



**STEPHENSON
HALLIDAY**

Planning, Landscape & Environment
an **RSK** company

Proposed solar farm on land west of Berrington

Landscape Proof of Evidence by
Daniel Leaver CMLI

Prepared for:

Econergy International Ltd

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Witness Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1.1 My name is Daniel Leaver and I am Associate Director of Landscape Planning with Stephenson Halliday environmental planning and landscape architecture consultants, an RSK Group company. I hold a Bachelor of Science Honours Degree from the University of London (1986) and Postgraduate, Bachelor of Landscape Design (1992) from the University of Manchester. I am a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute.
- 1.1.2 I have over twenty years professional experience and have been involved in landscape and visual assessments for a broad range of development proposals including renewable energy developments, commercial, residential and major infrastructure projects. I have prepared evidence and appeared in order to give expert witness evidence on landscape and visual matters in the countryside at written representations appeals, Public Inquiries and Hearings.
- 1.1.3 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this Public Inquiry is true and has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution, the Landscape Institute. I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

1.2 Appointment

- 1.2.1 I am instructed to provide a Proof of Evidence on behalf of Eenergy International Ltd (the 'Appellant') in respect of landscape and visual matters concerning the proposed solar farm development on land to the west of Berrington.
- 1.2.2 In September 2022, a detailed planning application (LPA application reference 22/04355/FUL) was submitted by the Appellant to Shropshire Council (the "Authority") for the proposed solar farm which is now the subject of this appeal. I was approached in December 2023 to review the proposed development and submitted application material in the context of the reason for refusal and any other landscape and visual matters arising. Following a review of the case and relevant information I provided a proposal to the Appellant to provide professional services which was accepted.

2 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE & APPROACH

2.1 Scope of Evidence

2.1.1 The background and policy context to my evidence is set out fully in Mr Anthony Heslehurst's Planning Evidence and I do not repeat that information. My evidence focusses on the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development to within 0.5km of the appeal site as this is the focus of the reason for refusal.

2.1.2 The principal aim of my evidence is to demonstrate that:

- Concerning landscape and visual matters, I will show that the proposal can be accommodated with limited impacts on landscape and visual receptors within the local area of the site.

2.1.3 The boundary of the appeal site is illustrated on Figure 1 of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) (CD 1.18) prepared by RSK ADAS Ltd. (ADAS).

2.2 Approach

2.2.1 I have reviewed the information submitted as part of the original planning application by the Appellant, including the LVA in respect of landscape and visual matters. I have then focused my own critical appraisal on the issues I consider to be most relevant for the decision maker.

2.2.2 My evidence serves to provide a considered understanding of the landscape and visual issues to be taken forward into the planning balance. That planning balance is considered by Mr Heslehurst, and it is not the purpose of my evidence to advise on whether planning consent should or should not be granted.

3 REASONS FOR REFUSAL

3.1.1 The Council refused planning permission by letter dated 16th May 2023 with a single reason for refusal in relation to landscape and visual matters as follows:

“2. The proposed solar farm site would potentially have a visually oppressive effect for users of the publicly maintained highway leading to Cantlop Mill which bisects the site. This is due to the height difference of up to 6m locally between the highway and the top of the proposed arrays. The proposals would also have an adverse effect on existing expansive and high-quality views in the vicinity of the public footpath at Cantlop which is in an elevated position overlooking the site. Other publicly accessible views of a generally pristine rural environment exist from the Berrington Road to the north and the Eaton Mascot Road to the east. Additional field margin planting has been proposed and solar arrays have been pulled back in some margins with the objective of seeking to reduce such views. However, full screening is not physically possible due to the local topography, and it is not certain how effective planting would be as a visual mitigation measure. The proposals therefore have the potential to adversely affect the local landscape and visual amenities from a number of public viewpoints surrounding the site due to the replacement of the current arable fields with solar arrays and associated built infrastructure. This conflicts with Core Strategy Policies CS6, CS17 and SAMDev policy MD12.”

3.1.2 The reason suggests that the levels of adverse visual effects would cause sufficient harm as to be “**visually oppressive**” for users of the highway that bisects the site and that there would be “**an adverse effect on existing expansive and high-quality views in the vicinity of the public footpath at Cantlop**”. In addition, it is stated that it is uncertain as to how the proposed landscape planting would mitigate the adverse effects experienced by people viewing the proposed development from the local road network.

3.1.3 My proof specifically addresses the single reason for refusal in so much as it concerns the effects of the appeal proposals on the visual amenity of people in the vicinity of the public right of way (PRoW) 0407/5R/2 at Cantlop and for people using the local publicly maintained roads that run adjacent to the site.

3.1.4 The landscape and visual effects of the proposal are considered against relevant planning policy as cited in the reason for refusal. As mentioned above, my evidence serves to provide an understanding of landscape and visual issues and does not consider the planning balance.

- 3.1.5 A full description of the appeal proposals is not repeated in my proof of evidence but can be found in the Appellant's main Statement of Case.
- 3.1.6 For the purposes of preparing my evidence I have visited the appeal site and relevant viewing locations in the surrounding countryside including the Berrington Road to the north, the Eaton Mascot Road to the south, the lane through the centre of the site to Cantlop Mill, PRow 0407/5R/2 and PRow 0407/1/1 and other local PRow.

4 BACKGROUND TO THE APPEAL

4.1 The Application and Decision

4.1.1 In September 2022, a detailed planning application (application reference 22/04355/FUL) was submitted by the Appellant to the Authority for the proposed solar farm which is now the subject of this appeal. The application was submitted with an accompanying LVA (CD 1.18) prepared by ADAS.

4.1.2 The case planner's report contains a number of references which I set out below under the main headings with which they appear in the report.

Representations

4.1.3 No objections are recorded from Berrington Parish Council or Shropshire Council Officers with respect to landscape and visual matters. It is noted that in the committee report (CD 3.1) the case officer stated that:

4.1.4 *"The conclusions and methodology of the LVIA have been supported by the Council's landscape consultant."* (para. 6.5.2).

4.1.5 It is noted that Councillor Wild has objected to the appeal proposals as follows:

"The photo montages submitted do not reflect the landscape impact and have been taken in a way which does not show residents' concerns.

Catastrophic impact on visual amenity for residents, walkers and visitors". (para. 4.13i)

4.1.6 In addition, the council has received 194 public representations in support of the proposals, 109 objections and 2 neutral representations. The main issues of concern to objectors are summarized at para. 4.14 of the committee report as follows:

"Visual impact: Site will be visible for 12 months of the year from Cantlop. A tarmac, council-maintained lane runs N/S through the centre of the proposed development. It is used by a significant number of walkers, equestrians and cyclists. Loss of views. Users off this PRoW will find motorised solar panels looming up to five metres above them as they walk down the lane."

4.1.7 The letters of support were summarized in the same document at para. 4.15 as follows:

“Visual amenity: Only a few views of the application site from the right of way, generally above the eyeline of walkers. Some properties in Cantlop will be affected and mitigation measures should provide screening. The site is not highly visible from the AONB.”

4.1.8 The planning application was scheduled for determination at planning committee on 9th May 2023 with the Report to Committee recommending permission be granted. Paragraph 6.5.8 of the Report to Committee sets out the conclusions of the Council’s landscape adviser on the landscape and visual impacts of the proposals as follows:

“The Council’s landscape adviser has supported the LVIA methodology and conclusions that the proposals can be accepted in terms of visual and landscape effects.”

4.1.9 The Council refused permission against the officer recommendation. The decision notice, dated 16th May 2023, cites a single reason for refusal as per para. 3.1.1, above.

4.1.10 Rule 6 Party, Flour not Power, have submitted a Statement of Case (SoC) in response to the refusal of planning permission. The SoC provides a summary of points that outline their opposition. The reasons relating to landscape and visual amenity issues are essentially a repetition of the Council’s Reason for Refusal as follows:

- Visually oppressive to users of the lane leading to Cantlop Mill;
- Adverse effect on views in the vicinity of the PRow at Cantlop;
- Mitigation would not be effective in screening the site; and
- Adverse impact on people from a number of public viewpoints due to the impact on local landscape character.

4.1.11 I consider these effects at Section 6 and 7 together with the Council’s Reason for Refusal.

4.2 Relevant Planning Policy

4.2.1 Whilst matters of Planning Policy are dealt with comprehensively by Mr Heslehurst, there are some policies of the NPPF, Local Plan and Draft Local plan which are of direct relevance to the landscape and visual matters in this case which I consider as follows:

- NPPF Section 12. Achieving well-designed places;
- NPPF Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment;

- Policy DP12: The natural environment;
- Policy CS17: Environmental Network; and
- Policy MD12: The Natural Environment.

4.2.2 I consider their relevance at Section 5 to 7.

4.3 The Submitted LVA

- 4.3.1 The LVA for the proposed scheme was undertaken by ADAS in May 2022 with the methodology in accordance with best practice, namely GLVIA 3 published by the Landscape Institute and IEMA. The report is accompanied by a series of plans included in an appendix to the submitted LVA which illustrate relevant landscape character areas, designation boundaries and ZTV plans and a Landscape Masterplan. The submitted LVA also includes a series of 21 viewpoints (LVA Appendix 2A), each illustrated with an annotated panoramic photograph to provide an idea of the site context. Photomontage have been prepared for Viewpoints 1, 2, 4, 11 and 15 to illustrate the as constructed solar farm at a size that provides a clear understanding of the scale of the view (LVA Appendix 2B).
- 4.3.2 The focus of the assessment is on receptors within a 0.5km radius which have some potential for greater levels of effect, at least initially following construction.
- 4.3.3 The site falls within the Shropshire Landscape Character Type (LCT): Estate Farmlands which would experience effects reported as Large Adverse at the scale of the site and Slight Adverse within the wider study area for the duration of the appeal proposals.
- 4.3.4 In terms of visual receptors, there were no residual effects reported as greater than Moderate Adverse for any receptors once the proposed planting scheme has matured. The ADAS LVA has reported initially Large Adverse levels of effect for the footpath and residential properties to the northern edge of Cantlop illustrated by viewpoints 14 and 15 (LVA Appendix 2a) reducing to Moderate adverse in the long term.
- 4.3.5 For both landscape and visual receptors it should be noted that the maximum levels of effect stated have been assessed as being experienced on completion of the works and that they would gradually reduce over a 15 year period. With the exception of the appeal site itself, no permanent effects have been judged as greater than Moderate adverse.

4.3.6 The Planning Officer's Report has noted agreement with the levels of effect as described above. There is therefore agreement from both parties as to the overall levels of effects potentially resulting from the appeal proposals.

5 DESIGN PROPOSALS AND LANDSCAPE MITIGATION MEASURES

5.1 The Proposals

- 5.1.1 The appeal proposal is for the erection of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array with a total export capacity of up to 30 MW and a lifespan of approximately 40 years on agricultural land to the west of Berrington. The proposed access, during both the construction and operational phase, would be via a new access point off the unnamed highway (referred to locally as 'Shrewsbury Road') to the west of the appeal site. The access would remain in place throughout the operational lifetime of the project and will be fitted with a gate and a turning area for the benefit of larger vehicles.
- 5.1.2 The solar arrays would consist of a tracker system to orient the panels towards the sun throughout the day. The panels are covered by high transparency solar glass with an anti-reflective coating which minimises reflection, whilst also allowing the maximum absorption of available sunlight. The panels are dark grey/blue in colour.
- 5.1.3 A Storage Container and Customer Sub-Station are also proposed along the western section of the western field parcel. Off-Appeal site cabling works are proposed, running north along the highway connecting to the Grid Substation. Temporary welfare units would also be set up along the western side of the appeal site.
- 5.1.4 The solar PV panels would be erected on posts within the existing pattern of the landscape ensuring that the soil beneath them would still be available for the infiltration of rainwater. The inverter station, customer switch gear and spare containers would all be elevated above ground level.
- 5.1.5 The final layout for this development has been refined to ensure that any potential impacts are minimised, whilst also incorporating enhancement measures into the scheme as described below.

5.2 Mitigation by Design

- 5.2.1 The siting and design of the appeal proposals have carefully considered landscape and visual impacts such that mitigation is integral to the development. The proposed siting of the solar farm within a gently undulating landform, combined with the existing woodland and field boundary vegetation, has ensured that the visual envelope of the scheme would be limited to

the immediate environs of the site and predominantly to 0.5km to the south and east; views from further afield are possible but tend to be limited to framed views through field entrances and or glimpses above and between intervening topography and vegetation.

5.2.2 The landscape strategy for the proposed development will ensure the delivery of landscape and biodiversity benefits through the landscape design and management proposals during its operational life. The proposed landscape, biodiversity enhancements and mitigation can be found on the Landscape Masterplan (LVA Figure 6). These mitigation measures form part of the landscape design and overall proposed development and have been considered in the assessment of effects.

5.2.3 The development will retain as many of the important landscape features as possible within the appeal site with the following broad aims:

- To assimilate built elements into the surrounding landscape.
- To minimise adverse effects on visual amenity.
- To enhance and reinforce the existing landscape framework and to improve the quality and character of the local landscape.

5.2.4 The landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals that have responded to the findings of the LVA and strategies and recommendation in relevant landscape character studies are shown on Figure 6 and are as follows:

- Retention of existing hedgerows and trees (mitigation).
- Retention of existing waterbodies (mitigation).
- Proposed tree and hedgerow planting to enhance landscape structure and habitat connectivity (mitigation and enhancement).
- Landscape management adaptations to increase overall height of hedgerows (mitigation).
- Proposed species rich grassland (enhancement).
- Beehives have also been included (enhancement).

- 5.2.5 These measures would retain and enhance the existing landscape structure of the appeal site and provide enhanced connectivity within the landscape and a greater variety of valued landscape elements as well as screening. As identified within the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment prepared by ADAS (CD 1.22) the enhancement of the appeal site with neutral grassland, species-rich native hedgerow and native trees would result in a BNG of 132.84%.
- 5.2.6 At the end of its useful life the facility would be decommissioned, all associated equipment removed, and the land quickly reverted to agricultural use. The strengthened boundary hedgerows and tree belt planting would remain leaving an enhanced landscape that is characteristic of the Estate Farmlands LCT.

6 CONSIDERATION OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

6.1 Effects on Landscape Character

6.1.1 The reasons for refusal note that the proposals “...*have the potential to adversely affect the local landscape... due to the replacement of the current arable fields with solar arrays and associated built infrastructure.*” This is not disputed and it is noted that the Council do not dispute the findings of the ADAS LVA with regard to the judgements of effects. This section has therefore been undertaken to provide an independent review and comparison with the ADAS LVA as to the potential level of landscape of adverse effects that would result from the appeal proposals.

6.1.2 This LVA review has been undertaken based on the Stephenson Halliday methodology, as included at Appendix 1, which has followed the guidance provided in the Natural England approach to landscape sensitivity assessment (CD 8.10) and GLVIA3, including TGN 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (CD 8.7).

6.1.3 The assessment takes into account the landscape baseline of the site and study area based upon the characteristics identified within the Shropshire Landscape Typology (CD 8.2) and field study. Landscape effects have been assessed at a number of scales: Firstly, at the scale of the site; secondly, at the scale of the local landscape as effected by the appeal proposals; and thirdly, at the scale of the wider LCT.

6.2 Review of Landscape Sensitivity

Value

6.2.1 As set out in Appendix 2, I have assessed the site value as Community taking account of a number of factors including its local value as open fields with generally well maintained field boundary vegetation with publicly accessible views from local roads and footpaths from the north, south and east. Its tranquility, which is typical of the wider Estate Farmlands, can be experienced from the surrounding landscape. It is typical of the locally valued but undesignated landscapes which cover the wider study area.

6.2.2 The landscape of the appeal site is not valued in terms of the NPPF, paragraph 180 a), as it is not covered by any statutory designations or identified as having high quality in any of the development plan documents or published landscape character study documents. As set out by my appraisal in Appendix 2, I have not identified the landscape of the appeal site as having

sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other surrounding undesignated, everyday landscapes.

Susceptibility

6.2.3 As set out within Appendix 2, I have judged the susceptibility of the site to be high. Although the development will exist within the existing pattern of the landscape and have negligible direct effects on landscape features there would be a clearly perceived change to land use on the appeal site. It would not alter the existing scale of the local field pattern and would be partially enclosed, however, there would be visibility of the south facing slopes to within approximately 0.5km of the site from within open countryside.

6.2.4 In my professional opinion, the site would therefore be of high susceptibility to the potential changes brought about by the introduction of appeal proposals, albeit this would be over a localised area of the local landscape type. I have judged the overall susceptibility as tipping to high rather than medium by considering the nature of local landscape, which is currently undeveloped open countryside, and its relative openness to local views from the south. The site does, however, have some ability to accommodate the proposed development by building on the existing green infrastructure which is typical of the Estate Farmlands LCT which would help minimise the change to its baseline character.

Sensitivity

6.2.5 Considering the value and susceptibility together, I have judged the sensitivity of the site and local landscape character area to development of the type proposed to be Medium. It should be noted that the high susceptibility of the site primarily relates to the appeal site and its local context to within approximately 0.5km; within the wider LCT, the ability of the landscape to absorb the type of proposed development would be increased due to the visual containment of the appeal proposals. The methodology I have employed has found the sensitivity to be the same as that described in the ADAS LVA, albeit with some difference in individual judgements of value/susceptibility. However, I am in agreement with the LVA as it identifies the key attributes of the landscape and their medium degree of sensitivity to the proposed development type.

6.3 Review of Landscape Effects

6.3.1 I have undertaken a review of the landscape effects of the appeal scheme using the Stephenson-Halliday methodology as follows.

During Construction

- 6.3.2 Effects on landscape character within the appeal site would involve the construction of the solar arrays, fencing and ancillary structures and equipment. The pattern of the landscape and all of the field boundaries would remain intact and would be enhanced with new tree and hedge planting; it is not expected that any hedgerows or trees would be removed as part of the construction. The character would change from relatively tranquil agricultural fields to a construction site with commensurate short-term movement and activity.
- 6.3.3 Effects on character would be large scale within the site and medium on the character of the local area to the south and east with more distant views beyond 0.5 km predominantly blocked by intervening vegetation and topography, albeit some limited views would be experienced.
- 6.3.4 These effects would be experienced to the full extents of the site and localised when considered in relation to the geographic extent of the Estate Farmlands LCT. Taking account of the scale, duration and extent of the construction effects, the magnitude of change would be moderate at the scale of the site and moderate/slight within the local Estate Farmlands LCT. Considering the medium sensitivity the overall effects would be Moderate adverse for the site and Moderate/Minor adverse for the local landscape reducing to Negligible within the wider Estate Farmlands LCT.

During Operation

- 6.3.5 During operation, there would be a permanent change of character to the area within the site from an agricultural field to a solar farm with pastoral grassland. Some areas around the perimeter of the site would become enhanced with new tree and hedge planting whilst all existing tree and shrub vegetation would be retained as shown by the Landscape Masterplan. The overriding change would be that of the addition of solar panels to within an open field and effects on the character of the site would be large scale and permanent. These large scale effects would be experienced to the full extents of the site landscape. Taking account of the scale, duration and extent of the effects, the magnitude of change would be substantial at the scale of the site. Considering the medium sensitivity of the landscape the overall effects would be Major /Moderate adverse for the site and permanent.
- 6.3.6 There would be no changes to the physical characteristics of the landscape character of the Estate Farmlands LCT beyond the appeal site. Perceptual effects on the local area would be

experienced to varying degrees from within the landscape up to approximately 0.5 km. The solar panels and ancillary equipment would permanently alter the character of the site from an arable field, however, the pastoral grassland beneath the panels would retain an element of agricultural use and the tranquility of the site would be largely unaffected. In addition, the appeal proposals would not effect the openness or scale of the landscape as it would not effect topography and would sit within the existing field structure. These changes would result in medium scale effects initially which would reduce to medium/small over the long term as the proposed planting matures; the landscape structure of the site would be strengthened albeit solar panels would remain perceptible on land as it rises to the north of the site. These effects would be experienced to a localised extent when considered in relation to the geographic extent of the Estate Farmlands LCT.

- 6.3.7 Taking account of the scale, duration and extent of the effects, the magnitude of change would be moderate within the local Estate Farmlands LCT to within 0.5km of the appeal site, reducing to moderate/slight in the long term. Effects would be Moderate adverse for the local Estate Farmlands LCT on completion reducing to Moderate/Minor adverse in the long term.
- 6.3.8 Effects within the wider Estate Farmlands LCT would be very limited in extent and are judged as Negligible outside of the local landscape area described above due to screening by intervening landform and vegetation.

Summary

- 6.3.9 The short-term construction activity would result in Moderate adverse effects to the field of the site reducing to Moderate/Minor adverse within the local Estate Farmlands LCT. The development would result in Major/Moderate adverse permanent effects within the site, whilst effects to the local LCA would be Moderate adverse on completion reducing to Moderate/Minor adverse in the long term. Effects within the wider Estate Farmlands LCT, beyond a maximum 0.5 km of the site, would be Negligible due to screening by intervening landform and vegetation. I have provided a comparison of effects with the ADAS LVA in Appendix 3.
- 6.3.10 It is therefore my professional opinion that there would be no permanent effects to the local landscape, outside of the appeal site itself, that would be greater than Moderate/Minor adverse.

7 REVIEW OF VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The site is currently visible from the local road and footpath network and from a small number of properties. The receptors identified as of most interest in terms of visual effects within the reasons for refusal are as follows:

- The users of the road leading to Cantlop Mill.
- The users of the public footpath at Cantlop (0407/5R/2).
- The users of road that runs along the northern boundary (known locally as the Berrington Road).
- The users of the road that runs along the eastern boundary (known locally as the Eaton Mascot Road).

7.1.2 In particular the reasons for refusal note that the proposals “...*would potentially have a visually oppressive effect for users of the publicly maintained highway leading to Cantlop Mill*” and would also “*have an adverse effect on existing expansive and high-quality views in the vicinity of the public footpath at Cantlop*”. The effectiveness of the mitigation planting is also noted as a concern in terms of its ability to the screen the appeal proposals. The ADAS LVA notes that there would be adverse visual effects from these and other local viewpoints but not to a level that could be described as ‘*oppressive*’.

7.1.3 This next section has been undertaken to provide an independent review and comparison with the ADAS LVA as to the potential level of visual effects that would result from the appeal proposals. I have undertaken a review of the visual effects of the appeal scheme using the Stephenson Halliday methodology (Appendix 1) as follows.

7.1 Review of Visual Sensitivity

7.1.1 Sensitivity of visual receptors will be dependent on their activity and whether their attention is focused on their surroundings. An explanation of the sensitivity of the visual receptors appraised in this report are discussed below.

Value

- 7.1.2 As set out in Appendix 1, the value of public views is identified as national, regional or community and will vary depending on the nature, location and context of the view and its recognised importance. Considerations include cultural associations; designation or policy protection; views of or from landmarks; and/or the scenic quality of the view. I have assessed the site value as Community taking account of a number of factors including its local value as agricultural fields with generally well maintained field boundaries with publicly accessible views from local roads and footpaths. Although valued locally, there is no additional identified value in terms of regionally or nationally valued landscape designations or views within any published documents.

Susceptibility

- 7.1.3 I have judged the susceptibility of all visual receptors to be high based on the criteria as set out within para. 28 of Appendix 1. Although local road users are often considered at a lower threshold of susceptibility, I have judged them to be of a high level because they will also be used for recreational purposes in a similar manner to the local PRoW network. Hence users of these roads are judged to have a focus and appreciation of views that makes them more highly susceptible to change and equivalent to that of the local footpath network.

Sensitivity

- 7.1.4 Considering the value and susceptibility together, I have judged the sensitivity of visual receptors to be High/Medium. The methodology I have employed has found the sensitivity to be a half level lower than that described in the ADAS LVA (CD 1.18). This is primarily a difference in the assessment of the susceptibility and the fact that the ADAS methodology does not allow for judgements between levels. However, the overall judgements are of a very similar order which can be considered a small difference in professional opinion.

7.2 Visual effects on users of the road to Cantlop Mill

- 7.2.1 This single track public highway runs between the two fields of the appeal site and links the residents of Cantlop Mill to the Berrington Road and the wider countryside. Views from this road are represented by viewpoints 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (LVA Appendix 2). The site is predominantly experienced whilst travelling in a southerly direction over an approximately 100m section from the Berrington Road junction. Views from this section of the road are limited to the northern edge of the eastern field as illustrated by viewpoint 2. There are then very limited oblique views

of the site from the sunken lane between the two fields, with these predominantly during winter months as illustrated by viewpoint 4. The exception to this are the views afforded by gaps in the hedgerows from two field entrances, one of which is illustrated by viewpoint 3, with views of the wider landscape visible beyond the appeal site.

- 7.2.2 Construction effects would include increased traffic movement and views of the solar panels and ancillary equipment under construction within the site. The scale of change for users of the road during construction is judged to be large/medium over a localised extent and short duration. The magnitude of change would be moderate/slight and overall effect Moderate adverse.
- 7.2.3 At completion there would be medium scale views of the appeal proposals from the northern section of road to a localised extent (Photomontage of viewpoint 2 within the LVA, Appendix 2) and very limited framed views from the two field entrances. Views from the majority of the sunken lane would be small in scale and localised in extents, predominantly in glimpsed winter views through dense hedgerow vegetation. The proposed panels would be set back from the road and would not be seen over the top of the vegetation as illustrated by the photomontage of viewpoint 4 which illustrates a typical view of receptors passing adjacent to the appeal site; illustrative sections are provided in the Landscape Statement of Case (CD 4.3) which demonstrate the relative location of panels in conjunction with lane and how views would be screened/filtered by existing dense hedgerows. Considering the experience of receptors along this road, the magnitude of change would be slight and, together with the High/Medium sensitivity, the overall effect Moderate/Minor adverse in the medium to long term.
- 7.2.4 After 15 years, the tree and hedgerow reinforcement planting along the northern boundary of the appeal site would have matured and would limit views along the section of the road to the south. The scale of change in views would reduce to small whilst the extent would remain localised for the road as a whole. Considering the experience of receptors along this road, the magnitude of change would be slight/negligible and, together with the high/medium sensitivity, the overall effect Minor adverse and permanent.
- 7.3 Visual effects on users of the public footpath at Cantlop (PRoW 0407/5R/2)**
- 7.3.1 This PRoW is located to the south of the appeal site from where users would experience relatively open views from most of the PRoW, albeit the views would be oblique to the direction of travel. Views, represented by viewpoint 15, would be in the middle distance as land rises

above the valley that forms the southern edge of the site. Views become partially screened as footpath users proceed west with the lower topography within the south of the appeal site increasingly screened by existing woodland and field boundary vegetation.

- 7.3.2 The proposed development would be experienced over an approximately 250 m section of PRoW at a distance of approximately 0.5km. On completion footpath users would experience the development as a low level renewable energy scheme contained within open countryside in middle distance views. The experience would be similar for the users of the public road that provides access to Cantlop and to local residents, albeit views from private properties would predominantly be from upper storey windows and not the principal rooms of the house due to screening by intervening vegetation and built form within gardens. The proposed mitigation planting would partially screen and filter views in the medium to long term, however views of solar panels would remain as land rises to the north of the fields. It is noted that the appeal proposals would not diminish the dark skies nature of the site and its perceived tranquillity.
- 7.3.3 The increase in activity and scale of change during construction is judged to be medium over a localised extent and short duration. The magnitude of change would be slight and overall effect Moderate/Minor adverse.
- 7.3.4 The scale of change experienced on completion is judged to be medium over a localised extent over the long term. Taking account of the scale, duration and extent of the effects, the magnitude of change would be moderate and, considering the high/medium sensitivity of the recreational footpath users, the overall effects would be Moderate adverse on completion. A level of Moderate rather than Major/Moderate has been assessed as the panels would be viewed at distances of greater than 0.5km, would not be viewed within the skyline or obstructing longer distance views and would be set within pasture meadows which would still be perceived as in agricultural use. It is also noted that the PRoW 0407/5R/2 provides limited connectivity with the wider PRoW network and effectively only provides a linkage between two local roads; where it connects to PRoW 0407/5R/1 to the west of the 'Shrewsbury Road', this latter footpath terminates at the end of the first field to the west providing no further linkage to the wider countryside. From my observations, therefore, this footpath would appear to provide only a limited function in terms of accessibility to the wider countryside.
- 7.3.5 There would be some increased filtering and screening of the panels to the lower levels of the appeal site as the proposed mitigation planting matured in the long term as illustrated by the photomontage of viewpoint 15. As well as partially screening the panels, the proposed planting

would strengthen the landscape structure of the site. The magnitude of change would, however, remain moderate and the overall effect would be Moderate adverse and permanent.

7.4 Visual effects on users of the Berrington Road

- 7.4.1 The Berrington Road runs in an east to west direction to the northern boundary of the site, linking the settlement of Berrington to the wider countryside. The road is narrow, single track and predominantly lined with vegetation and sunken in places. Most views are focused to the direction of travel along the road corridor channelled by vegetation on the road. Views from this road are represented by viewpoints 1, 7 and 8. Experience of views into the site vary considerably along the lane. There are very limited views when travelling along the lane to the north of the western field, with views limited to oblique glimpses through gaps in the hedgerows from two field entrances with no views from the deeply sunken section of the lane to the western half of the field; viewpoint 1 illustrates views through one of the field entrances. Views from the most open section of Berrington Lane are illustrated by viewpoint 7 taken between the road to Cantlop Mill and Berrington village. Road users experience views of the northern edge of the eastern field and the northern and eastern edges of the western field to varying degrees above and between intervening vegetation for an approximately 150 m section of the road when travelling in a westerly direction.
- 7.4.2 Construction effects will include increased traffic movement and views of the solar panels and ancillary equipment under construction within the site. The scale of change for users of the road during construction is judged to be medium over a localised extent and short duration. The magnitude of change would be slight and overall effect Moderate/Minor adverse.
- 7.4.3 At completion there would be medium/small scale of change in views from the eastern section of road to a localised extent and very limited open framed views from the two field entrances to within the western field. The proposed panels would be viewed set back from the road and partially screened by existing vegetation as illustrated by the viewpoint 7 which illustrates a typical view of receptors travelling west from Berrington. Considering the experience of receptors along this road, the magnitude of change would be slight and, together with the high/medium sensitivity, the overall effect Moderate/Minor adverse in the medium to long term.
- 7.4.4 After 15 years, the planting in the gaps along the northern boundary and around the appeal site would have matured, further limiting any oblique views into the appeal site (as shown in

photomontage of viewpoint 1). The scale of change in views would reduce to small whilst the extent would remain localised for the road as a whole. Considering the experience of receptors along this road, the magnitude of change would be slight/negligible and, together with the high/medium sensitivity, the overall effect Minor adverse and permanent.

7.5 Visual effects on users of the Eaton Mascot Road

7.5.1 The Eaton Mascot Road runs in a north to south-east direction along the eastern boundary of the appeal site linking the settlement of Berrington to Eaton Mascott. This single track road is predominantly sunken, deeply in places, and lined with dense hedgerow vegetation with views focused to the direction of travel along the road corridor. There are oblique framed views to within the appeal site through gaps in the hedgerows from two field entrances, the most substantial being an approximately 20m section of the road to the south-east corner of the appeal site. There are also very limited oblique glimpsed views towards the appeal site where hedgerow vegetation is less dense, represented by viewpoint 9.

7.5.2 Construction effects will include increased traffic movement and views of the solar panels and ancillary equipment under construction within the site. The scale of change for users of the road during construction is judged to be small over a limited extent and short duration. The magnitude of change would be negligible and overall effect Minor/Negligible adverse.

7.5.3 At completion there would be a small scale of change in views to a limited extent from the two field entrances and to a lesser extent through small gaps in the hedgerow. The proposed panels would be viewed set back from the road and predominantly screened by existing intervening vegetation. Considering the experience of receptors along this road, the magnitude of change would be slight/negligible and, together with the high/medium sensitivity, the overall effect Minor adverse. Although reinforcement planting along the boundary would further limit any oblique views into the appeal site views would remain through the site entrances. The overall permanent effect would therefore remain Minor adverse.

7.6 Summary

7.6.1 I have undertaken my own assessment of effects upon the visual receptors considered to be of greatest sensitivity to the appeal proposals; a comparison of effects with the ADAS LVA is provided at Appendix 3. In my opinion, the development would not result in any permanent effects greater than Moderate Adverse, with permanent effects of at most Moderate adverse from the footpath to the west of Cantlop. Other publicly accessible receptors using the local

road network, including those described as '*oppressive*' within the reasons for refusal, would experience permanent effects of at most Minor adverse.

8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 National Policy states that, “*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:...b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services...*”
- 8.1.2 These requirements are recognised in the Shropshire Council Local Plan in Policy CS 17 which states that development should protect and enhance local character and not adversely affect the visual or recreational values of the landscape. Further to this draft policy DP12 states that the Council will, “*Encourage new development to plant trees, woodlands and hedgerows...*”, and that proposals ensure “*...that native species hedgerows are retained on development sites.*”
- 8.1.3 This Landscape Appeal Proof of Evidence has specifically addressed the single reason for refusal in so much as it concerns the changes to the baseline landscape character of the appeal site and how these changes will affect the visual amenity of the public using local roads and footpaths, taking into account the effectiveness of the enhanced mitigation proposals.
- 8.1.4 The ADAS LVA concluded that there would be no permanent adverse landscape effects greater than Slight within the Estate Farmlands LCT and no permanent visual effects greater than Moderate adverse. The planning officer has noted agreement to these effects as described in the submitted planning report. It is my assessment that, permanent adverse landscape effects would be at most Moderate/Minor to within the local landscape area, reducing to Negligible within the wider LCT. In addition, I have assessed permanent visual effects as at most Moderate from the footpath at Cantlop, and Minor from the local road network in the immediate vicinity of the site.
- 8.1.5 Whilst some adverse landscape impacts would remain, the mature vegetated character of the proposed landscape enhancements would help to incorporate the appeal proposals into their local setting and the levels of effect would reduce from their initially moderate levels in the medium to long term.
- 8.1.6 Only the users of the public footpath in the vicinity of Cantlop to the south of the site would experience any visual effects greater than Moderate/Minor adverse on the completion of the

appeal proposals. These effects are judged to be Moderate adverse on completion and would remain Moderate adverse for the duration of the solar farm lifetime.

- 8.1.7 I have judged that views, described as '*oppressive*' in the reasons for refusal for the users of the road to Cantlop Mill, would be at most Moderate/Minor adverse on completion of the development; these effects would reduce to Minor adverse as the mitigation measures mature. In my professional opinion, neither level could be described as oppressive for the users of the road.
- 8.1.8 In relation to effects on landscape character and visual amenity, in my professional opinion, I conclude that there is insufficient landscape justification for refusal.

Appendix 1: Stephenson Halliday Landscape and Visual Methodology

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

1. *"Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and people's views and visual amenity."* (GLVIA3, paragraph 1.1). Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified, but the nature of landscape and visual assessment requires interpretation using professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the assessment, the prediction of magnitude and assessment of significance of the residual landscape and visual effects have been based on pre-defined criteria.
2. The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (Third Edition) (GLVIA3) states that "professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA" (paragraph 2.23) and that "in all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others." (paragraph 2.24).
3. Landscape and Visual Assessments are separate, though linked processes which GLVIA3 notes are *"related but very different considerations"*. The assessment of the potential effect on the landscape is carried out as an effect on the environmental resource (i.e. the landscape). Visual effects are assessed as an inter-related effect on people.
4. Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape elements which may give rise to changes in its distinctive character and how this is experienced, including consideration of aesthetic and perceptual aspects.
5. Visual effects relate to changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people's responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Establishing the Baseline

6. The baseline for consideration of landscape and visual effects is evaluated through desk study and site work and is the current situation at the time of the assessment, unless noted otherwise. Operational developments and those under construction are considered as part of the baseline and included as part of the assessment of landscape and visual effects.
7. The future baseline is considered to be changes to the landscape which are considered certain or likely to happen – including consented proposals which are not yet present in the landscape but are expected to be constructed. These may or may not be included as part of the landscape and visual baseline depending on individual project circumstances and the approach and reasoning is set out within the assessment.

Landscape Effects

8. The starting point for any assessment is a desk-based assessment of published landscape studies, which may include landscape character assessments, sensitivity and capacity studies and/or landscape designation reviews. These documents are listed in the assessment references and relevant extracts may be included as appendices where this is judged appropriate.

9. The landscape effects of the proposed development are considered against the key characteristics of the receiving landscape. The degree to which the proposed development changes “*distinct and recognisable pattern of elements, or characteristics, in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse*” (‘An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment’, Natural England, 2014), enables a judgement to be made as to the significance of the effect in landscape character terms.
10. Direct and indirect landscape effects are defined in GLVIA3. Direct effects may be defined as resulting “*directly from the development itself*” (paragraph 3.22). An indirect (or secondary) effect is one that results “*from consequential change resulting from the development*” (paragraph 3.22) and is often produced away from the site of the proposed development or as a result of a complex pathway or secondary association. The direct or physical landscape effects of the proposed development would generally be limited to within the planning application boundary. The indirect landscape effects are concerned with the visual effects and relate to effects associated with the introduction of the development seen in the context of the existing landscape and visual character of the view.
11. In order to reach an understanding of the effects of development upon the landscape resource it is necessary to consider different aspects of the landscape baseline including:
 - Landscape Fabric/Elements: The individual features of the landscape, such as hills, valleys, woods, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, buildings and roads for example which can usually be described and quantified.
 - Landscape key characteristics: The particularly notable elements or combinations of elements which make a particular contribution to defining or describing the character of an area, which may include experiential characteristics such as wildness and tranquillity.
12. The **sensitivity** (high, medium, low) of the landscape to a particular development is considered on a case by case basis and considers the susceptibility of the landscape, which varies depending on the type of development proposed and the particular site location, and the landscape value (identified as national, regional, or community). As stated in GLVIA3, ‘*LVIA sensitivity is similar to the concept of landscape sensitivity used in the wider arena of landscape planning, but is not the same*’.
13. **Landscape value**: The importance attached to a landscape, often used as a basis for designation or recognition which expresses national or local authority consensus, because of its special qualities/attributes. The factors which are considered in landscape include aesthetic or perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness or cultural associations as well as recreational/community value, conservation interests, landscape character and condition and representativeness/rarity.
14. **Landscape susceptibility** according to GLVIA3 means “the ability of the landscape to accommodate the proposed Development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”. Judgements on landscape susceptibility (high, medium, low) include references to both the physical and aesthetic characteristics and the potential scope for mitigation.
15. Susceptibility of landscape character areas are influenced by their characteristics and are often considered (though often recorded as ‘sensitivity’ rather than susceptibility) within landscape character assessments and capacity studies.
16. Susceptibility of designated landscapes is influenced by the nature of the special qualities and purposes of designation and/or the valued elements, qualities or characteristics, indicating the degree to which these may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

17. The criteria and the detailed judgements regarding susceptibility and value of landscape receptors are identified within the sensitivity tables included within Appendix X.X to this assessment.
18. Sensitivity is judged taking into account the component judgments about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the table below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National	High	High/Medium	Medium
	Regional	High/Medium	Medium	Medium/Low
	Community	Medium	Medium/Low	Low

19. The **magnitude of landscape change** arising from the proposed development at any particular location is assessed in terms of its size or scale, geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced and its duration and reversibility.
20. The **scale** of the change takes account of:
- degree of loss or alteration to key landscape features/elements; characteristics; and for designated areas – special qualities and/or purposes of designation;
 - distance from the development;
 - landscape context to the development;
21. The approach to assessing effects on landscape character is to consider the key characteristics for the Landscape Character Type (LCT) within which the proposed development is located (host) and the adjacent LCT's (non-host) and identify which of these the proposed development would affect. For the host LCTs, a large scale change in landscape character is likely to occur where key characteristics would be lost or substantially changed. Where particular views are a key characteristic of a landscape type, large or medium scale landscape character effects may occur where the proposed development becomes a key feature of those views. A similar approach applies to designated landscapes, for which the effects on the defined purposes of designation and special qualities are considered.
22. Having established the size/scale of change (large, medium, small, negligible) to the landscape baseline, the geographic **extent** of the change can be identified (wide, intermediate, localised or limited) and a judgement made as to the degree of change for each landscape receptor.
23. **Duration** and reversibility can be linked depending on the nature of the development. Reversibility is a judgement about the ability and practicality of the proposed development to be reversible (such as wind farms which are predominantly reversible), partially reversible to something similar (such as mineral extraction¹) or a permanent change in the landscape (such as housing). Duration reflects how long the change will last. The duration of the change would be considered short term when lasting less than 2 years; medium term when lasting between 2 and 10 years; or long term when lasting between 10 and 25 years, and permanent for more than 25 years.
24. Magnitude is considered taking into account the three contributory factors as illustrated by the diagrams included below.

¹ GLVIA3 page 91, paragraph 5.52

Visual Effects

25. In order to identify the significance of a visual effect it is necessary to establish the relative sensitivity of the viewers and the magnitude of the change they experience. In this case sensitivity is a combination of both susceptibility of the viewer to the proposed change and the value of the views.
26. Those living within view of the scheme are usually regarded as the highest susceptibility group as well as those engaged in outdoor pursuits for whom landscape experience is the primary objective. The susceptibility of potential visual receptors will also vary depending on the activity of the receptor. For visual receptors susceptibility and value are closely linked - the most valued views are also likely to be those where viewer's expectations will be highest.
27. The **value** of public views, which is the focus of GLVIA3, is identified as national, regional or community and will vary depending on the nature, location and context of the view and the recognised importance of the view. Considerations include cultural associations; designation or policy protection; views of or from landmarks; and/or the scenic quality of the view. The value attributed relates to the value of the view, e.g. a National Trail is nationally valued for access, but not always for the available views from every section.
28. Visual receptor **susceptibility** is defined as in accordance with the criteria below.
- **High** - Local residents; users of outdoor recreation focussed on the appreciation of views including footpaths, beauty spots and picnic areas; people experiencing views to or from important features of physical, visual, cultural or historic interest.
 - **Medium** - Local road users and travellers on trains. People engaged in outdoor recreation with some appreciation of the landscape e.g. road cycling, nature conservation, golf and water based recreation.
 - **Low** - Workers, users of facilities and commercial buildings (indoors) experiencing views from buildings. Road and rail users on fast moving commuting or trunk routes. Visual receptors where views are incidental to the activity and/or location.
29. Sensitivity is judged taking into account the component judgments about the value and susceptibility of the receptor as illustrated by the table below. Where sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National	High	High/Medium	Medium
	Regional	High/Medium	High/Medium	Medium/Low
	Community	High/Medium	Medium	Low

30. The **magnitude of visual change** arising from the proposed development at any particular location is assessed in terms of its size or scale (large, medium, small, negligible), geographic extent of the area or receptor that is influenced (wide, localised, limited) and its duration (short, medium, long, permanent).
31. The representative viewpoints are used as 'samples' on which to base judgements of the scale of effects on visual receptors. The wider extent of the effect and its duration are not captured in the viewpoint analysis (as a viewpoint cannot capture these factors for an entire route or area). As duration

and extent are necessary considerations in determining magnitude of change; magnitude and significance judgements are provided for visual receptors and not for all representative viewpoints. The exceptions to this are specific viewpoints – where people visiting that location to look at the view are assessed as a visual receptor group.

32. With the exception of specific viewpoints, each route and receptor group will encompass a range of possible views, which might vary from no view of the development to very clear, close views. Therefore effects are described in such a way as to identify where views towards the development are likely to arise and what the scale and duration and **extent** (wide, intermediate, Localised, Limited) of those views are likely to be. In some cases this will be further informed by a nearby viewpoint and in others it will be informed with reference to ZTV studies, aerial photography and site visits. Each of these individual effects are then considered together in order to reach a judgement of the effects on the visual receptors along that route, or in that place.
33. The **scale of effect** arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint reflects the degree to which the nature of the views from that location would be changed and is taking into account:
- The distance of the viewpoint from the development;
 - the degree to which the development is visible or screened;
 - the angle of view in relation to main receptor activity or main focus of the view;
 - the horizontal and vertical field of view occupied by the development; and
 - the extent and nature of other built development visible.
34. The approach to assessing effects on views is to consider the full 360 degree view from any given receptor – not just those towards the development and/or shown in visualisations. It is assumed that the change would be seen in clear visibility and the assessment is carried out on that basis. Where there are operational (and consented) developments considered as part of the baseline, the visual effects consider the effects of adding the proposed development to that baseline. Where appropriate, comment may be made on lighting and weather conditions.
35. **Duration** reflects how long the change will last and are rated in the same way as described above for landscape effects. The effects as a result of the proposed development would be considered short term when lasting less than 2 years; medium term when lasting between 2 and 10 years; or long term when lasting between 10 and 25 years, and permanent for more than 25 years. For visual receptors moving through the landscape (e.g. road and rail users), the length of their journey during which they would see the development is reflected in the judgement of the geographic extent of effects.
36. Magnitude is considered taking into account the three contributory factors as illustrated by the diagrams included below.

Magnitude of Landscape and Visual Change

37. Scale of effect is the first factor in determining magnitude; which may be higher if the effect is particularly widespread and/or long lasting, or lower if it is constrained in geographic extent and/or timescale. The tables below illustrate how this judgement is considered as a two-step process. Firstly, scale and extent are considered, for which the outcomes are illustrated by the first part of the table; the second part of the table illustrates the influence of duration on this initial judgement. Where magnitude is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment will be adopted.

Scale / extent		Large	Medium	Small	Negligible
Wide	Substantial				
Intermediate		Moderate			
Localised			Slight		
Limited					Negligible

Stage 1 Result / Duration		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Permanent	Substantial				
Long-term		Moderate			
Medium-term			Slight		
Short-term					Negligible

Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

38. The significance of any identified landscape or visual effect is assessed as major, moderate, minor or negligible. These categories are based on the consideration of sensitivity with the predicted magnitude of change. The table below is not used as a prescriptive tool and illustrates the typical outcomes, allowing for the exercise of professional judgement. In some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.

		Magnitude of Change			
		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
Receptor Sensitivity	High	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor/ Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Negligible

39. Where the effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate this is considered to be equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. Where 'Moderate' effects are predicted, professional judgement will be applied to ensure that the potential for significant effects arising has been thoroughly considered.

Beneficial/Adverse

40. Landscape and visual effects can be beneficial or adverse and in some instances may be considered neutral. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor positive but may incorporate a combination of both. Whether an effect is beneficial, neutral or adverse is identified based on professional judgement. GLVIA 3rd edition indicates at paragraph 2.15 that this is a "*particularly challenging*" aspect of assessment, especially in the context of a changing landscape.

Cumulative Effects

41. In a broad generic sense, cumulative impacts "*result from the incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project*"² However, an assessment of cumulative effects should focus on whether there are any potential cumulative impacts which are reasonably foreseeable and which are likely to influence the decision making of the proposed development, rather than an assessment of every potential cumulative effect³, which in practice means focussing on other nearby development proposals and the effects that might arise from the combined influence of those developments on landscape and visual receptors.

42. As recommended by the NatureScot cumulative guidance, this assessment focusses on the "additional cumulative change which would be brought about by the proposed development"⁴.

43. As noted above, operational developments are included in the baseline, Consented development which are expected to be constructed, form part of the future baseline and will be included as such.

² GLVIA3 page 120, paragraph 7.1 quoting Hyder, 1999 'Guidelines for the assessment of indirect and cumulative impacts as well as impact interactions'

³ GLVIA3 page 121 paragraph 7.5.

⁴ Assessing the Cumulative Impact of Onshore Wind Energy Developments, NatureScot, 2021

However, where there is some uncertainty regarding the future construction of consented developments, they may be considered as the first scenario of the cumulative assessment.

44. Proposals in planning are considered where there is good reason to assume that the timing of decisions may be similar and significant cumulative effects are likely. The assessment of effects is considered within the cumulative assessment.
45. Proposals in scoping are noted but not considered within the cumulative assessment, as there is no certainty that these proposals will progress to planning submissions and the nature of the proposed schemes may be subject to change.
46. The assessment is based on the same landscape and visual baseline and receptor groups as the main LVIA, and the methodology is also the same in terms of forming and expressing judgements.
47. Cumulative effects on landscape receptors arise from combined direct and/or indirect effects on the same receptor – such as two developments within the same character area; or one development within, and one visible from, a designated area.
48. Cumulative effects on visual receptors arise either from two (or more) developments both being visible from the same place; or from sequential views as people travel.
49. In order to simplify what may otherwise be a complex assessment, the following approaches are also used:
 - The cumulative assessment considers scenarios within which developments may be ‘grouped’ - for instance two nearby cumulative proposals may be considered in one scenario if it is considered that the cumulative effects arising if one or both are developed are likely to be similar.
 - Receptors judged to receive Negligible or Slight-Negligible magnitude effects are not considered for cumulative effects on the basis that any significant effects arising would primarily be caused by the cumulative developments and would be unlikely to be contributed to by the proposed development.
 - Only those receptors judged likely to experience effects from the cumulative development(s) being considered within a given scenario are described within that scenario.
50. Qualitative assessment of design and aesthetic considerations arising as a result of cumulative development, and/or considerations set out within local guidance provided in relation to cumulative development, is also provided where relevant.

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
CLVIA	Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Cumulative Effects	Cumulative effects are the additional effects arising from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions.
Direct Effect	A direct (or primary) effect may be defined as an effect that is directly attributable to the development. ⁵
GLVIA3	' <i>Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition</i> ', published jointly by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013.
Indirect Effect	An indirect (or secondary) effect is an effect that results indirectly from the proposed project as a consequence of the direct effect, often occurring away from the site, or as a result of a sequence of interrelationships or a complex pathway. They may be separated by distance or in time from the source of the effects. ⁶
Key Characteristics	Those combinations of elements which are particularly important to the current character of the landscape and help to give an area its particularly distinctive sense of place.
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
Landscape Capacity	The amount of change which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate without significant detrimental effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change proposed.
Landscape Character	The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse. ⁷
Landscape Character Areas	These are single unique areas which are the discrete geographical areas of a particular landscape type. ⁸
Landscape Character Types	These are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogeneous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different areas in different parts of the country, but wherever they occur, they share broadly similar combinations of geology, topography, drainage patterns, vegetation and historical land use and settlement pattern, and perceptual and aesthetic attributes.
Landscape Effects	Effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right. ⁹
Landscape Elements	Individual components which make up the landscape such as trees and hedges.

⁵ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p155

⁶ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p156

⁷ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p156

⁸ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

⁹ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

Term	Definition
Landscape Features	Particularly prominent or eye-catching elements, like tree clumps, church towers or wooded skylines.
Landscape Quality or Condition	This is a measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which a typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements. ¹⁰
Landscape Receptor	Defined aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Landscape Resource	The combination of elements that contribute to landscape context, character and value.
Landscape Value	The relative value or importance attached to different landscapes by society on account of their landscape qualities. ¹¹
Level of Effect	Determined through the combination of sensitivity of the receptor and the proposed magnitude of change brought about by the development.
Magnitude (of effect)	A term that combines judgements about the size and scale of the effect, the extent of the area over which it occurs, whether it is reversible or irreversible and whether it is short or long term in duration.
Mitigation	Measures including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development.
Photomontage	A visualisation which superimposes an image of a proposed development upon a photograph or series of photographs.
Residential Visual Amenity	A collective term describing the views and visual amenity from a residential property, relating to the type, nature, extent and quality of views that may be experienced from the property and its 'domestic curtilage' including gardens and access driveway. Residential Visual Amenity is only one component of the overall Residential Amenity, others being for example noise, shadow flicker and access amongst others.
Residual Effects	Potential environmental effects remaining after mitigation.
Sense of Place	The essential character and spirit of an area: <i>genius loci</i> literally means 'spirit of the place'.
Sensitivity	A term applied to specific receptors, combining judgements of the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific type of change or development proposed and the value related to that receptor. ¹²
Significant Effects	<p>It is a requirement of the EIA Regulations to determine the likely significant effects of development on the environment which should relate to the level of an effect and the type of effect. Where possible significant effects should be mitigated.</p> <p>The significance of an effect gives an indication as to the degree of importance (based on the magnitude of the effect and sensitivity of the receptor) that should be attached to the impact described.</p> <p>Whether an effect should be considered significant is not absolute and requires the application of professional judgement.</p>

¹⁰ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

¹¹ The Landscape Institute; Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations

¹² The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p157

Term	Definition
Type or Nature of Effect	Whether an effect is direct, indirect, temporary or permanent, positive (beneficial), neutral or negative (adverse) or cumulative.
Visual amenity	Value of a particular place in terms of what is seen by visual receptors taking account of all available views and the total visual experience.
Visual Effect	Effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people. ¹³
Visual Receptors	Individuals and/or defined groups of people who have the potential to be affected by a proposal.
Visualisation	Computer simulation, photomontage or other technique to illustrate the appearance of a development. ¹⁴
Wildness	A quality of appearing to be remote, inaccessible and rugged with little evidence of human influence.
Wireframe or Wireline	A computer generated line drawing of the DTM (Digital Terrain Model) and the proposed development from a known location.
Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)	Area within which a proposed development may have an influence or an effect on visual amenity. ¹⁵

¹³ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p158

¹⁴ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p158

¹⁵ The Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment; *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*; Spon; 2013; p158

Appendix 2: Landscape Sensitivity Assessment

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

The sensitivity of the landscape character area which may receive significant landscape effects is assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the proposed development. In the main this has been taken from the Shropshire Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in italics) as well as from local sources and site assessment. The table below is based on guidance provided within LI TGN 02/21 - specifically table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: Estate Farmland LCT

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	The landscape is typical of the wider countryside with no national or local landscape designations within the 3km study area.	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	High presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Native species hedgerows mark the boundaries of the site, whilst other flora and fauna are described as of local importance within the PEA. There are limited sites of ecological importance in the 3km study area including ancient woodland.	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	The site is not noted as having any particular aspects of historic interest, whilst the local landscape contains a number of listed buildings which are typical of the study area. Here registered parks and gardens are located within or partially within the 3km study area but have no connection with the site.	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	Landscape condition is considered good as hedgerows are generally intact and well managed with few gaps whilst trees to the field boundaries are generally in good condition.	Community

Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	There are no cultural associations noted within the LCT.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/ot with an important relationship to a settlement.	<p><i>"...landscape character is largely determined by an ordered pattern of fields and woods, although the prevailing pattern of medium to large subregular fields means that they lack their strong, planned aspect..."</i></p> <p><i>Since World War II agricultural intensification has introduced considerable change, and field enlargements in particular".</i></p> <p>The individual elements of the landscape are characteristic of local landscape and are not considered to be particularly important or rare examples of the key characteristics.</p>	Community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	A local access road runs between the two fields of the site but there is no public access to within the fields. The wider study area contains a network of footpaths that provide routes for the local enjoyment of the countryside.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particular visual.	<p><i>"...Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views ..."</i></p> <p>The landscape of the site forms part of an attractive area of local landscape for which there is no published assessment of scenic quality. The appeal site and wider Estate Farmlands therefore have some local scenic value as undesignated 'everyday' countryside.</p> <p>.</p>	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	The local landscape is also characterised as a rural area with a sense of tranquillity that make a recognisable positive contribution to local landscape character.	Community

Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	The existing intact hedgerow and hedgerow trees provide an element of green infrastructure function of habitat linkage/corridor which is typical of the study area.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Community

Susceptibility

Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	The landscape is not dramatic or rugged and is generally uniform in terms of its gently undulating nature.	Low
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	The site is partially enclosed by the strong hedgerow with mature trees to the north, west and east, however, the undulating landform is perceptible in views to the south and east.	High
Land cover, landform, complexity and patterns	Extensive areas of simple or regular landcover or simple and sweeping lines, linear feature and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	The landscape of the site is part of a greater whole which consists of undulating topography with a coherent pattern of woodland, hedgerow, settlement and parkland.	Medium
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	The site lies within a landscape which contains historic built form, albeit with no association to the site. The historic field pattern of the site has been eroded by enlargement of fields and loss of hedgerows but it remains attractive open countryside with little evidence of electrical infrastructure.	High
Key Views and intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area from key views	Views of the site are relatively contained with limited public views into the site from the north, south and east; the most open views being from within 0.5km to the south. There are no key views associated with the site from surrounding landscape.	Medium

Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	The landscape has limited intervisibility with surrounding countryside and would define the skyline in views from the south.	High
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	The landscape of the study area is described as being of medium to large sub-regular fields enlarged following farming intensification following World War II. The scale of development will extend across two medium sized fields but is perceived as being of low level and will sit within the existing landscape structure. It is considered as of medium scale when considering the receiving landscape.	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				High
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium

Appendix 3: Comparison of Landscape & Visual Effects

Comparison of landscape & visual effects for land west of Berrington

Receptor	Operational effects Year 1	Operational effects Year 15
Site: ADAS LVA	Large adverse	Large adverse
Site: Stephenson-Halliday	Major/Moderate adverse	Major/Moderate adverse
Estate Farmlands LCT: ADAS LVA	Slight adverse	Slight adverse
Estate Farmlands LCT: Stephenson-Halliday	Moderate adverse to 0.5km Negligible adverse to wider LCT	Moderate/Minor adverse to 0.5km Negligible adverse to wider LCT
Road to Cantlop Mill: ADAS LVA	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Road to Cantlop Mill: Stephenson-Halliday	Moderate/Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Public footpath at Cantlop: ADAS LVA	Large adverse	Moderate adverse
Public footpath at Cantlop: Stephenson-Halliday	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
Berrington Road: ADAS LVA	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse
Berrington Road: Stephenson-Halliday	Moderate/Minor adverse	Minor adverse
Eaton Mascot Road: ADAS LVA	Moderate adverse	Slight adverse
Eaton Mascot Road: Stephenson-Halliday	Minor adverse	Minor adverse

Nb. the 'Large' effects assessed by the ADAS LVA equate to Major impacts within the Stephenson-Halliday methodology.