claylands are as follows:

- *"Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow pattern by infilling gaps and establishing new hedgerow trees. Oaks are a feature of hedgerows in this area.*
- *Encourage the management of hedgerows through traditional cutting regimes.*
- *Promote the management and conservation of vegetation adjacent to the meandering watercourses including the pollarding of willow.*
- *Encourage the management of existing woodland and promote the establishment of new woodland particularly where it will reduce the visual impact of pylon lines.*

- *Maintain the condition and extent of unimproved and semi-improved grassland wherever possible. Encourage good management practices.*
- *Improve the management of historic meadows and pastures.*
- *Close to watercourses promote the use of permanent pasture, with low stocking density and flooding regimes to promote biodiversity and landscape enhancement.*
- *Encourage the restoration and management of ponds and the area around them to provide a succession of habitats from open water through to mature trees.*
- *Where possible link ponds to adjacent hedgerows with grassland.*
- *Enhance connectivity of habitats.*
- *Identify key views to surrounding higher from publicly accessible land and promote the preservation and enhancement of these views.*
- *Encourage the preservation of Ridge and Furrow by maintaining grassland."*

5.4.21 The ZTV for the proposed scheme extends over three further landscape character areas identified within the study area, the Claydon Valley LCA, Quainton Hill LCA and North Marston Undulating Claylands LCA. Information on these is provided below.

Claydon Valley LCA

5.4.22 The Claydon Valley LCA lies immediately north of the Site and the Hogshaw Claylands. The key characteristics are:

- *"A Shallow valley.*
- *Meandering brook on flat valley bottom.*
- *Lack of settlement apart from isolated farms on slightly higher ground above flood plain.*
- *Strong irregular field pattern.*
- *Predominantly small and medium fields.*
- *Mixed farming – greater area of pasture but large arable fields are visually dominant.*
- *Good mix of tree and shrub vegetation adjacent to brook.*
- *Disused railway line with trees and shrubs.*
- *Pylon lines radiating from sub-station north-west of Granborough."*

5.4.23 The landscape character areas Condition is Good and Sensitivity is Moderate. Landscape Guidelines are to Conserve and Reinforce, including:

- *"Encourage the retention and strengthening of the historic hedgerow pattern by infilling gaps and establishing new hedgerow trees.*
- *Promote the management and conservation of vegetation adjacent to the meandering watercourses including the pollarding of willows."*

Quainton Hill LCA

5.4.24 This character area forms a small but prominent area of upland to the south-west of the site. Key characteristics are as follows;

- *Part of a prominent network of hills.*
- *Pastoral land use.*

- *Long distance views over surrounding countryside.*
- *Area is exposed in winter.*
- *Incised steep sided valleys.*
- *Narrow ridges and promontories.*
- *Lack of woodland cover.*
- *Ridge and furrow.*

5.4.25 Condition is Good and Sensitivity is High for this LCA.

North Marston Undulating Claylands LCA

5.4.26 Granborough and North Marston lie within this area. The most significant difference between it and the Hogshaw Claylands is the more undulating landform which allows settlements to occupy the higher drier ground. Key characteristics are as follows;

- *"Undulating landform.*
- *Small hills and ridges.*
- *Meandering Steams.*
- *Predominantly pastoral.*
- *Settlement on high ground.*
- *Good hedgerow pattern.*
- *Ridge and furrow."*

5.4.27 Condition is Good and Sensitivity is High for this LCA.

Summary of Landscape Character

5.4.28 The Site lies in one of the least sensitive landscape character areas in the vicinity, partly due to its low-lying nature and adverse influence of the nearby East Claydon Substation and associated transmission lines. There are opportunities for enhancing both the landscape and biodiversity of the Site. Any development on the Site has the potential to influence the settings of adjacent character areas which typically occupy elevated ground around the Site.

National Historic Landscape Classification

5.4.29 The Site and surrounding farmland south of the brook is classified as *"enclosed agriculture, planned fields with the dominant period being 18th Century to Victorian"*. As such it has no particular significant historical value.

5.4.30 The farmland immediately north of the brook through which the cable and temporary haul route will run is classified as *"dominant broad enclosed agriculture of amalgamated fields, typically modern form, Post-war to Late 20th Century"* and so are of no particular historical value.

Townscape Character

5.4.31 The settlement of Winslow forms a small rural market town within Aylesbury Vale. The historic core of the town includes many medieval buildings. The area comprises mainly late 20th century residential developments of semi-detached, detached and terraced properties of single and two storey construction. Properties sit within medium to large plots, with front gardens defined by clipped hedges. Materials include mainly red brick and grey concrete tiled roofs with some painted render and timber details. The majority of the settlement edge currently comprises rear garden fences and garden vegetation with some remnant hedgerows and mature trees from the farmland landscape. The area can be defined as the Winslow Late 20th Century Residential Townscape Character Area, it is typical of many settlements, has an ordinary condition and a medium sensitivity.

5.4.32 The villages of Granborough, East Claydon and Botolph Claydon all have strong historic cores which give a strong sense of history and place. The churches at East Claydon and Granborough occupy high points and the towers rising above the surrounding tree cover are local landmarks. Late 20th and 21st century residential infilling is generally sensitive and has not eroded the historic character. Condition is Moderate to High and Sensitivity is High.

Trends for change

5.4.33 Limited change is occurring within the countryside apart from the construction of HS2 which is being constructed around 5km southwest of the Site. Currently HS2 construction activities are a significant feature of the landscape (but not intervisible with the Site) although once complete the mitigation associated with HS2 will ensure that it will not be a prominent feature of the landscape. The East Claydon Substation is attracting electrical infrastructure around it, as evidenced by the consented solar farm and this application. It is part of a nationwide trend of increased electrical infrastructure aggregating around large substations. The Rosefield Solar Farm is an extensive proposal in the early stages of consultation and so there is insufficient detail to consider its potential cumulative effect as part of this planning application.

5.4.34 Minor infilling is occurring within the surrounding towns and villages but is likely to remain limited as the main urban expansion in the region is taking place in Milton Keynes, Buckingham and Bicester.

Landscape Quality

5.4.35 The quality of the Site and landscape within the immediate environs of the Site is considered to be Low -Medium as assessed by the criteria set out in Appendix 5.3 due to the influence and disruption of the rural landscape arising from the electrical infrastructure associated with the East Claydon Substation (such as the high voltage overhead transmission lines and potential solar farm).

Landscape Value

5.4.36 A range of criteria is used to assess the value of a landscape to society in terms of its perceptual, cultural, recreational and ecological contribution. The landscape value of the Site and surrounding area are assessed in relation to these attributes in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Assessment of Landscape Value

Element	Assessment for the Site	Value	Assessment for the immediate area around the Site	Value
Landscape quality A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.	The landscape is not subject to any national or regional landscape designation which recognises quality and is adversely influenced by electrical infrastructure within it.	**Low - Medium**	Influence and disruption of the rural landscape arising from the electrical infrastructure associated with the East Claydon Substation (such as the high voltage overhead transmission lines and potential solar farm).	**Low - Medium**
Use In terms of its value to society as a whole	The current use of the Site is for agricultural production. Currently there is no public access.	**Medium**	Agricultural production, electrical infrastructure. Few dwellings in the countryside.	**Medium**
Scenic quality The term used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses)	The Site is flat with no singular landscape or landmark features, but the strong hedgerow network contributes to the landscape character and scenic quality	**Low - Medium**	The immediate area is adversely influenced by the East Claydon Substation and associated infrastructure and so has Low scenic value. The more elevated ground and	Valley **Low – Medium** Quainton Hill **High**

Element	Assessment for the Site	Value	Assessment for the immediate area around the Site	Value
	of the valley floor.		has Medium scenic value.	
Rarity The presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare Landscape Character Type	It is a typical valley floor arable landscape with no rare features.	**Low**	Typical rural landscape with no rare features. No singular historic landscape value, typically post late Victorian is the dominant type..	**Low**
Representativeness Whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.	The Site is not of a type or includes features which are representative of a unique landscape.	**Low**	The Site is not of a type or includes features which are representative of a unique landscape.	**Low**

5.4.37 It is concluded that the Landscape Value of the Site is Low to Medium and that of the immediate surrounding area Medium.

Landscape Susceptibility

5.4.38 The LVIA Guidelines define susceptibility as:

> *"The ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality / condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and / or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the Proposed*

Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and / or the achievement of landscape planning policies or strategies".

5.4.39 The Proposed Development will be out of keeping with the current rural character but will represent a new form of electrical infrastructure within an area where electrical infrastructure already has a strong influence on landscape character. The low lying, almost flat character of the Site, distant from residential properties and surrounding villages, combined with the strong hedgerow network, means that it has the ability to absorb a fairly low-level form of development.

5.4.40 Overall, the susceptibility of the Site to absorb this type of development is Medium.

Landscape Sensitivity

5.4.41 Landscape sensitivity is determined by combining Landscape Quality with Landscape Susceptibility. Landscape quality has been determined as Low - Medium and Susceptibility as Medium, therefore the Site has a slightly less than Medium sensitivity to the type of development proposed.

Visual Baseline

5.4.42 Visual receptors are "the different groups of people who may experience views of the development" (GLVIA, 3rd edition, para 6.3). The different types of groups assessed within this report encompass local residents; people using key routes such as roads; cycle ways, people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using Public Rights of Way; or people visiting key viewpoints. In dealing with areas of settlement, Public Rights of Way and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common.

5.4.43 A series of viewpoints have been chosen to convey the main potential visual impacts. These are not the only places where someone may see the Proposed Development but have been chosen to be sufficiently representative that an accurate overall assessment of impact can be made. The selection includes close views, medium distance views and long distant views and views covering all directions of the compass around the Site. The list of representative views is presented in **Table 5.3.** The photographs taken from each viewpoint are presented in **Figures 5.10, 5.12 and 5.14** and are located on **Figures 5.9, 5.11** and 5.13. It has not been possible to take photographs from private properties and so the visual impacts from these receptors are estimated.

5.4.44 The main sensitive receptors will be users of the PRoW network which passes close to the Site, although typically views from within the base of the valley are very limited due to intervening tree and hedge cover. Views of the Site are possible from the upper slopes of the valley, including a few residential properties on the edges of Winslow, Granborough and Botolph Claydon and some sections of some of the PRoW which traverse the more distant elevated ground on the valley sides.

5.4.45 Table 5.3 lists the chosen representative views, their locations, reasons for choice and the sensitivity of the receptor.

Table 5.3: Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 1: View 1: from rural footpath GRA 10/1 on the western edge of Granborough Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 670 m **(Note: all distances quoted in this table are to the main permanent site, and do not include the temporary haul road).** Elevation: 112 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76568 24996 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath and a few residents within dwellings on the west side of the village.	The effects on the views from Granborough are an important consideration.	Receptor sensitivity: High. Landscape sensitivity: Medium and Local

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 2: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 as it joins Hogshaw Road, west of Granborough Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 431 m Elevation: 102 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76332 25032 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	Views from Hogshaw Road are blocked by the roadside hedge. This is the first view of the Site west of the road.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local
VIEW 3: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 heading towards the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 264 m Elevation: 98 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76168 25081 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	The Site comes clearer into view as walkers enter the field immediately east of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 4: from rural footpath GAR 1/1 as it approaches the Site from the northeast Direction of view: South west Distance to nearest site boundary: 190 m Elevation: 97 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75974 25396 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	The footpath crosses slightly elevated ground and this point affords the clearest view over the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local
VIEW 5: rom rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northeast boundary of the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 10 m Elevation: 93 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75880 25236 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	The footpath runs alongside the hedge which forms the northeast boundary of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 6: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northern boundary of the Site. Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 5.7 m Elevation: 90 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75694 25376 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	The footpath runs alongside the hedge which forms the northeast boundary of the Site. The proposed customer substation will lie on the opposite side of this hedge.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local.
VIEW 7: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it heads east towards the Site Direction of view: South East Distance to nearest site boundary: 351 m Elevation: 96 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75082 25550 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	To illustrate the extent of visibility from the base of the valley, north of the brook. This is the first view when heading south, prior to this the path runs through tree and hedge cover around the existing substation.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Low - Medium and Local

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 8: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it continues up the hill, west of the Site. Direction of view: South East Distance to nearest site boundary: 775 m Elevation: 116 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74498 25494 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	To illustrate the potential change to the setting of the PRoW and the effect on the visual amenity of walkers as they cross higher ground.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Low - Medium and Local
VIEW 9: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it crests the hill, west of the Site. Direction of view: South East Distance to nearest site boundary: 965 m Elevation: 120 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74294 25535 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Users of the footpath.	To illustrate the potential change in view from the rest of the valley side.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local.

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 10: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it enters the village of East Claydon (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way). Direction of view: South East Distance to nearest site boundary: 1 km Elevation: 121 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74158 25557 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers and horse riders.	This illustrates how the village of east Claydon is set back from the crest of the valley slope, with topography restricting views of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: High (Long Distance Footpath) Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local
VIEW 11: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it descends the slope through countryside west of the Site (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way). Direction of view: South East Distance to nearest site boundary: 424 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74669 25004 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers and horse riders.	To illustrate how the substantial hedgerow network in the area restricts views of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: High Landscape Sensitivity: High and Regional

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 12: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 (a continuation ECL 5/1) as it passes through countryside southwest of the site. Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 257 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75097 24531 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers and horse riders.	To illustrate how the substantial hedgerow network in the area restricts views of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: High Landscape Sensitivity: medium and Local
VIEW 13: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 looking through a field gateway southwest of the Site. Direction of view: North East Distance to nearest site boundary: 278 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75155 24424 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers and horse riders.	To illustrate how the substantial hedgerow network in the area restricts views of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: High Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 14: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south. Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 401 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75444 24252 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers	To illustrate how the substantial hedgerows and tree belts in the area restricts views of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local
VIEW 15: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south. Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 238 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75488 24439 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers	To illustrate how the substantial hedgerows and tree belts in the area restricts views of the Site.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 16: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 195 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75636 24553 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers	This offers the clearest view of the Site when approaching from the south.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local.
VIEW 17: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it passes along the southeast boundary of the main development area. Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 10m from field but on the access track Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75771 24946 Date photo was taken: 02.02.23	Walkers	To illustrate the potential impact to walkers as they pass immediately alongside the Site	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium and Local.

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 18: rom rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it descends a slope on the northern edge of Granborough Walkers Direction of view: South West Distance to nearest site boundary: 909 m Elevation: 89 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76209 26114 Date photo was taken: 02.02.23		To illustrate the potential impact to walkers and those around the environs of this part of Granborough.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium. Landscape Sensitivity: Medium
VIEW 19: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it passes through an area of historical earthworks north of the Site (un-designated). Direction of view: South West Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.2 km Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75942 26606 Date photo was taken: 02.02.23	Walkers	To illustrate the potential impact to walkers and on the setting of this site of a deserted village.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 20: from a field gateway on the East Claydon Road north of the Site and east of the East Claydon Substation. Direction of view: South Distance to nearest site boundary: 5 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75768 24943 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers	To illustrate the potential visual impact to walkers and users of the East Claydon Road (glimpsed views).	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium
VIEW 21: from Bridleway HOG 9/3 from the summit of Conduit Hill (part of Quainton Hill), south of the Site Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 2.7 km Elevation: 175 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74980 21879 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Walkers and horse riders.	To illustrate the potential impact to those crossing the high ground to the south.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: Medium.

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 22: From a field gateway on Botyl Road within Botolph Claydon. Direction of view: East Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.6 km Elevation: 127m AOD Grid reference: SP 73482 24917 Date photo was taken: 03.04.23	Those passing on the highway (glimpsed) Views from upper windows	Illustrates the likely effect on views from the environs of the village (part of which is a Conservation Area).	Receptor sensitivity: Medium and High Landscape Sensitivity: Medium.
VIEW 23: from footpath ECL 7/2 at Bernwood Farm, Botolph Claydon. Direction of view: Northeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.9 km Elevation: 122m AOD Grid reference: SP 73415 24230 Date photo was taken: 23.03.23	Users of the footpath	Originally chosen for potential views from the nearby Bernwwod Jubilee way, but views from this long distance footpath (ECL 8/1) are blocked by the brow of the hill and hedges. Only a short section of ECL 7/2 affords a view as it starts the descent to Hogshaw.	Receptor sensitivity: Medium Landscape Sensitivity: High

Viewpoint and Location Details	Visual Receptors	Reason for choice	Landscape and Visual Receptor Sensitivity
VIEW 24: From Hogshaw Road outside Bracknall House (close to the proposed point of highway access). Direction of view: Northwest Distance to nearest site boundary: 474m Elevation: 100m AOD Grid reference: SP 76146 24703 Date photo was taken: 23.03.23	Residents of Bracknall House (mainly from upper windows) and glimpsed views to road users.	To illustrate views from Bracknall House and the Hogshaw Road	Receptor sensitivity: Medium and High Landscape Sensitivity: Medium

Landscape and visual baseline summary

5.4.46 The Site and its immediate surroundings do not lie within a designated landscape. It lies within the Hogshaw Claylands Landscape Character Area, a gently sloping bowl of low ground in mixed agricultural use, sparsely settled. Landscape quality has been determined as Low to Medium (largely due to the adverse influence of the East Claydon Substation and the transmission lines which radiate from it). Susceptibility is Medium, therefore the Site has a slightly less than Medium Sensitivity to the type of development proposed.

5.4.47 The main sensitive receptors will be users of the PRoW network which passes close to the Site, although typically views from within the base of the valley are very limited due to intervening tree and hedge cover. Views of the Site are possible from the upper slopes of the valley, including a few residential properties on the edges of Winslow, Granborough and Botolph Claydon and some sections of some of the PRoW which traverse the more distant elevated ground on the valley sides.

5.5 The Proposed Development Including Inbuilt Mitigation

Construction and Layout

5.5.1 The Proposed Development involves construction of the following elements:

- Stripping the topsoil within Fields 1 and 2 with minor grading to create flat platforms for the BESS compound and proposed substation.

- Laying impermeable and permeable geotextile and build up with permeable stone layers.
- Erection of 2.4m high weldmesh fencing around the compounds (steel palisade around the customer substation).
- Installation of 518 battery containers, 37 inverter houses, 7 control rooms, 3 shipping containers for storage and one as a welfare unit and three fire water storage tanks.
- A large customer substation (80m x 150m in footprint with elements up to 12.1m in height).
- Extensive landscaping in the form of hedge, tree planting, wetland and biodiverse grassland.

5.5.2 It is no longer proposed to develop Field 3 (which will remain in agricultural production) and Field 4 will be used entirely for screening planting and achieving high biodiversity net gain. The layout is presented in **Figure 5.8.1** and details of the electrical infrastructure in **Figures 5.8.2 and 5.8.3.**

Site location, design evolution and inbuilt mitigation

5.5.3 The main driver for locating the BESS at this location is its proximity to the existing East Claydon National Grid Substation and the ability to connect to it. The fields which comprise the Site are almost level which makes them suitable for the construction of level compounds to house the equipment. While there is land closer to the substation, it is gently sloping and more visible and so less suitable. The compounds have been located outside the flood zone along the brook.

5.5.4 The existing hedges around the fields which comprise the Site are substantial and will significantly reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development from viewpoints which are at a similar level to the Site. The compounds have been offset from these hedges to ensure their protection, with substantial buffers to allow additional mitigation. The existing tree cover along the brook is substantial and provides a level of screening to views from the more elevated ground to the north, but it is proposed to augment this with additional tree planting. Substantial tree planting is proposed to the southeast to screen the proposed facility from high ground around Granborough. Substantial tree planting to the northeast will screen the proposed facility to long distance views from the edge of Winslow and, on the northwest side, the high ground around Botolph Claydon and Quainton Hill.

5.5.5 Even in the long-distance elevated views the existing hedgerows will substantially screen the majority of the equipment without requiring new hedge planting to be effective. The inverter houses have been designed with green roofs to minimise their visibility within the long oblique views from the distant high ground.

5.5.6 It is necessary to achieve a level of screening above the hedge line to fully screen the equipment from the elevated views. It is proposed to achieve this by planting heavy standard tree stock which comprises a mix of fast-growing species suited to the wet clay of the valley floor, such as poplars, willow and alders; all characteristic of the area. These will be interspersed with slower growing but longer-term species, such as oak and hornbeam.

5.5.7 The aim is to establish sufficient depth of planting that the tree canopies are an effective screen, even in winter, due to the depth and density of the branches. The existing hedges will also be managed to retain around 66% top growth over winter for the benefit of wildlife, (that is cutting 33% each year) with the cutting taking place on a three year cycle. This will maintain a higher level of winter screening compared with traditional agricultural management.

5.5.8 There is an existing farm track which runs on the opposite side of the hedge which forms the southwest boundary of Field 1. This will be a second emergency point of access. It is likely to only require minor making good to bring it to a suitable standard in terms of running surface and so the landscape and visual effects will be Negligible, particularly as this boundary is not prominent within the wider landscape.

Timescales for the proposed mitigation to become effective

5.5.9 It is assumed that hedges and slower growing species will put on an average of 300mm growth per annum and so typically a 600mm high transplant will reach around 3.5m high within 10 years. The faster growing species are predicted to grow an average of 400mm per year, reaching 4.5m high. If planted as 3.5m high standards the initial growth is unlikely to be less, resulting in a 350mm average growth over 10 years for fast growing species, potentially reaching 6 – 7m height after 10 years. The planting combined with the hedge management, is likely to result in the majority of the facility being screened within 10 years with only the taller elements of the substation taking longer – typically 15 – 20 years.

5.6 Landscape and Visual Impact During Construction

5.6.1 The most significant landscape and visual effects arising from the construction process will be moving vehicles and machinery, delivery traffic and crane jibs used to lift the equipment into place. Traffic management and temporary haul routes will be the most prominent aspects to users of the local highway network. The majority of the equipment will be manufactured off-site and can be rapidly lifted into place. The landscape and visual effects arising from the construction process will be temporary.

5.6.2 While the access from Hogshaw Road will be the permanent operational access it is proposed to create an alternative temporary construction access from the East Claydon Road. This will comprise a temporary new road access (resulting in the loss of around 7m of hedge), a trackway formed from removable plates laid on top of the existing field surface and a temporary bridge crossing Claydon Brook (the bridge will be craned into place in typically two premade sections).The trackway will head south from just east of the existing substation, crossing farmland and the brook to enter the Site from the north. This will substantially reduce construction traffic passing through Granborough. On completion of construction the haul road from the East Claydon Road will be removed and the land returned to agriculture. The short section of hedge lost on the East Claydon Road to create the access will be replanted.

5.6.3 The landscape effects of the construction phase of the Proposed Development are assessed in **Table 5.4**. The red background colour within the table indicates a significant adverse effect, orange a moderate adverse effect (multiple moderate effects can become significant) and green indicates a beneficial effect, Minor adverse effect or a Negligible effect.

Table 5.4: Effect of the construction phase of the Proposed Development on Landscape Character

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect
The Site (part of the Hogshaw Claylands)	Medium (Moderate)	High	Moderate to Major adverse **A Significant but temporary effect.**
The Hogshaw Claylands adjacent to the Site	Medium (Moderate)	Medium	Moderate adverse, temporary
Claydon Valley LCA	Medium (Moderate)	Low	Minor adverse on its setting, temporary
Quainton Hill LCA	High	Low	Moderate adverse on its setting, temporary
North Marston Undulating Claylands LCA	Medium	Low	Minor adverse on its setting, temporary

5.6.4 Construction effects on visual amenity are summarised in **Table 5.5.** Reference should be made to the Viewpoint Figures in **Appendix 5.1.**

Table 5.5: Summary of Visual Effects During Construction

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 1: View 1: from rural footpath GRA 10/1 on the western edge of Granborough Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 670 m Elevation: 112 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76568 24996 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	High, some residents and walkers	Medium, summer and winter Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Moderate – Major adverse, summer and winter. **A significant but Temporary effect.**
VIEW 2: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 as it joins Hogshaw Road, west of Granborough Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 431 m Elevation: 102 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76332 25032 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Medium in winter, Low in summer Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Moderate adverse in winter, Minor adverse summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 3: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 heading towards the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 264 m Elevation: 98 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76168 25081 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Medium, in winter, Low in summer Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Moderate adverse, Minor in summer, Temporary.
VIEW 4: from rural footpath GAR 1/1 as it approaches the Site from the northeast Direction of view: South west Distance to nearest site boundary: 190 m Elevation: 97 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75974 25396 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Medium in winter and summer Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Moderate adverse, winter and summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 5: rom rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northeast boundary of the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 10 m Elevation: 93 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75880 25236 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Low, winter and summer Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Moderate adverse, winter and summer. Temporary.
VIEW 6: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northern boundary of the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 5.7 m Elevation: 90 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75694 25376 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Medium, winter and summer Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes. Particularly noticeable when passing the proposed substation construction site.	Moderate adverse, winter and summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 7: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it heads east towards the Site. Direction of view: Southeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 351 m Elevation: 96 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75082 25550 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	High in winter and summer. Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes within the Site and the temporary haul route and moving construction traffic. The footpath will have to cross the temporary haul route.	Moderate - Major adverse winter and summer. **A Significant but Temporary effect.**
VIEW 8: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it continues up the hill, west of the Site Direction of view: Southeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 775 m Elevation: 116 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74498 25494 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Medium in winter, Low in summer. Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Moderate adverse in winter, Minor adverse in summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 9: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it crests the hill, west of the Site Direction of view: Southeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 965 m Elevation: 120 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74294 25535 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers	Low in winter and summer. Primarily moving plant and equipment including cranes.	Minor adverse winter and summer. Temporary.
VIEW 10: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it enters the village of East Claydon (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way) Direction of view: Southeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 1 km Elevation: 121 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74158 25557 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	High Walkers and riders.	No change to the view	No effect.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 11: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it descends the slope through countryside west of the Site (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way) Direction of view: Southeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 424 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74669 25004 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	High Walkers and riders.	No change to the view	No effect.
VIEW 12: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 (a continuation ECL 5/1) as it passes through countryside southwest of the site Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 257 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75097 24531 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	High Walkers and riders.	No change to the view	No effect.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 13: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 looking through a field gateway southwest of the Site Direction of view: Northeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 278 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75155 24424 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers and riders	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane might be visible above the tree line.	Minor adverse effect winter and summer. Temporary.
VIEW 14: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 401 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75444 24252 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers and riders	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane might be visible above the tree line.	Minor adverse effect winter and summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 15: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 238 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75488 24439 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers and riders	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane might be visible above the tree line.	Minor adverse effect winter and summer. Temporary.
VIEW 16: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 195 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75636 24553 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium Walkers and riders	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane might be visible above the tree line.	Minor adverse effect winter and summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 17: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it passes along the southeast boundary of the main development area Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 10m from field but on the access track Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75771 24946 Date photo was taken: 02.02.23	Medium Walkers	High, winter and summer Construction traffic moving on and off the Site along a haul road which crosses the footpath.	Moderate – Major adverse effect winter and summer. **A significant but temporary effect.**
VIEW 18: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it descends a slope on the northern edge of Granborough Walkers Direction of view: South West Distance to nearest site boundary: 909 m Elevation: 89 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76209 26114 Date photo was taken: 02.02.23	Medium	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane on the substation construction site might be visible.	Minor adverse winter and summer. Temporary.

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 19: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it passes through an area of historical earthworks north of the Site (un-designated) Direction of view: Southwest Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.2 km Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75942 26606 Date photo was taken: 02.02.23	Medium	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane on the substation construction site will be visible. In winter it may be possible to see construction traffic moving along the temporary haul road.	Moderate adverse winter Minor adverse in summer. Temporary
VIEW 20: from a field gateway on the East Claydon Road north of the Site and east of the East Claydon Substation Direction of view: South Distance to nearest site boundary: 5 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75768 24943 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium	Low winter and summer. Potentially the jib of a crane on the substation construction site will be visible. In winter it may be possible to see construction traffic moving along the temporary haul road.	Moderate adverse winter Minor adverse in summer. Temporary

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 21: from Bridleway HOG 9/3 from the summit of Conduit Hill (part of Quainton Hill), south of the Site Direction of view: North Distance to nearest site boundary: 2.7 km Elevation: 175 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74980 21879 Date photo was taken: 18.11.2022	Medium	Low winter and summer. Some construction activity may be visible, but at a distance in a wide panorama.	Minor adverse winter and summer. Temporary
VIEW 22: From a field gateway on Botyl Road within Botolph Claydon Direction of view: East Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.6 km Elevation: 127m AOD Grid reference: SP 73482 24917 Date photo was taken: 03.04.23	High	Low winter and summer. Some construction activity will be visible, but at a distance in a wide panorama.	Moderate adverse winter and summer. Temporary

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Magnitude of change	Significance of Effect
VIEW 23: from footpath ECL 7/2 at Bernwood Farm, Botolph Claydon Direction of view: Northeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.9 km Elevation: 122m AOD Grid reference: SP 73415 24230 Date photo was taken: 23.03.23	Medium	Low winter and summer. Some construction activity may be visible, but at a distance in a wide panorama.	Minor adverse winter and summer. Temporary
VIEW 24: From Hogshaw Road outside Bracknall House (close to the proposed point of highway access) Direction of view: Northwest Distance to nearest site boundary: 474m Elevation: 100m AOD Grid reference: SP 76146 24703 Date photo was taken: 23.03.23	High	Medium	Moderate adverse winter and summer. Some construction activity may be visible, but at a distance in a wide panorama.

Summary of construction effects

5.6.5 The construction process will result in slightly greater adverse landscape and visual effects than the operational phase, primarily because the construction activities, stockpiled materials, moving machinery and delivery vehicles will be more visible in the landscape than the completed facility which will be largely static and in muted colours. This activity There will be a sufficient buffer in terms of distance and screening vegetation that there will be no significant adverse visual effects to those in residential properties and road users apart from a few residents within Granborough, for whom there will be a **Significant but Temporary Effect.** There will be Moderate adverse effects to users of the public right of

way network which runs immediately adjacent to the Site and Moderate – Major, **Significant but temporary effects**, to those crossing the two access routes (PRoW GRA1/2 and ECL 4/2), particularly as these will require traffic management and safety features in terms of signage, fencing etc.

5.6.6 On completion of construction the elements forming the haul road from the East Claydon Road will be removed (including the temporary bridge) and the land returned to agriculture. The short section of hedge lost on the East Claydon Road to create the access will be replanted, as will the gaps created within the two other hedge crossings

5.7 Landscape And Visual Impacts During Operation

Potential Impacts

5.7.1 The landscape impact assessment is assessed using the criteria set out in Appendix C. Once operational the main features of the Proposed Development which could potentially result in landscape and visual impacts are:

- Changes to land use;
- Changes to topography;
- Introduction of additional electrical infrastructure in the local landscape, reinforcing this negative impact of landscape character, and
- Tree planting and better management of the existing hedges which will reinforce this positive aspect of landscape character.

Effect on Topography and Watercourses

5.7.2 The fields in which the BESS compounds will be situated are fairly flat and so will only require minor regrading to create platforms which are sufficiently level to accommodate the electrical infrastructure. Typically, the stripped topsoil will be replaced by aggregate, resulting in only minor changes in level. Given the wide and expansive nature of the valley these changes will be barely perceptible from the wider landscape.

5.7.3 The Proposed Development will have a direct and permanent effect on the micro topography of the Site, sensitivity is considered Medium, and the magnitude of change will be Low, resulting in a Minor adverse effect on topography.

5.7.4 The storm water attenuation strategy will allow the creation of wetlands and ponds within the nature reserve areas which will drain to established outfalls at rates throttled to meet existing runoff rates. The attenuation ponds will be around 1m deep (with some areas excavated slightly deeper to create seasonal water bodies for wildlife), essentially shallow grassy depressions, and so will not represent a significant change in levels.

5.7.5 A minimum 10m wide buffer strip is retained along the tributary of the Claydon Brook with no landscape works (other than enhancement of the existing meadow) at the request of the drainage board. Bridges capable of being crossed by maintain vehicles and pedestrians will be erected across the ditches that feed into the watercourse to allow access along the tributary without having to enter compound areas.

Year 10 and 20 – Following Establishment of Proposed Development Primary Mitigation

5.7.6 Over time the changes in topography will be masked by the proposed landscape screening around the Site. The perceived effect of topographical changes on the landscape character areas and visual amenity will be Negligible.

Effect on trees and hedgerows and other landscape features

5.7.7 The Proposed Development has been designed to fit within the existing field system to avoid the loss of trees and hedges. No trees or hedges will need to be removed to construct the main development area apart from:

- Approximately 5m of hedge either side of the existing farm access onto Hogshaw Road to allow the bell mouth to be widened to accommodate the turning motion of HGV's.
- 10m of hedge on the East Claydon Road to create an access for the haul road, but this will be temporary.
- 5m of hedge between Fields 1 and 2 to allow an access track to pass through.
- 6m of hedge where the hedges in Field 3 meet the brook. This is to create a gap for the permissive path and watercourse maintenance vehicles to pass through.
- 10m of streamside bank vegetation along the brook to allow the construction of a temporary bridge crossing.
- 4m of hedge between Field 1 and 2 to allow the security fence to pass through.

5.7.8 The sensitivity of the landscape is Medium and the magnitude of change due to the loss of landscape features is Low, resulting in a Minor adverse effect (Not Significant) in the first year of operation.

Years 10 and 20 – Following Establishment of Proposed Development Primary Mitigation

5.7.9 The proposed tree and hedge planting associated with the Proposed Development will far exceed that which is lost.

Effect on the Landscape Character of the Site

5.7.10 The Proposed Development will substantially alter the character of the fields in which it is situated, replacing the rural character with one of a mix of an engineered landscape containing low level electrical infrastructure and areas of enhanced landscape and biodiversity. Apart from the Customer Substation, the electrical infrastructure will be under 4m high and the scheme has been designed to fit within the existing fields with only short sections of hedge being lost to allow access. The fields are fairly level, making them suitable for the creation of level compounds. The sensitivity of the Site is Medium and the magnitude of change in and around the BESS compounds will be High, resulting in a Moderate – Major adverse effect. The Proposed Development will, however, result in a more varied and enriched landscape along the riparian buffer and within Field 4, resulting in a Moderate benefit. Thus overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on the landscape character of the whole Site will be Moderate adverse.

Effect on the character of the wider LCA

5.7.11 The change in character to the Site will not be completely out of character with that of the immediate locality, where electrical infrastructure is a notable feature in the form of overhead lines and the existing substation. The electrical infrastructure is, however, perceived as a negative aspect of landscape character and the Proposed Development will reinforce that, resulting in a cumulative effect.

Table 5.6: Effect of the operational phase of the Proposed Development on Landscape Character

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Comment
The Site (part of the Hogshaw Claylands)	Medium	Year 1: High Year 10 and 20: Medium	Year 1: Moderate - Major adverse Year 10 and 20: Minor adverse	Only 41% of the agricultural land will be replaced with electrical infrastructure, with the remainder being enhanced in terms of landscape character in line with the landscape Guidelines for the area. As this matures it will compensate for the negative aspects of the development on landscape character.
The Hogshaw Claylands adjacent to the Site	Medium (Moderate)	Year 1: High Year 10 and 20: Medium	Year 1: Moderate adverse Year 10 and 20: Moderate beneficial	The Proposed BESS will largely be screened by the mitigating landscape while the increased tree cover will be more visible and beneficial.
Claydon Valley LCA	Medium (Moderate)	Year 1:Low Year 10 and 20: Low	Year Minor adverse Neutral	The Proposed BESS will largely be screened by the mitigating landscape while the increased tree cover will be more visible and beneficial. It will still be possible to perceive the increased electrical infrastructure within the valley.

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect	Significance of Effect	Comment
Quainton Hill LCA	High	Year 1: Low Year 10 and 20: Low	Moderate adverse Neutral	The Proposed BESS will largely be screened by the mitigating landscape while the increased tree cover will be more visible and beneficial. It will still be possible to perceive the increased electrical infrastructure within the valley.

5.7.12 Overall, the effect of the Proposed Development on the wider LCA's is considered to be not significant and in the long term, Neutral.

Direct effects on Public Rights of Way

5.7.13 The Proposed Development will have no direct effects on the existing PRoW network apart from the upgrading of the existing farm track which crosses PRoW GRA 1/2. This will be a Negligible adverse effect. It is proposed to establish a permissive path through the Site. It will enter the Site in the northeast corner of Field 1, close to where existing PRoW GRA 1/1, GRA 1/2 and GRA 2/2 meet. It will run down the northeast boundaries of Fields 1 and 2, within the setting of the landscape buffer strip until it reaches the brook in the northeast corner of Field 2. From there it will follow the brook southwest, within the landscape corridor and then head southeast, also following the watercourse, passing through the proposed nature area. On reaching the southeastern boundary of the nature area it will continue southeast along the southwest boundary of an adjoining field until it meets GRA 1/2. This new 1.8 Km route will benefit those seeking to enjoy the countryside, particularly because it will run alongside an attractive water course and will create a circular walk, usefully connecting into existing PRoW.

5.7.14 Part of the route will be fenced within a wide corridor so that access to the grassland can be restricted during the ground nesting bird season, but outside of the season people will be free to roam within the nature area (including the orchard) providing further benefit.

5.8 Visual impact

5.8.1 A series of viewpoints have been chosen to illustrate the likely effect of the Proposed Development on those living, working and visiting the area. For each viewpoint, photographs have been taken and are presented in Figures 9, 11 and 13 are located on Figures 10, 12 and 14 of Appendix A. The likely visual effect of the Proposed Development is then determined by combining the sensitivity of the viewer with the magnitude of change, using the criteria set out in Appendix B. It has not been possible to take photographs from private properties and so the visual impacts from these receptors are estimated. The

assessment below is also presented in the figures for ease of reference with the actual photographs.

5.8.2 The Applicant is seeking a temporary consent (40 years) and so effects will be temporary, albeit for a long duration. The exception being the effects arising from the tree, scrub and hedge planting, since this is likely to remain in place once the electrical infrastructure has been removed. Visual assessments have been made for Year 1 (immediately after construction and worst case), 10 Years after construction (a time when the hedge planting is likely to be fully effective) and Year 20 (by which time the woodland planting will have a significant visual effect). It is anticipated that the visual effect of the woodland will continue to increase over a 35 year timeframe.

VIEW 1: View 1: from rural footpath GRA 10/1 on the western edge of Granborough

The existing view

5.8.3 A rural view across the valley with some properties within Botolph Claydon visible on the ridge. The view is marred by the overhead transmission lines which cross the field of view and the existing substation. The Site is visible within the valley floor as slivers of field, partly obscured by foreground tree cover.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.4 In winter the upper parts of the battery containers and inverter houses will be visible in Field 1, painted in a variety of recessive greens to create, overall, a disruptive colour pattern. The customer substation will also be clearly visible. The electrical infrastructure will be less visible in summer.

5.8.5 The sensitivity is High (walkers but also some residents) and the magnitude of change High in winter and Medium is summer, resulting in a Major adverse effect in winter and a Moderate – Major adverse effect in summer. Both effects are **Significant.**

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.6 It is proposed to screen the BESS with tree planting. It will be possible to use fast growing species such as poplar, willow and alder in the valley floor. It should be possible to form an effective screen in both winter and summer, with only the upper section of the substation remaining visible. After 10 years the residual effect will be Minor adverse in winter (some containers will be visible through the leafless branches) and Neutral in summer as the fields comprising the Site will appear to be replaced by woodland, an equally valid component of a rural landscape. After 20 years the effect will be Neutral in winter and summer.

VIEW 2: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 as it joins Hogshaw Road, west of Granborough

The existing view

5.8.1 The lower elevation of the viewpoint means that the fields which make up the Site are not visible and only the hedges bounding the fields can be seen. It is a rural view but also marred by the transmission lines which cross the field of view.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.2 The upper sections of the containers and inverter houses will be visible above the hedge line, less so in summer. The proposed customer substation will be screened by the existing hedge alongside the PRoW. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Medium (winter and summer), resulting in a Moderate adverse effect, winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.3 It is proposed to screen the BESS with tree planting. It will be possible to use fast growing species such as poplar, willow and alder in the valley floor. It should be possible to form an effective screen in both winter and summer. After 10 years the residual effect will be Neutral in winter and summer as the fields comprising the Site will appear to be replaced by woodland, an equally valid component of a rural landscape. After 20 years the effect will be Neutral in winter and summer.

VIEW 3: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 heading towards the Site

The existing view

5.8.4 The lower elevation of the viewpoint means that the fields which make up the Site are not visible and only the hedges bounding the fields can be seen. It is a rural view but also marred by the transmission lines which cross the field of view and the East Claydon Substation.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.5 The upper sections of the containers and inverter houses will be visible above the hedge line, less so in summer. The proposed customer substation will be visible but will be seen in the context of the East Claydon Substation. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Medium (winter and summer), resulting in a Moderate adverse effect, winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.6 It is proposed to screen the BESS with tree planting. It will be possible to use fast growing species such as poplar, willow and alder in the valley floor. It should be possible to form an effective screen in both winter and summer. After 10 years the residual effect will be Neutral in winter and summer as the fields comprising the Site will appear to be replaced by woodland, an equally valid component of a rural landscape. After 20 years the effect will be Neutral in winter and summer.

VIEW 4: from rural footpath GAR 1/1 as it approaches the Site from the northeast

The existing view

5.8.7 This section of this footpath affords a slightly elevated view over the Site and so the grassland within the Site can be seen between the hedge lines. This is the clearest, close view of the Site. It is a rural view, marred by the overhead transmission lines.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.8 The upper sections of the containers and inverter houses and proposed customer substation will be visible above the hedge line, less so in summer. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Medium (winter and summer), resulting in a Moderate adverse effect, winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.9 It is proposed to screen the BESS with tree planting. It will be possible to use fast growing species such as poplar, willow and alder in the valley floor. By Year 10 it should be possible to form an effective screen in summer with glimpses of equipment through the leafless branches in winter. The residual effect will be Minor adverse in winter and Neutral in summer as the fields comprising the Site will appear to be replaced by woodland, an equally valid component of a rural landscape. After 20 years the effect will be Neutral in winter and summer.

VIEW 5: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northeast boundary of the Site

The existing view

5.8.10 The existing hedge on the northeast side of the site is low but dense (it has a high content of blackthorn) and blocks views into the Site even in winter. It is a rural landscape marred by the overhead transmission lines and the East Claydon Substation, visible along the line of the footpath.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.11 The proposed battery storage containers and inverter houses will be set sufficiently far away from the boundary hedge (typically by 35m), that they will not be visible, but the upper section of the proposed customer substation will be just visible through gaps in the tree line. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Low (winter and summer), resulting in a Minor adverse effect, winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.12 It is proposed to plant trees within a 30m wide landscape buffer which will run inside the hedge on this boundary. By Year 10 it will still be possible to see the taller elements of the substation, resulting in a Negligible adverse effect, winter and summer. By Year 20 the planting will screen the customer substation from view in summer and winter (due to the depth of the planting). The residual effect on visual amenity will be Minor beneficial as the woodland will also screen the overhead transmission lines from view.

VIEW 6: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northern boundary of the Site

The existing view

5.8.13 A rural view marred by the overhead transmission lines. The boundary hedge blocks views into the Site, even in winter.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.14 The upper section of the proposed customer substation will be clearly visible, rising above the hedge. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change High (winter and summer), resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse effect, winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.15 It is proposed to plant trees within a landscape buffer along this boundary which will form an effective screen in summer but will still allow glimpsed views of the upper part of the substation in winter since the buffer is narrower at this location. The substation cannot be set further away due to the constraint of the flood zone. By Year 10 it will still be possible to see the taller elements of the substation, resulting in a Negligible adverse effect, winter and summer. By Year 20 the planting will screen the customer substation from view in summer and winter resulting in a Negligible effect.

VIEW 7: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it heads east towards the Site

The existing view

5.8.16 A rural view which is partly restricted by the tree cover along the brook. The view is marred by overhead transmission lines.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.17 There will be filtered views of the proposed electrical infrastructure when the vegetation along the brook is out of leaf; it will be far less visible in summer. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Medium in winter and Low in summer, resulting in a Moderate adverse effect in winter and a Minor adverse effect in summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.18 The electrical infrastructure has to be located out of the flood zone and so there is a 30m – 150m wide landscape buffer alongside the brook. Tree and scrub planting within this area will augment the existing tree screen along the brook and screen the proposed development from view in summer and winter. After 10 years the residual effect on visual amenity will be Neutral in winter and summer and remain so for Year 20.

VIEW 8: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it continues up the hill, west of the Site

The existing view

5.8.19 As the footpath climbs the side of the valley the grassland within the fields which comprise the Site become more visible. They are part of a rural view across the valley towards Granborough, although the view is marred by the overhead transmission lines. The buildings of Sion Hill Farm are visible in the foreground.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.20 The rows of proposed battery container and inverter houses, painted in a disruptive pattern of green shades, will be partially visible in Field 1, seen through the gaps in the tree line along the brook. The upper part of the proposed customer substation will also be visible. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Medium in winter and summer, resulting in a Moderate adverse effect in winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.21 The electrical infrastructure has to be located out of the flood zone and so there is a 30m – 150m wide landscape buffer alongside the brook. Tree and scrub planting within this area will augment the existing tree screen along the brook and screen the proposed development from view in summer and winter. After 10 years the residual effect on visual amenity will be Neutral in winter and summer and remain so for Year 20.

VIEW 9: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it crests the hill, west of the Site

The existing view

5.8.22 The top of the valley affords a panoramic view across the valley towards Granborough and North Marston. It is a rural view marred by the overhead transmission lines. The majority of the Site is screened, by either topography or tree cover along the brook. Field 1 and 3 are most visible, far less so in summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.23 The electrical infrastructure will be visible in Fields 1 and 3 and in winter it will be possible to glimpse the upper part of the substation through the leafless branches of the trees along the brook. The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Medium in winter and summer, resulting in a Moderate adverse effect in winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.24 The electrical infrastructure has to be located out of the flood zone and so there is a 30m – 150m wide landscape buffer alongside the brook. Tree and scrub planting within this area will augment the existing tree screen along the brook and screen the proposed development from view in summer and winter. The residual effect on visual amenity will be Neutral in winter and summer and remain so for Year 20.

VIEW 10: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it enters the village of East Claydon (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way)

The existing view

5.8.25 This view illustrates how the village of East Claydon sits back from the edge of the valley and so from its environs the Site lies out of view in the base of the slope. The long-distance footpaths descend the side of the valley on a track which is set slightly down in the landform and so views of the Site when moving down the valley side are blocked.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.26 The proposed development will result in no changes to the view.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.27 No change to the view, no effect.

VIEW 11: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it descends the slope through countryside west of the Site (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way)

The existing view

5.8.28 This view illustrates how views towards the Site from these long-distance footpaths are blocked by the substantial hedges within the landscape.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.29 The proposed development will result in no changes to the view.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.30 No change to the view, no effect.

VIEW 12: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 (a continuation ECL 5/1) as it passes through countryside southwest of the site

The existing view

5.8.31 This view illustrates how views towards the Site from this footpath are blocked by the substantial hedges within the landscape.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.32 The proposed development will result in no changes to the view.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.33 No change to the view, no effect.

VIEW 13: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 looking through a field gateway southwest of the Site

The existing view

5.8.34 This view illustrates how views towards the Site from this footpath are blocked by the substantial hedges within the landscape.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.35 The proposed development will result in no changes to the view.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.36 Year 10, no effect but soon after the trees planted as part of the scheme will start to become visible above the foreground trees and will increasingly reduce the visibility of the existing transmission lines, resulting in a Minor beneficial effect, winter and summer.

VIEW 14: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south

The existing view

5.8.37 This view illustrates how views towards the Site from this footpath are blocked by the substantial hedges within the landscape.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.38 The proposed development will result in no changes to the view.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.39 No change to the view, no effect.

VIEW 15: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south

The existing view

5.8.40 A rural view across a field towards a hedge and tree line, beyond which are visible, on the skyline, the overhead transmission lines and the upper section of the East Claydon Substation.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.41 The batteries and inverter houses will be screened by the existing trees but it will be possible to glimpse the top of the proposed customer substation through the leafless branches in winter (although it will be lower than the East Claydon Substation it will be closer to the viewer). The sensitivity of the view is Medium (a local footpath) and the magnitude of change Low in winter and Negligible in summer, resulting in a Minor adverse effect in winter and Negligible in summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.42 Several layers of tree planting will be established between the viewer and the proposed customer substation. By Year 10 the effect will be Negligible but shortly after Year 10 the trees planted as part of the scheme will start to become visible above the foreground trees and will increasingly reduce the visibility of the existing transmission lines and substation, resulting in a Minor beneficial effect, winter and summer.

VIEW 16: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south

The existing view

5.8.43 A rural view across a field towards a boundary hedge, beyond which are visible, on the skyline, the overhead transmission lines and the upper section of the East Claydon Substation. Field 3 lies a further field away from the boundary hedge.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.44 The battery containers and inverter houses will be sufficiently low that they do not appear above the hedgerows and the customer substation will sufficiently distant that it will also not be visible. There will be no change to the view as a result of the Proposed Development.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.45 The upper part of the canopies of trees planted within fields 3 and 4 will become increasingly visible as they grow above the hedges, reducing the visible impact of the existing transmission lines. While the beneficial effect will not be significant by Year 10, by Year 20 there will be a Minor beneficial effect.

VIEW 17: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it passes along the southeast boundary of the main development area

The existing view

5.8.46 Footpath GAA 1/2 runs along the outside of the hedge which forms the southeast boundary of Field 1. It is a dense hedge which prevents views of the Site, even in winter. It does, however, pass the existing access agricultural track and entrance into the field. There is a fleeting view of part of Field 1 to those passing along the footpath.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.47 The farm track will be upgraded with a wider track of crushed stone and the gateway into the Site will be widened but the scheme has been designed so that the access track bends on entering the Site. Initially it will be possible to see a small part of the BESS through the gateway until the proposed landscaping has matured sufficiently to block the views. It will not be possible to see the battery containers and inverter houses when following the footpath alongside the hedge, since they will be set between 45m and 60m deep into the Site.

5.8.48 The sensitivity is Medium and the magnitude Medium resulting in a Moderate adverse effect in winter and summer on visual amenity, primarily due to the need to cross the upgraded access track and glimpses of the BESS through the access.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.49 Tree and hedge planting alongside the access track within Field 1 will block views of the BESS when looking down the track into the facility. The stoned access track crossed by the footpath will have weathered to appear as a farm track. Tree planting in the 30m – 50m wide landscape buffer along the southeast boundary will be visible above the hedge. The effect on visual amenity will be Neutral.

VIEW 18: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it descends a slope on the northern edge of Granborough

The existing view

5.8.50 This view illustrates how views of the Site from the footpaths and dwellings on the northern side of Granborough are restricted by tree cover and topography, although the East Claydon Substation and the transmission lines feeding into it are clearly visible.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.51 The majority of the proposed BESS will be screened by tree cover although the upper section of the proposed customer substation will be visible in winter through the leafless branches of the hedge (or if it is trimmed lower). As walkers descend the hill views become further restricted by the hedgerow cover.

5.8.52 The sensitivity is Medium and the magnitude of change Low in Winter and Negligible in summer, resulting in a Minor adverse effect in winter and Negligible in summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.53 The tree planting on the northeast side of the substation will start to reduce its visibility, but it will take up to 20 years for it to reach sufficient height to entirely screen the taller elements.

5.8.54 After 10 years the effect will still be Minor adverse but after 20 years the effect will be Neutral.

VIEW 19: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it passes through an area of historical earthworks north of the Site (un-designated)

The existing view

5.8.55 This view illustrates the Site in relation to the setting of this non-designated historical asset. It is a rural, lowland view, marred by the transmission lines which cross the field of view. Views of the fields which comprise the Site are blocked by intervening hedge and tree cover.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.56 The battery containers and inverter houses will be screened by the intervening hedges but the upper section of the proposed customer substation will be visible above the hedges, although partially screened by trees. The sensitivity is Medium and the magnitude of change Low resulting in a Minor adverse effect in summer and winter.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.57 The tree planting on the northeast side of the substation will start to reduce its visibility, but it will take up to 20 years for it to reach sufficient height to entirely screen the taller elements.

5.8.58 After 10 years the effect will still be Minor adverse but after 20 years the effect will be Neutral.

VIEW 20: from a field gateway on the East Claydon Road north of the Site and east of the East Claydon Substation

5.8.59 Views towards the Site from the East Claydon Road are restricted by hedges alongside the road and tree and hedge cover within the intervening landscape. This also limits views from public footpath GRA 1/1 as it crosses the fields, heading towards the Site. The Tuckey Farm solar farm would occupy intervening fields if built.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.60 The battery containers and inverter houses will be screened by the intervening hedges but the upper section of the proposed customer substation will be visible above the hedges,

although partially screened by trees. The sensitivity is Medium and the magnitude of change Low resulting in a Minor adverse effect in summer and winter.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.61 The tree planting on the northeast side of the substation will start to reduce its visibility, but it will take up to 20 years for it to reach sufficient height to entirely screen the taller elements.

5.8.62 After 10 years the effect will still be Minor adverse but after 20 years the effect will be Neutral.

VIEW 21: from Bridleway HOG 9/3 from the summit of Conduit Hill (part of Quainton Hill), south of the Site

The existing view

5.8.63 Conduit Hill affords a panoramic view over the valley towards Granborough and Winslow. The East Claydon Substation is visible, but is difficult to make out, as are the fields which comprise the Site, which is 2.7km from the hill.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.64 Some of the battery containers and inverter houses in Field 1 will be visible as well as the upper part of the proposed customer substation. They will, however, be difficult to make out, particularly due to the proposed disruptive coloration. Field 3 will remain in agricultural production and Field 4 will be landscaped. The sensitivity is High (Long Distance footpath) and the magnitude of change Low in winter and summer resulting in a Moderate adverse effect.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.65 The proposed tree planting will screen the proposed development from view. By Year 10 the effect will reduce to Minor adverse and by Year 20 it will be Neutral.

VIEW 22: From a field gateway on Botyl Road within Botolph Claydon

The existing view

5.8.66 Views of the Site from the Botyl Road are blocked by tree and hedge cover along the road but this field gateway affords a fleeting view across the valley towards the Site. Similar views are afforded from the upper windows of a few properties along the road. It is a rural view but is substantially adversely affected by the numerous transmission lines and towers which radiate out from the East Claydon Substation. Fields 2 and 3 are largely obscured by tree cover along the brook, but Field 1 is clearly visible.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.67 The most prominent elements of the BESS will be the roofs of the inverter houses in Field 1, interspersed among the battery containers, but these will mainly be seen through tree branches in winter. In summer the trees along the brook will screen the majority of the BESS. The Sensitivity is High (residential and the setting of a Conservation Area) and the magnitude of change Medium in winter, Low in summer, resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse effect in winter (**a significant effect**) and Moderate adverse in summer. The fleeting view from the road will be a Minor adverse effect in winter and Negligible in summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.68 Substantial tree planting will be undertaken between the compounds and the brook and within Field 4. Within 10 years this will for a sufficiently dense strip of vegetation to screen

the majority of the proposed electrical infrastructure except the roofs of a few inverter houses, winter and summer. The effect on visual amenity after 10 Years will be Minor adverse. After 20 years the effect will be Negligible winter and summer as the BESS will be entirely screened by trees.

VIEW 23: from footpath ECL 7/2 at Bernwood Farm, Botolph Claydon

The existing view

5.8.69 This view illustrates the view from high ground to the west of Botolph Claydon and is similar to View 22 except more of the Site is screened by topography and tree cover along the brook.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.70 The roofs of a few inverter houses within Field will be visible in summer and winter but the proposed customer substation will be screened by topography. Field 3 will remain in agricultural production but with a block of screening woodland planted close to the watercourse. Field 4 will be used for landscaping. There will be a substantial treed buffer between the village and the facility.

5.8.71 Sensitivity is Medium and the magnitude of change Low in winter and summer resulting in a Minor adverse effect, winter and summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.72 Substantial tree planting will be undertaken between the compounds and the brook and within Field 4. Within 10 years this will form a sufficiently dense strip of vegetation to screen the majority of the proposed electrical infrastructure except the roofs of a few inverter houses, winter and summer. The effect on visual amenity after 10 Years will be Minor adverse. After 20 years the effect will be Negligible winter and summer as the BESS will be entirely screened by trees.

VIEW 24: From Hogshaw Road outside Bracknall House (close to the proposed point of operational highway access)

The existing view

5.8.73 This view illustrates the view from the environs of the house, although views from the house are restricted by a tree in the front garden. In winter road users have views over the hedge towards the Site but in summer views are blocked. The fields which comprise the Site lie behind the intermediate hedges. The tower in Field 2 is visible, to the right of Sion Hill Farm on the valley slope north of the brook.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Year 1

5.8.74 In winter the upper sections of the battery containers and inverter houses in Field 1 and the upper part of the proposed substation will be visible above the trimmed hedges. Field 3 will remain in agricultural production and Field 4 will be used for landscaping and achieving BNG. The sensitivity is High and the magnitude of change Low resulting in a Moderate adverse effect in winter, Minor adverse in summer.

Predicted changes to the view and effect - Years 10 and 20

5.8.75 Extensive tree planting around the boundaries of the site will screen the proposed facility from view by Year 10 in summer and winter, resulting in a Neutral effect. The effect will be Minor beneficial by Year 20 as the tree cover establishes.

Summary of the effects on visual amenity

5.8.76 Following the completion of construction (Year 1 of operation) there are eight locations where the Proposed Development will be visible to sensitive receptors, adversely affecting their visual amenity:

- Residents within a few properties on the west side of Granborough
- Users of a short section of a PRoW GRA 10/1 on the west side of Granborough
- Users of PRoW GRA 2/2 as it approaches the Site from the west.
- Users of PRoW GAR 1/1, GAR 1/2 and GAR 2/1 and as they pass close to the Site.
- Users of PRoW ECL 4/2 as it climbs the valley side to the north.
- A few residents within properties on the southern edge of Winslow.
- Residents within a few properties at Botolph Claydon.
- Walkers on Conduit and Quainton Hill 4km to the southwest.

5.8.77 These few viewpoints/receptors should be seen in the context of the many areas, including surrounding roads, footpaths and properties, where it will not be possible to see the Proposed Development. The adverse visual effects can be reduced to an acceptable level within ten years through the landscape mitigation proposed. The effects on visual amenity are summarised in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Summary of Visual Effects Years 1, 10 and 20

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 1: View 1: from rural footpath GRA 10/1 on the western edge of Granborough Distance to nearest site boundary: 670 m Elevation: 112 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76568 24996	High, some residents and walkers	Major adverse winter Moderate Major adverse summer	Minor adverse winter Neutral summer	Neutral winter Neutral Summer
VIEW 2: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 as it joins Hogshaw Road, west of Granborough Distance to nearest site boundary: 431 m Elevation: 102 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76332 25032	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse winter Moderate adverse summer	Neutral winter Neutral summer	Neutral winter Neutral summer
VIEW 3: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 heading towards the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 264 m Elevation: 98 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76168 25081	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse in winter Moderate adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 4: from rural footpath GAR 1/1 as it approaches the Site from the northeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 190 m Elevation: 97 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75974 25396	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse effect in winter Moderate adverse effect in summer	Minor adverse effect in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer
VIEW 5: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northeast boundary of the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 10 m Elevation: 93 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75880 25236	Medium Walkers	Minor adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Negligible adverse effect in winter and summer	Minor beneficial in winter Minor beneficial in summer
VIEW 6: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northern boundary of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 5.7 m Elevation: 90 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75694 25376	Medium Walkers	Moderate to Major adverse in winter Moderate to Major adverse in summer	Negligible adverse effect in winter Negligible adverse effect in summer	Negligible adverse effect in winter Negligible adverse effect in summer

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 7: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it heads east towards the Site. Distance to nearest site boundary: 351 m Elevation: 96 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75082 25550	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer
VIEW 8: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it continues up the hill, west of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 775 m Elevation: 116 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74498 25494	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse in winter Moderate adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer
VIEW 9: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it crests the hill, west of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 965 m Elevation: 120 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74294 25535	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse in winter Moderate adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 10: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it enters the village of East Claydon (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way) Distance to nearest site boundary: 1 km Elevation: 121 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74158 25557	High Walkers and riders.	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer
VIEW 11: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it descends the slope through countryside west of the Site (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way) Distance to nearest site boundary: 424 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74669 25004	High Walkers and riders.	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer
VIEW 12: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 (a continuation ECL 5/1) as it passes through countryside southwest of the site Distance to nearest site boundary: 257 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75097 24531	High Walkers and riders.	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 13: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 looking through a field gateway southwest of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 278 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75155 24424	Medium Walkers and riders	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer	Minor beneficial Winter and summer
VIEW 14: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Distance to nearest site boundary: 401 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75444 24252	Medium Walkers and riders	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer
VIEW 15: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Distance to nearest site boundary: 238 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75488 24439	Medium Walkers and riders	Minor adverse in winter Negligible adverse in summer	Negligible in winter Negligible in summer	Minor beneficial winter Minor beneficial in summer

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 16: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Distance to nearest site boundary: 195 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75636 24553	Medium Walkers and riders	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer	No effect Winter and summer
VIEW 17: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it passes along the southeast boundary of the main development area Distance to nearest site boundary: 10m from field but on the access track Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75771 24946	Medium Walkers	Moderate adverse in winter Moderate adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer
VIEW 18: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it descends a slope on the northern edge of Granborough Distance to nearest site boundary: 909 m Elevation: 89 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76209 26114	Medium	Minor adverse effect in winter Negligible adverse in summer	Minor adverse effect in winter Negligible adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 19: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it passes through an area of historical earthworks north of the Site (un-designated) Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.2 km Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75942 26606	Medium	Minor adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Minor adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer
VIEW 20: from a field gateway on the East Claydon Road north of the Site and east of the East Claydon Substation Distance to nearest site boundary: 5 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75768 24943	Medium	The solar farm panels will block the view towards the Proposed Developm ent.	The solar farm panels will block the view towards the Proposed Developm ent.	The solar farm panels will block the view towards the Proposed Developm ent.
VIEW 21: from Bridleway HOG 9/3 from the summit of Conduit Hill (part of Quainton Hill), south of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 2.7 km Elevation: 175 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74980 21879	Medium	Moderate adverse effect in winter Moderate adverse effect in summer	Minor adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Neutral in summer Neutral in winter

Viewpoint and Location	Visual Receptors and sensitivity	Effect Year 1	Effect Year 10	Effect Year 20
VIEW 22: From a field gateway on Botyl Road within Botolph Claydon Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.6 km Elevation: 127m AOD Grid reference: SP 73482 24917	High	Moderate to Major adverse effect in winter Moderate to Major adverse effect in summer	Minor adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Negligible in winter Negligible in summer
VIEW 23: from footpath ECL 7/2 at Bernwood Farm, Botolph Claydon Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.9 km Elevation: 122m AOD Grid reference: SP 73415 24230	Medium	Minor adverse effect in winter Minor adverse effect in summer	Minor adverse effect in winter Minor adverse effect in summer	Negligible in winter Negligible in summer
VIEW 24: From Hogshaw Road outside Bracknall House (close to the proposed point of highway access) Distance to nearest site boundary: 474m Elevation: 100m AOD Grid reference: SP 76146 24703	High	Moderate adverse in winter Minor adverse in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer	Neutral in winter Neutral in summer

Effect on the visual amenity of residents

5.8.78 The Proposed Development will be visible to some residents living on the edge of Granborough, Winslow and Botolph Claydon. The number of windows within these settlements which afford views of the Site can be ascertained from the photographs presented in Figures 6.7 and 6.8. They were taken with a zoom lens and so the distance between the properties and the Site is far greater than indicated. Those living in Winslow are considered sufficiently distant, will views filtered by layers of vegetation that the effect on their visual amenity will be at most Minor adverse.

5.8.79 Approximately six houses within Granborough will afford views, from upper windows, and initially the effect will be Moderate – Major adverse in winter and Moderate adverse in summer. After 20 years it will decline to Minor adverse in winter and summer as the landscape mitigation forms an effective screen with only the upper section of the Customer Substation remaining visible from some properties.

5.8.80 Approximately twelve windows within Botolph Claydon will afford views of the Proposed Development but it will largely be seen through gaps in the tree cover along the brook. The removal of the BESS compound within Field 3 combined with increased woodland planting along the watercourse substantially reduces the amount of electrical infrastructure visible from the village.

5.9 Cumulative Landscape And Visual Effects

Introduction

5.9.1 The main potential cumulative effects will arise from the Tuckey Farm solar farm consent. The solar farm is split into a block north of the East Claydon Road 740m north of the Site and a block south of the East Claydon Road, 885m northeast of the Site. HS2 potentially has a sequential cumulative effect and so is also considered. Other proposed projects at an earlier pre-application stage of planning include the Rosefield Solar Farm and BESS and the Wings Solar Farm. These are plotted on Figure 5.15. While cumulative effects are normally only considered for detailed planning applications or consented schemes, some consideration is given to the pre-application schemes.

Cumulative Landscape Effects

5.9.2 The Proposed Development and the Tuckey Farm Solar Farm will increase the amount of electrical infrastructure around the East Claydon Substation. The East Claydon Substation and Tuckey Farm Solar Farm (if built) lie within the Claydon Valley LCA while the Site lies within the Hogshaw Claylands. The substation represents an LCA transition zone and the area also follows a trend nationally for new electrical infrastructure to aggregate around substations which are the most efficient and functional point of connection.

5.9.3 The solar farm will be largely screened from the Hogshaw Claylands by the East Claydon Substation. It will be possible to see the part of the solar farm that lies south of the East Claydon Road in conjunction with the proposed Customer Substation and so the increase in electrical infrastructure in the area will be noticeable, but only from a limited area. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect on the transitional landscape character area around the substation is not considered to increase the Moderate adverse effect that will result due to the Proposed Development on its own. The cumulative effect on the perceived character of the wider Claydon Valley and Hogshaw Claylands LCA will be Negligible.

5.9.4 HS2 is too distant to have a direct cumulative effect on the landscape character areas around the Site but people moving sequentially through the landscape may come across the temporary construction works of HS2, the solar farm and the Proposed Development, leading to the cumulative perception of significant landscape change occurring in the local landscape. Once all of the schemes have been built out the associated mitigation will integrate the developments into the landscape and the overall sequential cumulative effect will be Negligible.

5.9.5 Regarding the pre-application schemes, if consented and built out it is likely that the landscape around the substation will be perceived as one in which electrical infrastructure is a defining feature, an adverse cumulative effect. The extent of this perception will depend upon how effective any proposed screening associated with each proposal is. If effective, the perception will be of a more acceptable, enclosed/well treed landscape. Certainly, this is the effect that the proposed mitigation associated with the East Claydon BESS seeks to achieve.

Cumulative visual effects

Direct effects

5.9.6 The locations where a viewer will be able to see parts of the Tuckey solar farm and the Proposed Development either looking directly or turning their head are Direct effects will be very limited, largely because the East Claydon Substation lies between the two schemes, blocking views, and both developments sit in the base of the valley. It might be possible to see parts of both schemes from the upper floor windows of a few properties on the northwest part of Granborough, but at distance. It may also be possible to see elements of both from Viewpoint 4 (only by looking in different directions), but the level of increase in electrical infrastructure in the view will not increase the adverse effect from the currently assessed Moderate adverse for Year 1. The landscape mitigation associated with both schemes will reduce this adverse effect by Year 10 to Minor adverse in winter and Neutral in summer with no cumulative effect.

5.9.7 It will be possible to see parts of both schemes from Viewpoint 8 (again by looking in different directions), but this will not increase the level of effect beyond Moderate adverse and again with mitigation, this will decline to Minor adverse in winter and Neutral in summer with no cumulative effect.

5.9.8 Quainton Hill affords an elevated view over the Site and East Claydon Substation. The proposed substation will be seen with the existing larger substation as a backdrop, and at a distance of over 3Km will not represent a significant cumulative effect within the very wide panorama. The BESS compound in Field 1 will be visible but will be screened once the several layers of tree planting between the viewer and BESS have established. The Tuckey solar farm will be largely screened from Quainton Hill because it will lie behind the East Claydon Substation and in the side valley where it will be screened by the rising ground of the East Claydon ridge. As a result, the direct cumulative visual effect from Quainton Hill will not be significant.

Sequential Cumulative Effects

5.9.9 The Tuckey Farm Solar Farm will be partly visible to users of the East Claydon Road, while the Proposed Development is unlikely to be so. It may be possible to glimpse parts of the Proposed Development from parts of the Hogshaw Road in winter, but it will not be possible to see the solar farm. There will therefore be a minor adverse sequential cumulative effect to road users in Year 1, but this will decline to Negligible after Year 10.

5.9.10 There is an extensive rural public footpath network in the vicinity and so people using it may come across the Proposed Development and the Tuckey Farm Solar Farm as they

pass through the landscape, depending upon which route they take. The footpaths that make up this network are WIS 1/1, WIS 1/2, ECL 3A/1, ECL 3/1, GRA 1/1, GRA 2/1 and GRA 2/2. To users of the network there will be a Minor adverse cumulative effect in Year 1, declining to Negligible in Year 10.

5.9.11 With regard to HS2, once the mitigation associated with this project is in place the section west of the Site will be largely screened within the landscape and even the road crossings will not afford views of the track. The sequential effect will be Negligible.

Effect on heritage assets

5.9.12 A separate Heritage Statement has been produced as part of the ES.

5.10 Decommissioning

5.10.1 All the equipment, buildings, concrete foundations, fencing, underground cables, drainage pipes, gravel and hard standings can be removed at the end of the operational life of the facility, particularly as the majority of it is modular and has been designed to be delivered as complete units on a HGV. The flat platforms will be topsoiled and returned to agriculture. The tree planting around them will have matured into woodland and will be retained. As a result the Site will appear as a block of woodland within the landscape.

5.10.2 Whether the substation is retained or removed or reconfigured will depend on the grid management strategy at the time of decommissioning. It is likely that whatever the post operational use of the Site it can be accommodated within the woodland framework without any significant adverse visual and landscape effects on the wider landscape.

5.10.3 The effect on landscape character as a result of decommissioning is set out in **Table 5.8.**

Table 5.8: Summary of effects on landscape character on decommissioning

Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect on decom-missioning	Significance of Effect	Comment
The Site (part of the Hogshaw Claylands)	Medium	Medium	Moderate beneficial	The landscape will comprise fields and water bodies set within mature woodland.
The Hogshaw Claylands adjacent to the Site	Medium (Moderate)	Medium	Moderate beneficial	The Site will appear as a block of mature woodland within the landscape.
Claydon Valley LCA	Medium (Moderate)	Medium	Moderate beneficial	The Site will appear as a block of mature woodland forming

				part of the setting of this LCA.
North Marston Undulating Claylands LCA	Medium (Moderate)	Low	Minor beneficial	The mature woodland on the Site will screen the East Claydon Substation, enhancing the setting of this LCA.
Quainton Hill LCA	High	Low	Moderate beneficial	The mature woodland on the Site will screen the East Claydon Substation, enhancing the setting of this LCA.

Table 5.9 Summary of effects on visual amenity on decommissioning

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 1: View 1: from rural footpath GRA 10/1 on the western edge of Granborough Distance to nearest site boundary: 670 m Elevation: 112 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76568 24996	Sensitivity: High Magnitude: Medium	Moderate to Major beneficial summer and winter	The blocks of mature trees will be a dominant, positive feature in the valley and will reduce the visibility of some of the transmission towers.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 2: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 as it joins Hogshaw Road, west of Granborough Distance to nearest site boundary: 431 m Elevation: 102 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76332 25032	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial summer and winter	The blocks of mature trees will be a dominant, positive feature in the valley and will reduce the visibility of some of the transmission towers.
VIEW 3: from rural footpath GRA 2/2 heading towards the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 264 m Elevation: 98 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76168 25081	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: High	Moderate beneficial summer and winter	The blocks of mature trees will be a dominant, positive feature in the valley and will reduce the visibility of some of the transmission towers.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 4: from rural footpath GAR 1/1 as it approaches the Site from the northeast Distance to nearest site boundary: 190 m Elevation: 97 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75974 25396	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial summer and winter	The blocks of mature trees will be a dominant, positive feature in the valley and will reduce the visibility of some of the transmission towers.
VIEW 5: rom rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northeast boundary of the Site Direction of view: West Distance to nearest site boundary: 10 m Elevation: 93 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75880 25236	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial summer and winter	The blocks of mature trees will be a dominant, positive feature in the valley.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 6: from rural footpath GRA 2/1 as it runs just outside the northern boundary of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 5.7 m Elevation: 90 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75694 25376	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial summer and winter	The blocks of mature trees will be a dominant, positive feature in the valley.
VIEW 7: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it heads east towards the Site. Distance to nearest site boundary: 351 m Elevation: 96 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75082 25550	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial summer and winter	The mature trees will reinforce the line of tree cover along the brook and provide succession.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 8: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it continues up the hill, west of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 775 m Elevation: 116 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74498 25494	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial summer and winter.	The mature trees will reinforce the line of tree cover along the brook and provide succession.
VIEW 9: from rural footpath ECL 4/2 as it crests the hill, west of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 965 m Elevation: 120 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74294 25535	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Low	Moderate beneficial summer and winter.	The mature trees will reinforce the line of tree cover along the brook and provide succession.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 10: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it enters the village of East Claydon (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way) Distance to nearest site boundary: 1 km Elevation: 121 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74158 25557	No change	No effect, summer and winter.	
VIEW 11: from Bridleway ECL 5/1 as it descends the slope through countryside west of the Site (also part of the Midshires Way and Buckinghamshire Way) Distance to nearest site boundary: 424 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74669 25004	No change	No effect, summer and winter.	

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 12: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 (a continuation ECL 5/1) as it passes through countryside southwest of the site Distance to nearest site boundary: 257 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75097 24531	No change	No effect, summer and winter.	
VIEW 13: from Bridleway HOG 6/1 looking through a field gateway southwest of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 278 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75155 24424	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Low	Minor beneficial Summer and winter.	The mature trees will be visible above the intervening vegetation and will reduce the visibility of the overhead transmission lines.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 14: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Distance to nearest site boundary: 401 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75444 24252	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Low	Minor beneficial Summer and winter	The mature trees will be visible above the intervening vegetation and will reduce the visibility of the overhead transmission lines.
VIEW 15: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Distance to nearest site boundary: 238 m Elevation: 94 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75488 24439	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial, summer and winter	The mature trees will be visible above the intervening vegetation and will reduce the visibility of the overhead transmission lines.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 16: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it approaches the Site from the south Distance to nearest site boundary: 195 m Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75636 24553	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Moderate beneficial, summer and winter	The mature trees will be visible above the intervening vegetation and will reduce the visibility of the East Claydon Substation and the overhead transmission lines.
VIEW 17: from rural footpath GRA 1/2 as it passes along the southeast boundary of the main development area Distance to nearest site boundary: 10m from field but on the access track Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75771 24946	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: High	Neutral	The mature trees behind the hedge will be a dominant positive feature as typical of therural landscape as the hedge.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 18: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it descends a slope on the northern edge of Granborough Distance to nearest site boundary: 909 m Elevation: 89 m AOD Grid reference: SP 76209 26114	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Low	Neutral	The upper canopies of the trees planted as mitigation will be visible above the intervening vegetation, a rural feature within a rural setting.
VIEW 19: from rural footpath GRA 3/1 as it passes through an area of historical earthworks north of the Site (un-designated) Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.2 km Elevation: 91 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75942 26606	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Low	Neutral	The upper canopies of the trees planted as mitigation will be visible above the intervening vegetation, a rural feature within a rural setting.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 20: from a field gateway on the East Claydon Road north of the Site and east of the East Claydon Substation Distance to nearest site boundary: 5 m Elevation: 95 m AOD Grid reference: SP 75768 24943	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Medium	Neutral	The upper canopies of the trees planted as mitigation will be visible above the intervening vegetation, a rural feature within a rural setting, although if the solar farm is built out the panels will block this view.
VIEW 21: from Bridleway HOG 9/3 from the summit of Conduit Hill (part of Quainton Hill), south of the Site Distance to nearest site boundary: 2.7 km Elevation: 175 m AOD Grid reference: SP 74980 21879	Sensitivity: High Magnitude: Low	Moderate beneficial	The trees planted as part of the mitigation will have matured, forming a visible block of woodland that will also screen the existing substation.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 22: From a field gateway on Botyl Road within Botolph Claydon Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.6 km Elevation: 127m AOD Grid reference: SP 73482 24917	Sensitivity: High Magnitude: Low	Neutral	The upper canopies of the trees planted as mitigation will be visible above the intervening vegetation, a rural feature within a rural setting.
VIEW 23: from footpath ECL 7/2 at Bernwood Farm, Botolph Claydon Distance to nearest site boundary: 1.9 km Elevation: 122m AOD Grid reference: SP 73415 24230	Sensitivity: Medium Magnitude: Low	Neutral	The upper canopies of the trees planted as mitigation will be visible above the intervening vegetation, a rural feature within a rural setting.

Viewpoint and Location	Sensitivity and magnitude of change	Effect on decommissioning	Comments
VIEW 24: From Hogshaw Road outside Bracknall House (close to the proposed point of highway access) Distance to nearest site boundary: 474m Elevation: 100m AOD Grid reference: SP 76146 24703	Sensitivity: High Magnitude: Low	Neutral	The upper canopies of the trees planted as mitigation will be visible above the intervening vegetation, a rural feature within a rural setting.

5.11 Summary and Conclusion

5.11.1 The landscape and Visual Amenity chapter determines the landscape and visual effects that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development and makes proposals for mitigation measures designed to avoid, prevent, reduce, offset or compensate for any significant negative effects. The aim is to identify those effects which are considered 'Significant'. The identification of Significant effects allows them to be considered in the planning process.

5.11.2 The methodology to determine significance follows guidance set out in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', Third Edition (Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment, 2013). This combines expert qualitative assessment with quantitative assessment. Quantitative assessment combines the sensitivity of a receptor with the magnitude of change (in either landscape character or visual amenity). Sensitivity is an assessment formed from combining judgements of the susceptibility of a particular landscape or visual receptor to a particular landscape or visual effect resulting from the specific development and a judgement on the value attached to a particular landscape receptor or view. The 'magnitude' of a landscape or visual effect is an assessment combining judgements on the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is sort or long term in duration. The 'significance' of a landscape or visual effect is an assessment made by combining the judgements on the sensitivity of the Landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of the landscape or visual effect. Effects judged to be of Moderate to Major or Major are considered significant.

5.11.3 The Site and its immediate surroundings do not lie within a designated landscape such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Site lies within the Hogshaw Claylands Landscape Character Area, a gently sloping bowl of low ground in mixed

agricultural use which is sparsely settled. Landscape quality has been determined as Low to Medium (largely due to the adverse influence of the East Claydon Substation and the transmission lines which radiate from it). Susceptibility is Medium, therefore the Site has a slightly less than Medium Sensitivity to the type of development proposed.

5.11.4 The main sensitive receptors will be users of the PRoW network which passes close to the Site, although typically views from within the base of the valley are very limited due to intervening tree and hedge cover. Views of the Site are possible from limited areas on the upper slopes of the valley, including a few residential properties on the edges of Winslow, Granborough and Botolph Claydon and the more distant elevated ground on Conduit/Quainton Hill.

5.11.5 The Proposed Development will substantially alter the character of the fields in which it is situated, replacing the rural character with one of a mix of an engineered landscape containing low level electrical infrastructure and areas of enhanced landscape. Apart from the Customer Substation, the electrical infrastructure will be under four metres high, and the scheme has been designed to fit within the existing fields, with only short sections of hedge being lost to allow access. The fields are fairly level, making them suitable for the creation of level compounds.

5.11.6 The existing hedges around the fields which comprise the Site are substantial and will significantly reduce the visibility of the Proposed Development from viewpoints which are at a similar level to the Site. The compounds have been offset from these hedges to ensure their protection, with substantial buffers to allow additional mitigation. The existing tree cover along the brook is substantial and provides a level of screening to views from the more elevated ground to the north, but it is proposed to augment this with additional woodland and tree planting. Substantial tree planting is proposed to the southeast to screen the proposed facility from high ground around Granborough. Substantial tree planting to the northeast will screen the proposed facility to long distance views from the edge of Winslow and, on the northwest side, the high ground around Botolph Claydon and Conduit/Quainton Hill. To ensure rapid screening the proposed planting will include a mix of fast-growing species suited to the wet clay of the valley floor, such as poplars, willow and alders; all characteristic of the area. The planting will include heavy standard and larger tree stock to maximise initial impact.

5.11.7 Even in the long-distance elevated views the existing hedgerows will substantially screen the majority of the equipment without requiring new hedge planting to be effective. The inverter houses will be painted in a range of recessive greens to create an overall disruptive colour pattern to enable them to blend in with the landscape when seen from the few elevated viewpoints.

5.11.8 The aim is to establish sufficient depth of planting that the tree canopies are an effective screen, even in winter, due to the depth and density of the branches. The existing hedges will also be managed to retain around 60% top growth over winter for the benefit of wildlife, with the cutting alternating in subsequent years. This will maintain a higher level of winter screening compared with traditional agricultural management.

5.11.9 The following summarises the Significant effects and how they will become less than significant and acceptable over time as the proposed mitigation becomes effective. The effects are all local and in the 40-year timeframe of the operational period assigned a degree of permanence, but the adverse effects are ultimately reversible on decommissioning.

- A Moderate – Major adverse effect on the landscape character of the fields within which electrical infrastructure will be situated, both during construction and in Years 1, 10 and 20, but a Moderate beneficial effect on decommissioning.

- A Major adverse effect in winter (Moderate to Major in summer) to a few residents and users of part of PRoW GRA 10/1, during construction and in Year 1, declining to Minor adverse by Year 10, Neutral by Year 20 and Moderate to Major beneficial on decommissioning. This is a
- A Moderate to Major adverse effect to a few residents on the edge of Botolph Claydon, during construction and in Year 1, declining to Minor adverse by Year 10, Negligible by Year 20 and Neutral on decommissioning.
- Major adverse effects on the visual amenity of walkers using footpath ECL 4/2, mainly due to the temporary haul road which crosses the footpath. This is a temporary effect.

5.11.10 While there is the potential for the Proposed Development to have an adverse cumulative effect in association with the consented, but not yet built, Tuckey Farm Solar Farm the effect is not considered to increase the effect beyond the Moderate adverse as already determined for the Proposed Development. Since the Proposed Development and the solar farm will be separated by the existing East Claydon Substation the direct cumulative effect on visual amenity above the effects determined will be Negligible to most receptors. There will, however, be a Minor adverse sequential effect on those passing both developments when using the local PRoW network.

5.11.11 It is concluded that the Proposed Development will have some significant adverse landscape and visual effects during construction and initially when complete, but these will decline to acceptable levels within ten years, once the mitigation has become effective. On decommissioning the woodland planting and habitat creation will deliver a legacy of landscape and visual benefits.

5.12 References

1) Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) 3rd Edition
2) The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) 'Landscape Character and Assessment – Guidance for England and Scotland' (LCA)
3) Natural England (2014) 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment'
4) Department for Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2018
5) Aylesbury Vale District Council, Aylesbury Vale Local Plan, 2004 (Saved policies, as of September 2007)
6) Aylesbury Vale District Council, Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013 to 2033 Proposed Submission, November 2017
7) Winslow Town Council, Winslow Neighbourhood Plan 2014 to 2031, June 2014
8) Aylesbury Vale District Council, Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment, 2008
9) Natural England, National Character Area profile (2013).