Landscape and Visual Appraisal for Bishops Dal Storage.

Land South of Eccles Substation, Scottish Borders, Scotland, TD12 4LU.

On behalf of Bishops Dal Energy Storage Limited.

Date: 10 January 2025 | Pegasus Ref: P24-0160_ R001v2 EN_SCS/DT

Author: Scott Cochran-Sharp

Document Management.

Version	Date	Author	Checked/ Approved by:	Reason for revision
R001v1	19/12/2024	SCS	DT	-
R001v2	10/01/2025	SCS	DT	Client comment

Contents.

Appendices contents.

Figures contents.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been prepared on behalf of Bishops Dal Energy Storage Limited (the Applicant) by the Pegasus Planning Group Ltd (Pegasus).

1.2. This appraisal relates to the proposed construction, operation, then decommissioning of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) development with associated infrastructure on land south of the Eccles Substation, near Coldstream in the Scottish Borders.

1.3. The application site, which is located on the southern side of the A697 adjacent to Eccles Substation, is located in the administrative district of Scottish Borders Council (as shown on **Figure 1: Site Location Plan)**.

1.4. This LVA considers possible effects of the proposed development upon landscape features, landscape character, and visual amenity. This appraisal has been guided by the assessment criteria set out in **Appendix 1: LVIA Methodology (Non-EIA).**

1.5. This LVA has been prepared following site visits and through a desk study analysis of the application site and its policy context to gain an appreciation of the landscape and visual context. Other supporting figures referenced within this appraisal are:

- Figure 2: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) and Viewpoint Location Plan.
- Figure 3: Designated Landscapes and Recreational Routes.
- Figure 4: Landscape Character Plan.
- Figure 5: Topographical Plan.
- Figure 6: Cumulative Sites Plan.

1.6. Landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals are illustrated on **Appendix 2: Landscape Masterplan** which conveys the landscape strategy for the application site.

1.7. A photographic record of views toward the application site and its local context is provided in **Appendix 3: Photographic Record**. The proposed development has been modelled and visualized in a selection of viewpoint locations, as shown by **Appendix 4: Photomontages.** The photographic locations are illustrated on **Figure 2: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) and Viewpoint Location Plan.**

2. Stakeholder Consultation

2.1. Pegasus' planning consultants submitted a Notification of New Project Form to the Energy Consents Unit (ECU) on behalf of the Applicant on the 07 June 2024.

2.2. A Pre-Application Advice Request and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion Request was subsequently submitted to the ECU on 02 July 2024. A Pre-Application Advice Request was also submitted to Scottish Borders Council (SBC) on the same date, with SBC dating their response 31 March 2022 (sic). Under the Placemaking and Design section, SBC requested a landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) and cumulative assessment be submitted with the planning application; however, as the

proposed development is not considered an EIA development, an LVA has been produced. A cumulative assessment has been included as part of this appraisal.

2.3. A request was made to include an additional viewpoint *"in front of the planting that encloses the western edge of the Eccles substation as this would provide a sequential visual assessment along the public road"*. Upon review, the viewpoint request has had to be discounted on health and safety grounds. A sequential assessment from the A697 is however included in this LVA.

2.4. Design and mitigation advice provided by SBC during the pre-application stage has influenced the landscape planting proposals included as part of the proposed development.

2.5. At the time of writing no response had been received from the ECU.

3. Methodology

3.1. This LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the best practice principles outlined in published guidance documents listed in the reference section of this report, notably the Third Edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment (GLVIA3) – see **Section 11: References**. It should be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines, not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:

3.2. "This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."

3.3. The approach set out below - and in detail in the Assessment Criteria at **Appendix 1: LVIA Methodology (Non-EIA)** - has been developed specifically for this LVA to ensure that the methodology is fit for purpose.

Distinction between Landscape and Visual Effects

3.4. In accordance with GLVIA3, landscape and visual effects are assessed separately; although, the procedure for assessing each of these is closely linked. A clear distinction has been drawn between landscape and visual effects as described below:

- Landscape effects relate to the effects of the proposed development on the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality.

- Visual effects relate to the effects the proposed development has on specific views as experienced by visual receptors and on visual amenity more generally.

Landscape and Visual Assessment Process

3.5. The assessment of landscape effects follows a recognised process as set out below:

- Identify the baseline landscape resource (i.e. individual landscape elements and a thorough understanding of landscape character both at a local scale and a wider scale) and its value.
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the landscape resource to the type of development proposed.
- Develop mitigation proposals/measures iteratively throughout the development process to avoid, reduce, and/or ameliorate potential adverse landscape impacts and to maximise the beneficial landscape impacts of the proposed development.
- Identify predicted landscape impacts of the proposed development.
- Evaluate the magnitude of change to the baseline landscape resource.
- Assess the level of residual effect of the proposed development on the landscape.

3.6. The assessment of visual effects follows a similar process as set out below:

- Identify the geographical area from where views of the proposed development are possible through desk-based research and site work.
- Identify potential visual receptors for the proposed development (i.e. groups of people who would have potential views of the proposed development).
- Describe the nature of the baseline views towards the proposed development for each receptor group, usually illustrated by a photograph.
- Evaluate the sensitivity of the visual receptor groups.
- Develop potential landscape mitigation proposals/measures iteratively throughout the development process to avoid, reduce, and/or ameliorate potential adverse visual effects and to maximise the beneficial visual impact of the proposed development.
- Identify predicted visual effects of the proposed development on receptor groups.
- Evaluate the magnitude of change in the view of representative visual receptor groups.
- Assess the level of residual effects on the views from representative receptor groups and on overall visual amenity.

Types of Landscape and Visual Impacts Considered and Duration

3.7. There are several ways the proposed development may affect the existing landscape and visual characteristics found within the application site and the study area. Given the nature of the proposed development, these effects are likely to be either short-term or temporary (and relate specifically to the construction/decommissioning phases of works), long-term (and incurred during the operational phase) or permanent (i.e., lasting beyond the lifetime of the proposed development).

3.8. Duration of effects are judged on a scale as short-term, medium-term, and long-term, which for the purposes of this LVA are categorised as:

- Short-term covering a 1-to-5-year period.
- Medium-term covering a 5-to-10-year period.
- Long-term covering a period of more than 10 years.

3.9. Consideration has been given to seasonal variations in the visibility of the proposed development and these are described where necessary.

3.10. Both beneficial and adverse effects are identified in the assessment and reported as appropriate. Where effects are described as 'neutral' this is where beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects. The adverse and beneficial effects are communicated in each case so that the judgement is clear.

3.11. As part of the proposed development, new native planting would be introduced. New planting can take several years to mature, with average growth rates taken into consideration in this LVA. The effectiveness of new planting would improve over time (both in terms of integrating the proposed development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening) and this needs to be considered appropriately.

3.12. As a result, temporary landscape and visual effects of the proposed development are assessed both in the winter of year 1 (the year in which construction of the proposed development would be completed) and in the summer of year 10 (10 years after construction of the proposed development). In this second scenario, it is assumed that all new planting proposed as part of the proposed development would have established and that it exhibits a degree of maturity.

3.13. It should be noted that the bund would be removed at decommissioning, with soil distributed across the site. It is intended that new planting would remain onsite following decommissioning, becoming a permanent addition.

Cumulative Effects

3.14. This LVA also considers the potential for cumulative effects which may arise when considering the proposed development alongside other similar developments present/not yet present in the landscape.

3.15. The cumulative assessment considers potential effects that may arise when considering the proposed development in relation to relevant potential future baseline scenarios, i.e., when considering the proposed development in addition to other major relatable built infrastructure developments already present in the landscape (operational/under construction) or those with planning consent but for which no construction activity has occurred (consented). The final scenario considers the proposed development in addition to those developments entered into the planning system with a validated planning application.

3.16. As the cumulative situation changes frequently as modifications are made to existing and consented developments, such as their removal; extensions to their lifetime; application

withdrawals; or changes to layouts submitted for planning applications, it is necessary to decide on a cut-off date when the sites and layouts to be included are fixed.

3.17. For the cumulative assessment, cumulative research was taken up to Tuesday 17 December 2024 and is complete to the best of our knowledge. Any changes in the cumulative situation after this date are not incorporated in the assessment.

Night-Time Assessment

3.18. The proposed development does not include a requirement for any permanent lighting that would be in regular use during darkness hours. Security and/or task lighting may be incorporated within the main substation compound; although, this would be sensor and/or user operated.

3.19. As no notable landscape or visual effects from lighting would be anticipated to arise, night-time effects are not considered any further in this LVA.

Residential Amenity

3.20. The LI Technical Guidance Note 02//19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) states:

3.21. "Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has 'a right to a view.' …

3.22. It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before."

3.23. Whilst this LVA considers potential visual effects from nearby residencies in relation to public views and public visual amenity, it does not include an assessment on residential visual amenity as it is judged that the proposed development would not give rise to effects meeting the threshold described above.

3.24. For clarity, in the preparation of this LVA, no properties were visited, with assessments based on desk-based studies and site work from the nearest publicly accessible location, i.e., the local road network.

Assumptions and Limitations of Assessment

Competence

3.25. This LVA has been prepared by Chartered Landscape Architects at Pegasus, which is a Landscape Institute registered practice.

3.26. All work has been prepared and reviewed internally by highly experienced landscape planners.

Assessed Development

3.27. The proposed development has been developed iteratively in conjunction with the production of this LVA with the intention of incorporating mitigation from the outset. The effects identified and described as part of this LVA are based on the landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals shown on **Appendix 2**.

Study Area

3.28. Based on an understanding of visibility gained during site visits and the results of the Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) plan (see **Figure 2**), this LVA has focussed on an initial 3km study area.

Baseline Information

3.29. The baseline landscape resource and visual receptors were identified through a desk-based study of Ordnance Survey mapping, published landscape character studies, relevant planning policies, interrogation of aerial photography, as well as photographs taken, and observations made, during site work.

3.30. Access during site visits was restricted to publicly accessible locations or land within the ownership of the site landowner. Assumptions have therefore been made regarding the view from private properties. These assumptions have been based on an understanding of the properties and features present within the wider landscape gained during the site visits from publicly accessible locations. Assumptions are guided by professional experience and judgement.

3.31. A photographic record of views toward the application site and its local context is provided in **Appendix 3: Photographic Record.** Photomontages of the proposed development from a selection of viewpoint locations is included in **Appendix 4: Photomontages.** The photographic locations are illustrated on **Figure 2: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) and Viewpoint Location Plan.**

Site Visits

3.32. As part of the baseline study, site visits to the application site and surrounding area were undertaken in winter 2024.

3.33. During the site visits, representative viewpoint locations were micro-sited; roads were driven; access tracks and paths were walked; and important landscape features in-and-around the application site were recorded and photographed.

Distances

3.34. Where distances are given in this LVA, these are approximate distances between the nearest part of the application site and the nearest receptor in question, unless stated otherwise.

4. Site Context

4.1. The application site is located on the southern side of the A697, adjacent to Eccles Substation.

4.2. The application site comprises agricultural land with associated access. The site largely covers one large rectilinear agricultural field, which is dedicated to arable farmland; although, a proposed access track would cross further fields to the north.

4.3. The application site lies in the Tweed basin. Landform can broadly be described as flat, with land gently rising from a central drainage channel towards the southern boundary. Elevations range from lows of approximately 45m AOD (at the drainage channel) to highs of approximately 55m AOD (near the southern extents).

4.4. Along the roadside of the A697, post-and-wire fencing and a mixed hedgerow interspersed with scattered individual hedgerow trees defines the boundary extents of the application site. Further tree cover is present on the periphery of the application site, at Egerton Covert, Paxton Wood, and Crown Gorse. The drainage channel is lined by low-lying riparian vegetation. The site is crossed by electricity pylons and poles carrying overhead powerlines to the substation.

4.5. Presently, the primary point of access to the application site is from a field access track on the northern boundary; accessed from the A697.

4.6. The immediately surrounding landscape comprises gently undulating ridges and hollows that are interspersed by scattered towns, villages, farmsteads, and country estates. Land is largely used for agricultural and forestry/woodland management purposes, with field patterns often defined by hedgerows, scattered woodlands, and plantations.

4.7. The existing presence of large-scale infrastructure at Eccles Substation, coupled with the emergence of battery storage development, provides a somewhat industrialised character to the local environs, with built development largely visually enclosing the site to the north. To the east, south, and west, the site is largely enclosed by drumlins, woodland belts and strips, plantations, and tree cover and riparian vegetation along watercourses.

5. Designations and Policy Context

5.1. This section provides an overview of the planning policies and designations of particular relevance to landscape and visual amenity.

European Landscape Convention

5.2. The European Landscape Convention (ELC) is the first international convention to focus specifically on landscape. The convention promotes landscape protection, management, and planning, as well as European co-operation on landscape issues. Signed by the UK Government in February 2006, the ELC became binding from March 2007. It applies to all landscapes, towns, and villages, as well as open countryside; the coast and inland areas; and ordinary or even degraded landscapes, as well as those that are afforded protection.

5.3. The UK Government has stated that it considers the UK to be compliant with the ELC's requirements and in effect the principal requirements of the ELC are already enshrined in the existing suite of national policies and guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

5.4. The ELC defines landscape as: "*An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*."

5.5. It is important to recognise that the ELC does not require the preservation of all landscapes; although, landscape protection is one of the core themes of the convention. Equally important is the requirement to manage and plan future landscape change.

5.6. The ELC highlights the importance of developing landscape policies dedicated to the protection, management, and planning of landscapes. The analysis of landscape and visual matters in this LVA, when read in context with appropriate national and local policy, enables decisions to be made with due regard to landscape character as promoted by the ELC.

National Planning Policy

5.7. The Fourth National Planning Framework for Scotland (NPF4) was adopted in 2023, replacing the Third National Planning Framework (NPF3) and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). NPF4 sets out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments, and national planning policy for Scotland.

5.8. NPF4 sets out the following six overarching spatial principles:

- *"Just transition. We will empower people to shape their places and ensure the transition to net zero is fair and inclusive.*
- *Conserving and recycling assets. We will make productive use of existing buildings, places, infrastructure and services, locking in carbon, minimising waste, and building a circular economy.*
- *Local living. We will support local liveability and improve community health and wellbeing by ensuring people can easily access services, greenspace, learning, work and leisure locally.*
- *Compact urban growth. We will limit urban expansion so we can optimise the use of land to provide services and resources, including carbon storage, flood risk management, blue and green infrastructure and biodiversity.*
- *Rebalanced development. We will target development to create opportunities for communities and investment in areas of past decline, and manage development sustainably in areas of high demand. •*
- *Rural revitalisation. We will encourage sustainable development in rural areas, recognising the need to grow and support urban and rural communities together."*

5.9. By applying these principles, NPF4 will support the planning and delivery of:

- *"sustainable places, where we reduce emissions, restore and better connect biodiversity;*
- *liveable places, where we can all live better, healthier lives; and*
- *productive places, where we have a greener, fairer and more inclusive wellbeing economy."*

5.10. The following NPF4 policies are considered to be of most relevance to the application site and the proposed development from a landscape and visual perspective:

Policy 1: Tackling the climate and nature crises

5.11. Policy 1 states that:

"When considering all development proposals significant weight will be given to the global climate and nature crises."

Policy 4: Natural places

5.12. Policy 4 states that:

"a) Development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment, will not be supported.

b) Development proposals that are likely to have a significant effect on an existing or proposed European site (Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Areas) and are not directly connected with or necessary to their conservation management are required to be subject to an "appropriate assessment" of the implications for the conservation objectives.

c) Development proposals that will affect a National Park, National Scenic Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest or a National Nature Reserve will only be supported where:

i. The objectives of designation and the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of national importance.

All Ramsar sites are also European sites and/or Sites of Special Scientific Interest and are extended protection under the relevant statutory regimes.

d) Development proposals that affect a site designated as a local nature conservation site or landscape area in the LDP will only be supported where:

i. Development will not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area or the qualities for which it has been identified; or

ii. Any significant adverse effects on the integrity of the area are clearly outweighed by social, environmental or economic benefits of at least local importance.

e) The precautionary principle will be applied in accordance with relevant legislation and Scottish Government guidance.

f) Development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on species protected by legislation will only be supported where the proposal meets the relevant statutory tests. If there is reasonable evidence to suggest that a protected species is present on a site or may be affected by a proposed development, steps must be taken to establish its presence.

The level of protection required by legislation must be factored into the planning and design of development, and potential impacts must be fully considered prior to the determination of any application.

g) Development proposals in areas identified as wild land in the Nature Scot Wild Land Areas map will only be supported where the proposal:

i. will support meeting renewable energy targets; or,

ii. is for small scale development directly linked to a rural business or croft, or is required to support a fragile community in a rural area.

All such proposals must be accompanied by a wild land impact assessment which sets out how design, siting, or other mitigation measures have been and will be used to minimise significant impacts on the qualities of the wild land, as well as any management and monitoring arrangements where appropriate.

Buffer zones around wild land will not be applied, and effects of development outwith wild land areas will not be a significant consideration."

Policy 11: Energy

5.13. Policy 11 states that:

"a) Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported. These include:

i. wind farms including repowering, extending, expanding and extending the life of existing wind farms;

ii. enabling works, such as grid transmission and distribution infrastructure;

iii. energy storage, such as battery storage and pumped storage hydro;

iv. small scale renewable energy generation technology;

v. solar arrays;

vi. proposals associated with negative emissions technologies and carbon capture; and

vii. proposals including co-location of these technologies.

b) Development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported.

c) Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities.

d) Development proposals that impact on international or national designations will be assessed in relation to Policy 4.

e) In addition, project design and mitigation will demonstrate how the following impacts are addressed:

i. impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including, residential amenity, visual impact, noise and shadow flicker;

ii. significant landscape and visual impacts, recognising that such impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable;

iii. public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes;

iv. impacts on aviation and defence interests including seismological recording;

v. impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;

vi. impacts on road traffic and on adjacent trunk roads, including during construction;

vii. impacts on historic environment;

viii. effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;

ix. biodiversity including impacts on birds;

x. impacts on trees, woods and forests;

xi. proposals for the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration;

xii. the quality of site restoration plans including the measures in place to safeguard or guarantee availability of finances to effectively implement those plans; and

xiii. cumulative impacts."

Policy 14: Design, quality and place

5.14. Policy 14 states that:

"a) Development proposals will be designed to improve the quality of an area whether in urban or rural locations and regardless of scale.

b) Development proposals will be supported where they are consistent with the six qualities of successful places:

***Healthy:** Supporting the prioritisation of women's safety and improving physical and mental health.*

***Pleasant:** Supporting attractive natural and built spaces.*

Connected: *Supporting well connected networks that make moving around easy and reduce car dependency*

Distinctive: *Supporting attention to detail of local architectural styles and natural landscapes to be interpreted, literally or creatively, into designs to reinforce identity.*

Sustainable: *Supporting the efficient use of resources that will allow people to live, play, work and stay in their area, ensuring climate resilience, and integrating nature positive, biodiversity solutions.*

Adaptable: *Supporting commitment to investing in the long-term value of buildings, streets and spaces by allowing for flexibility so that they can be changed quickly to accommodate different uses as well as maintained over time.*

Further details on delivering the six qualities of successful places are set out in Annex D.

c) Development proposals that are poorly designed, detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area or inconsistent with the six qualities of successful places, will not be supported."

5.15. A full and detailed consideration of the NPF4 policies applicable to the proposed development are provided in the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application.

Local Planning Policy

5.16. The Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan (LDP2) was adopted on 22 August 2024. The following LDP policies are considered to be of most relevance to the application site and the proposed development from a landscape and visual perspective:

- Policy ED9: Renewable Energy Development.
- Policy EP10: Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

Supplementary Guidance

5.17. The following Supplementary Guidance and Supporting Documents have also been taken into consideration in the development of this LVA:

- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape and Development (2008).
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Local Landscape Designations (2012).
- Supplementary Planning Guidance. Renewable Energy (2018[1]).

[1] This document was formerly adopted as Supplementary Guidance in 2018 and carried forward as Supplementary Planning Guidance in August 2024

Consideration of LDP Policies

Designated Landscapes

5.18. The application site does not lie within a nationally designated landscape (National Park or National Scenic Area).

5.19. As shown on **Figure 3**, the application site also lies outside any of the LDP identified Special Landscape Areas (SLAs). The Hirsel Country Park – a registered Garden and Designed Landscape (ref: GDL00364) - lies nearly 2km east-southeast of the application site.

Design of the Proposed Development

5.20. The above local planning policies have been used to inform the design of the proposed development to ensure it is befitting of the site context and immediate surroundings, and delivers enhancements, where possible.

5.21. The proposed development would be located in a landscape already influenced by industrial-scale infrastructure as evidenced by the presence of Eccles Substation. The local environs will also be subject to change to accommodate the emerging pattern of consented BESS developments.

5.22. **Section 6: Proposed Development; Section 7: Landscape Baseline and Effects; and Section 8: Visual Baseline and Effects** describe how the existing landscape; landscape features such as existing trees; and visual amenity, have been addressed in the design proposals, and how additional landscape features are proposed.

6. Proposed Development

6.1. This LVA considers potential effects resulting from the construction, operation, then decommissioning of a BESS development with an output of up to 150MW.

6.2. As a BESS development could not function without associated infrastructure, this appraisal also considers potential landscape and visual effects that may arise from the inclusion of ancillary elements such as substations, access tracks, fencing, storage containers, construction compounds, and lighting/CCTV columns, where visible.

6.3. Key information pertaining to the appraisal includes the location and heights of the. BESS containers, the substation buildings, storage containers, and the retention of existing landscape features such as riparian and field boundary vegetation, and protection of adjacent woodland and plantations. The proposed development layout and application site boundary in which this LVA is based, is as per the following Applicant produced drawing:

- 05389-RES-LAY-DR-PT-001 Revision 6 titled Infrastructure Layout (Dated: 26 November 2024).

6.4. There is currently one primary point of access to the application site, from the A697, which currently accommodates large farm vehicles and machinery. Two new access points from the A697 are proposed for use for construction and operational purposes.

Mitigation Proposals

6.5. To mitigate against potential landscape and visual effects, the landscape mitigation and enhancement proposals illustrated on **Appendix 2** have been developed to take account of the identified areas of sensitivity by providing additional planting, where required.

6.6. During construction, vegetation on the application site and in the immediacy, i.e. hedgerows and hedgerow trees along the A697, and woodland in Egerton Covert, Paxton Wood, and Crown Gorse would be retained and protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

6.7. The landscape mitigation proposals also include the following:

- The built features of the proposed development, including the BESS containers, are relatively low in terms of height.
- Provision of new native trees and hedgerow planting to gaps in the existing hedgerow field boundary along the roadside of the A697 to assimilate the proposed development into the local environs and provide biodiversity enhancement (where practical and feasible).
- New hedgerow planting along the northeastern boundary to compensate for any hedgerow loss required to facilitate the proposed development, and to enhance local landscape character.
- Creation of a landscape bund and promotion of new woodland planting to assimilate the proposed development into the local environs and reduce the potential visual impact from built development in views from the north and west.
- Areas of wildflowers and meadow grass to enhance biodiversity.
- Ongoing landscape management of planting during the lifetime of proposed development.

6.8. Please refer to the Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) and planning drawings, for further information in relation to the overall design concept and each of the built elements of the proposed development.

7. Landscape Baseline and Effects

Introduction

7.1. The assessment of landscape effects deals with the changes to the landscape as a resource. Different combinations of the physical, natural, and cultural components (including aesthetic, perceptual, and experiential aspects) of the landscape and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscapes in different places.

7.2. Effects are considered in relation to both landscape features and landscape character during construction, at Year 1, at Year 10, and beyond. The sensitivity of landscape features is a function of both their susceptibility and value, as discussed further in the Assessment

Criteria at **Appendix 1**. A summary of landscape effects is included in **Table 1: Summary of Landscape Effects**.

Landscape Features

Landform and Topography

7.3. The application site lies in the Tweed basin, with the course of the River Tweed and Leet Water influencing the immediate and wider landscape pattern.

7.4. Landform can broadly be described as flat, with land gently rising from a central drainage channel towards the southern boundary. Elevations range from lows of approximately 45m AOD (at the drainage channel) to highs of approximately 55m AOD (near the southern extents). Landform on the application site is typical for the locality and in keeping with the description for Landscape Character Type (LCT) 106: Lowland with Drumlins.

7.5. Landform is judged to be of medium susceptibility to the type and scale of development proposed. When considering the present site condition and the immediate landscape surroundings, the landscape value is judged to be low, resulting in an overall sensitivity rating of medium.

7.6. Whilst earthworks would be required as part of the proposals, with some changes to the landform necessary to accommodate the foundations of the proposed compound, fencing, access track, and other structures, changes would be minimised to a degree by the general flatness of the site at present. A landscape bund would be formed from any removed soil.

7.7. During the construction phase, the magnitude of change is considered to be low, resulting in a **Moderate/minor** temporary adverse landscape effect.

7.8. Whilst from year 1 onwards, all earthworks would be completed, and new features outside of the main compound would be planted, topographical changes to the landform on the application site would remain in place. As a result, the magnitude of change is considered to remain at low, resulting in a **Moderate/minor** adverse long-term landscape effect.

Watercourses and Drainage

7.9. There are no notable watercourses within the application site.

7.10. A drainage channel, which physically separates two agricultural fields, extends from the A697 along field boundaries towards Egerton Covert and Paxton Wood where it follows the woodland edge. This drainage channel is considered to be of low value and moderately (medium) susceptible to changes which may affect its course or quality. The combined sensitivity level is judged to be low.

7.11. Built form and associated infrastructure has largely been located away from the drainage channel, limiting the potential for direct construction effects to occur; although, there would be a need to culvert over the drainage channel at the western access into the main substation compound. There is potential for direct construction effects also to occur where the surface water pipe connects into the attenuation basin. There is a risk of chemical spillages and/or sediment run-off during the construction process; although, effects would be limited and controlled through best-practice construction and environmental practices. Consequently, the changes to drainage conditions within the application site during the

construction phase are judged to result in a low magnitude of change. When taking account of the low sensitivity, this would result in a **Minor** temporary adverse landscape effect.

7.12. When considering the creation of the new attenuation basin as part of the proposed development, the drainage conditions are predicted to improve very slightly over the operational phase. The resulting magnitude of change is predicted to be low, which results in a **Minor** beneficial long-term effect.

Land Use, Buildings, and Infrastructure

7.13. The application site largely comprises one large, broadly rectilinear arable field, and the fringes of a secondary field. The fields are set within a landscape comprising agricultural land divided by post-and-wire fencing, hedgerows, and woodlands or mixed plantations.

7.14. Whilst there are no existing buildings within the application site, the site is considerably influenced by its proximity to Eccles Substation. Visually prominent electricity pylons and poles carrying overhead powerlines cross the site, with further pylons and poles visible from within the site. The application site is further influenced by its proximity to the A697.

7.15. When accounting for the existing land uses and the influence of electricity infrastructure and the A697, the susceptibility and landscape value are both judged to be medium/low. The combined sensitivity is judged to be medium/low.

7.16. The proposed development would represent a change to the current land use from arable farmland to an operational BESS development with associated infrastructure. The magnitude of change is judged to be medium during the construction, operational, and decommissioning phases, as part of the application site would remain free of built development and remain as arable land. When taking account of the medium/low sensitivity, the resulting effects are judged to be **Moderate** adverse, temporary, but long-term.

Vegetation

7.17. Arable fields divided by hedgerows is listed as a key landscape characteristic of LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins, which illustrates its influence across the extents of the LCT.

7.18. The pattern of vegetation within the application site is typical of the surrounding landscape, with the field enclosed by hedgerows, hedgerow trees, and the immediately adjacent mixed woodland blocks and plantations at Egerton Covert, Paxton Wood, and Crown Gorse. The vegetation found onsite is considered to have a low landscape value.

7.19. Whilst arable fields, hedgerows, and hedgerow trees are an abundant element in the area that can be reinstated post-decommissioning, they can take some time to regenerate and establish; often requiring human intervention for planting, management, and maintenance. The susceptibility to change of the vegetation onsite is therefore considered to be medium. The combination of the medium susceptibility to change with low landscape value results in a medium/low sensitivity rating.

7.20. The proposed development would occupy an area of land largely comprising arable farmland, with the design of the site layout taken cognisance of the onsite field boundary vegetation, the drainage channel, the existing landform and topography, as well as the existing routes of electricity pylons, poles, and overhead powerlines.

7.21. During construction, the introduction of the proposed development would result in the localised loss of an arable field. The proposals would also result in the removal of a relatively small number of hedgerow species to facilitate the proposed access points. This would constitute a small portion of the total hedgerow coverage along the roadside of the A697. The hedgerow trees and the existing woodlands immediately adjacent to the boundaries of the site would be retained and protected as far as practicable during construction. Consequently, the magnitude of change is judged to be low during the construction phase, resulting in **Minor**, localised, temporary effects.

7.22. Proposed mixed native woodland planting is proposed on the application site as illustrated in **Appendix 2**, to better integrate the proposals with the surrounding area. New hedgerow planting is also proposed along the northeastern boundary to compensate for the loss of hedgerow species to facilitate access, as well as along the northern boundary with the A697 to infill gaps in the existing hedgerow (where practical and feasible). Furthermore, areas around the proposed development and the proposed attenuation basin would be appropriately seeded with areas of wildflowers and meadow grass to enhance biodiversity.

7.23. When considering the inclusion of the landscape mitigation measures proposed, the magnitude of change is predicted to be low from year 1 onwards, which results in a **Minor** beneficial landscape effect over the longer-term.

Landscape Character

7.24. This section provides an overview of the landscape character of the application site and its locality. It provides a judgement on the sensitivity of the landscape character to the proposed development and the potential effects that may arise from the development proposals.

National Level Landscape Character

7.25. Scotland has a digital map-based national Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The LCA, which was published in 2019 by NatureScot, defines LCTs i.e. areas of consistent and recognisable landscape character. This mapping supersedes the various regional landscape character studies produced in the 1990s.

7.26. According to **Figure 4**, the application site is located entirely in LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins, which occupies an extensive area of undulating lowlands in the Tweed basin. With respect to the proposed development, direct effects on landscape character would be limited to LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins.

7.27. Given the limited SZTV coverage shown on **Figure 2**, and lack of any secondary LCTs within a 3km radius of the application site, this LVA only considers the effects of the proposed development on LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins as no notable indirect effects are predicted beyond this extent.

7.28. With reference to the NatureScot guidance, the key characteristics of LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins considered relevant to the site and immediate landscape are:

- *"Parallel elongated, gently undulating ridges and hollows.*
- *Land cover dominated by a regular grid pattern of large arable fields divided by hedgerows, and scattered mainly broadleaf woodlands.*

- *Densely settled, with scattered towns, villages and farmsteads served by an extensive grid like road network.*
- *Collection of country estates defined strongly in the landscape by the planted shelterbelts of their outer policies.*
- *A productive, organised landscape of smooth gentle curves and a colourful, regular patchwork appearance, generally open in character but with locally intimate river corridors.*
- *Sense of place historically well established, reinforced by the continued usage of the place name "Merse"."*

7.29. In terms of how the LCT is perceived, NatureScot have provided the following description:

"This is a mainly open, expansive landscape with frequent views over the distant upland ranges in the north, south and west. Localised enclosure and visual containment is provided by woodlands, or by landform in the hollows between ridges. These reduce the typically available long open views across the Merse. The main views in and out of this Character Type are available to and from the major hill ranges to the north, south and west, but visual contact with adjoining lowland and valley types is restricted. Along the river valleys the steep, often wooded bluff slopes may in places create a narrow, intimate corridor. The colours of this landscape are dominated by the seasonally varied patchwork of arable fields. In spring and summer these form a colourful tapestry of bright, dark and yellow green hues, of which oilseed rape is the most strident, enhanced by the foliage of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodlands. By contrast, during the winter the colours of the landscape are dominated by muted browns and reddish browns of bare arable fields.

Buildings are visually prominent in this landscape. Modern large scale barns and silos sited on drumlin ridges commonly form visual foci, contrasting with the greens, yellows and earth colours of the farmlands. Pylons are also prominent."

Effects on LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins

7.30. LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins covers the majority of land within the study area. Whilst there are other examples of the 'host' LCT present across Scotland, this LVA considers potential effects on land in the Tweed basin only.

7.31. In the context of the study area, the LCT is not covered by any international, national, or local landscape designations. The rich conditions for woodland and agricultural practices have however permitted the incorporation of historic houses and large estates; many of which have since been recognised as designed landscapes and recreational outdoor spaces, such as at the Hirsel.

7.32. The landscape further benefits from the presence of a relatively simple and uniform pattern of landform and land cover. Its pattern of large arable fields is often bound by post-and-wire fences, woodlands, or hedgerows; although, hedgerows are often incomplete in places, including along the roadside of the A697.

7.33. This LCT has been considerably modified by human intervention through farming and forestry/woodland practices or to accommodate settlement, transport corridors, and electricity infrastructure including Eccles Substation. There are however some more rural or

parkland areas where inherent attributes such as ancient woodland blocks and plantations have remained intact, albeit they are often in decline. Many of these features are however commonly found in similar landscapes.

7.34. Other influential factors include industrial built form and structures, which are more notable near larger settlements such as Coldstream. The varied presence of built development, settlement, mineral working, and industrial activities coupled with movement generated by vehicles on transport corridors often presents as a busy landscape, which can diminish the sensory experience. The adoption of forestry/woodland land management and agricultural practices as the primary land-use however also provides areas of tranquillity, as well as an attractive rural setting to the settlements.

7.35. The undulating nature of the landform and its relationship with adjacent valley landscapes as well as pronounced hill and hill-ranges also provides for recreational outdoor pursuits. A dense network of Core Paths facilitates recreational access between settlements, and the countryside/hillside, including to many of the historic assets that lie within its extents. When considering all of the above factors, the landscape value is considered to be medium.

7.36. LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins is a broad, and relatively large-scale landscape dominated by a simple land cover pattern centred on agricultural and forestry/woodland management. The weakening or loss of tree and hedgerow cover field boundaries, and subsequent replacement with post-and-wire fencing, has increased the sense of openness in the landscape; although, in places, a sense of enclosure is provided by settlement, built form, and vegetation.

7.37. The ecological and historic land-use characteristics found in the landscape increases the susceptibility of the LCT to development as does its association with adjacent valley landscapes and pronounced hills and hill-ranges. Contrastingly, increased human intervention, including the adoption of more intensive agricultural and forestry/woodland land uses and management processes, decreases susceptibility.

7.38. The presence of variant large-scale development, including settlements, electricity infrastructure, and transport corridors further reduces the susceptibility of the LCT to the type of development proposed, with these factors also contributing to the landscapes ability to provide intermittent concealment/visual screening to the proposed development. On balance, the susceptibility rating is considered to be medium.

7.39. The combination of the value of the landscape and its susceptibility to the proposed development leads to an overall sensitivity rating of medium.

7.40. When accounting for the size and scale of the proposed development and the visual screening influence provided by existing landform, built form, and vegetation (including the proposed mitigation planting along the northern and western boundaries), effects on landscape character are predicted to be contained within the application site and the immediate surroundings (up to distances of approximately 1km from the site).

7.41. Whilst the proposed development would introduce built and anomalous development and marginally extend the presence and influence of electricity infrastructure in the southwestern extents of LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins, the associative magnitude of change would be no greater than low to distances up to approximately 1km, which reduces to very low across the wider extents of the LCT. The resulting landscape effect would be **Moderate/minor to Minor** adverse.

7.42. As the proposed development would introduce a number of enhancements in the form of additional woodland planting, it is predicted that visibility of the proposals and its influence on landscape character would reduce over the longer term. Therefore, a very low magnitude and a **Minor** neutral, non-permanent, but long-term effect is predicted to be experienced after 10 years in operation.

7.43. All viewpoint locations supporting this LVA have been taken from within this LCT.

Effects on Local Landscape Character

Sensitivity of the Application Site

7.44. The application site is currently used for arable farming.

7.45. The application site is not located within any international, national, or locally designated landscape. There are also no recreational routes crossing the application site or its boundaries. National Cycle Network Route 1 (NCR 1) passes within approximately 500m of the southwestern corner of the application site (at its closest point). The closest Core Paths are located within the village of Birgham, which lies approximately 2km south of the application site. As a result, the landscape value of the application site is considered to be medium/low.

7.46. The application site is influenced by its proximity to Eccles Substation, and nearby electricity pylons, poles, and overhead powerlines, including those that route through the site. Traffic and vehicle movements on the A697 is also conspicuous. The site benefits from concealment/visual screening provided by woodland on its field boundaries. When considering the existing land uses and influences, the landscape susceptibility is considered to be medium.

7.47. When considering the landscape value and susceptibility judgements, the overall sensitivity of the site to the type and scale of development proposed, is considered to be medium.

Effects on the Application Site

7.48. The proposed development would introduce a new feature into the landscape.

7.49. Whilst the proposed battery containers and ancillary features would be relatively low in terms of height; with the lateral extent of the proposed development minimised, and the location of the built form permitting continual use of the surrounding land for arable production, the development would adversely alter the physical and perceptual attributes of the application site.

7.50. The resulting magnitude of change is assessed as medium, which would result in a **Moderate** adverse effect.

7.51. The landscape mitigation proposals included as part of the proposed development would provide some landscape enhancement to the application site, with new woodland helping to partly enclose the proposed development visually. New hedgerow planting and management of the existing hedgerow along the roadside of the A697 would also have the potential to enhance local landscape character.

7.52. When considering the benefits of the landscape measures proposed in the longer-term, the magnitude of change on the application site is predicted to reduce to low, resulting in a **Moderate/minor** adverse, non-permanent, but long-term landscape effect after 10 years in operation.

Designated Landscapes

7.53. The Hirsel Country Park – and Garden and Designed Landscape - is located approximately 2km east-southeast of the application site, as shown on **Figure 3**.

7.54. According to **Figure 2**, there is no potential theoretical visibility of the proposed development from the Hirsel. As there is minimal to no potential for notable indirect effects as a result of the proposed development, potential effects at the Hirsel are not considered any further in this LVA from a landscape perspective.

Table 1 - Summary of Landscape Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of change	Level of Effect
Landscape Features				
Landform and topography	Medium	Construction/ Decommissioning	Low	Moderate/minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Moderate/minor adverse
		Year 10	Low	Moderate/minor adverse
Water features and drainage	Low	Construction/ Decommissioning	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor beneficial
		Year 10	Low	Minor beneficial
Land use, buildings, and infrastructure	Medium/low	Construction/ Decommissioning	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 10	Medium	Moderate adverse

Vegetation	Medium/low	Construction/ Decommissioning	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor beneficial
		Year 10	Low	Minor beneficial
Landscape Character				
LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins	Medium	Construction/ Decommissioning	Low to very low	Moderate/minor to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low to very low	Moderate/minor to Minor adverse
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral
Application Site	Medium	Construction/ Decommissioning	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 10	Low	Moderate/minor adverse

8. Visual Baseline and Effects

Introduction

8.1. An assessment of visual effects considers the potential for changes in views and visual amenity. The aim is to establish the area in which the proposed development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the proposed development, the places where they would be affected, and the nature of the views and visual amenity (meaning the overall quality and pleasantness to a view).

8.2. Effects are considered during construction, at year 1, at year 10 and beyond. New planting takes time to mature and average growth rates have been taken into consideration.

8.3. The effectiveness of the vegetation, both in terms of integrating the proposed development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening would improve over time and needs to be considered appropriately. A summary of visual effects is included in **Table 2: Summary of Visual Effects**.

8.4. A photographic record is included in **Appendix 3: Photographic Record.** Photomontages of the proposed development from a selection of viewpoint locations is included in **Appendix**

4: Photomontages. The photographic locations are illustrated on **Figure 2: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) and Viewpoint Location Plan.**

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

8.5. The SZTV (see **Figure 2: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) and Viewpoint Location Plan**) identifies the potential locations from which the proposed development may be visible. The SZTV has been produced using Digital Terrain Modelling (DTM) data. Existing built development (8m tall) and larger blocks of woodland have also been modelled (15m tall) to take account of the potential screening effect that these would provide.

8.6. The potential screening effect provided by smaller blocks of woodland and hedgerows/hedgerow trees have not been considered. Consequently, the actual extent of the area from which the proposed development may be visible is likely to be much smaller than that shown by the SZTV.

Sensitivity

8.7. Residential receptors, visitors to tourist attractions, users of long distance or recreational trails and other sign posted walks, and users of Scottish Borders Core Paths are considered to have a high visual sensitivity to the changes proposed. In all cases they are considered to have a high susceptibility to changes in their views and that these views are of a high value.

8.8. Users of B-class roads and the local road network - where the view is not the focus of the activity - are considered to have medium sensitivity, which is a combination of a medium susceptibility and medium value associated with the views from these routes.

8.9. People using nearby A-class roads and passengers on commercial railway lines are considered to have low sensitivity, reflecting the low susceptibility and low value associated with the views from these routes.

8.10. The approach to sensitivity of visual receptors is set out in **Appendix 1: LVIA Methodology (Non-EIA).**

Residential Receptors

8.11. The appraisal of residential receptors focuses on nearby residential properties and clusters of residential properties.

8.12. This LVA does not include a separate residential visual amenity assessment (RVAA) as it is considered that effects resulting from the proposed development would fall below the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold referred to in the Landscape Institute's Residential Visual Amenity Assessment guidance as visual effects: *"of such nature and / or magnitude that it potentially affects 'living conditions' or Residential Amenity"*.

8.13. For the purpose of this assessment, it is assumed as a worst-case, that all nearby properties are permanent residences.

8.14. Of the properties located within the area immediately surrounding the application site, the SZTV suggests that there is a very limited number from which potential visibility of the proposed development would arise. Of these, the properties at Whitrig Farm (including

Cottages) and Todrig Farm (including Cottages) have been identified as those requiring further exploration and assessment as part of this appraisal.

8.15. According to the SZTV, the remainder of residential properties in the area immediately surrounding the application site, namely those clustered around Fernyrig Farm, Fernyrig Cottage, Hatchednize Farm, and at the Woodside Sawmill, would have no views of the proposed development.

Whitrig Farm (including Cottages)

8.16. Whitrig Farm and cottages are located adjacent to the western boundary of the application site. The properties, which are accessed from the A697 via a private access track, appear to be orientated northwest – southeast; suggesting that the residents have the potential for visibility of the proposed development from primary day time living spaces (e.g. lounge, dining room, kitchen, or conservatory).

8.17. The SZTV indicates theoretical visibility from the properties and their curtilage. Presently, there is prospect for close, unobstructed views into the application site from the properties; although, landform and the established mixed woodland in Egerton Covert provides partial screening. Visibility of existing electricity infrastructure is largely limited to taller built features, including the electricity pylons and poles carrying overhead powerlines into Eccles Substation; with visibility of the substation building itself largely obscured by intervening landform and vegetation.

8.18. Owing to proximity, construction activities occurring within the application site would likely be evident, including the movement of vehicles along the A697 and the newly formed access tracks. Construction activities have the potential to influence a reasonable portion of foreground and middle-distance views, which are backclothed by vegetation; although, activities occurring towards the southern portion around the BESS substation compound and the attenuation basin may be less visible due to screening provided by the woodland in Egerton Covert.

8.19. The site layout has been designed to minimise prospective visibility of built form at the properties, with the BESS substation compound set back from the nearest field to reduce visual impact. At year 1, the expectation is therefore that a portion of the proposed built form would be partially screened behind landform or vegetation with visibility largely restricted to the secondary access track (to the west) and to built development towards the easterly extents of the BESS substation compound, as shown by **Viewpoint 2: A697 (near Puncheon Bridge).** Further built development may be visible from the curtilage of the properties and any upper-storey windows; however, this is a matter of private amenity.

8.20. There would also be the potential to view ancillary features such as security fencing, the proposed bund, and proposed mitigation planting. Activities associated with maintenance and management of the site and equipment may also be visible.

8.21. Whilst there is potential to view the proposed built form in views from the properties (and their curtilage), the presence of surrounding topography and vegetation is predicted to minimise the potential visual impact experienced. As a result, the proposed development is not expected to exert a dominating or strong influence in views.

8.22. Where visible, the proposed development would be experienced in the context of built form and electricity pylons and poles carrying overhead powerlines into Eccles Substation.

Consequently, the corresponding magnitude of change is predicted to be medium. A medium magnitude of change combined with the high sensitivity of the receptors is judged to result in **Moderate** effects during the construction phase and at year 1.

8.23. At year 10, the proposed development would benefit from the establishment of the proposed woodland planting proposed on the application site. Whilst there remains the prospect to view the proposed development in gaps between planting (primarily when deciduous species are not in leaf); overall, the proposed mitigation measures would help screen or filter views of the proposed development from the properties and their curtilage, whilst helping to integrate the development within the local landscape. Consequently, the magnitude of change at year 10 is judged to be low. When taking account of the high sensitivity, this would result in a long-term, temporary **Moderate/minor** adverse level of effect.

Todrig Farm (including Cottages)

8.24. Todrig Farm and cottages are located approximately 500m north-northeast of the application site. The properties, which are accessed from the local road via a private access track, appear to be orientated north-south; suggesting that the residents have the potential for visibility of the proposed development from primary day time living spaces (e.g. lounge, dining room, kitchen, or conservatory).

8.25. The SZTV indicates limited theoretical visibility from the properties themselves, with prospective visibility largely shown from the access tracks and curtilages of the properties. Presently, there is minimal to no prospect for views into the application site from the properties owing to intervening landform, vegetation, and built features in Eccles Substation, as shown in **Viewpoint 3: Permissive/Country Path (near Todrig).**

8.26. There is prospect for construction activities occurring within the application site to be visible, including the movement of vehicles along the A697; however, it is expected that the majority of works and activities would primarily be screened from view by intervening landform, vegetation, and built features in Eccles Substation.

8.27. At year 1, the expectation is that the proposed built form would primarily be screened behind landform, vegetation, and/or built features at Eccles Substation. There would also be the potential to view ancillary features such as security fencing, the proposed bund, and proposed mitigation planting. Activities associated with maintenance and management of the site and equipment may also be visible.

8.28. Where visible, the proposed development would be experienced in the context of built form and associated infrastructure at Eccles Substation, including electricity pylons, that are predicted to restrict any permissible visibility to no more than intermittent glimpses. As the proposed development would not be visually prominent, the corresponding magnitude of change is predicted to be very low. A very low magnitude of change combined with the high sensitivity of the receptors would result in **Minor** neutral effects during the construction phase and at year 1.

8.29. At year 10, the proposed development would benefit from the establishment of the proposed woodland planting proposed on the application site. Whilst there remains the prospect to view the proposed development in gaps between planting and the built form at Eccles Substation; overall, the proposed mitigation measures would help screen or filter views of the proposed development from the properties and their curtilage, whilst helping

to integrate the development within the local landscape. Consequently, the magnitude of change at year 10 is judged to remain at very low, which would result in a long-term, temporary **Minor** neutral level of effect.

Other Residences and Settlement within the Study Area

8.30. No notable visual effects are anticipated on other residential receptors within the study area, including from the villages of Eccles, Leitholm, and Birgham.

Recreational and Tourist Attraction Receptors

8.31. There are a few recreational and tourist attractions in the study area, with the most notable being the Hirsel Country Park.

8.32. According to the SZTV, there would be negligible or no visibility of the proposed development from the Hirsel. Consequently, recreational and tourist visitors to the Hirsel are predicted to be unaffected by the proposed development.

Other Recreational and Tourist Attractions within the Study Area

8.33. No notable visual effects are anticipated at other attractions within the study area.

Recreational Route Receptors

National Cycle Route 1

8.34. National Cycle Route 1 is an approximately 2,034km long-distance route that extends across the UK, providing access (in sections) from Dover, England to the Highlands of Scotland. Locally to the application site, the route forms a connection to Edinburgh as well as the surrounding districts of Midlothian, West Lothian, and East Lothian.

8.35. In the context of the study area, the cycle route extends south of the application site between Eccles and the Hirsel, passing the site approximately 400m to the south at its closest point.

8.36. According to the SZTV, this route would lie almost entirely outside of SZTV coverage, with the SZTV showing that potential visibility would be restricted to scattered very short sections in the vicinity of Eccles Newton and Birgham Wood.

8.37. From those very small sections where views are permissible from National Cycle Route 1, these would be no more than intermittent glimpses, giving rise to no more than **Minor** neutral effects. Effects would further reduce as the proposed mitigation measures mature, as shown by **Viewpoint 4: NCR 1 (near Birgham Wood) and Viewpoint 5: NCR 1 (near Eccles Newton).**

Other Recreational Routes within the Study Area

8.38. The SZTV illustrates minimal to no visibility of the proposed development from the number of Scottish Borders Core Paths located in the vicinity of Birgham**.** Consequently, recreational users traversing these routes would be unaffected by the proposed development.

Transport Routes

A697

8.39. The A697 extends for approximately 109km between Morpeth in Northumberland, and Oxton: a small rural village in the Scottish Borders.

8.40. In the context of the study area, the road routes between Springwells (to the northwest of the application site) and to the Hirsel at the junction with the A698 (southeast of the application site). This section of the road covered by the study area extends to approximately 7.5m.

8.41. According to the SZTV, potential visibility of the proposed development would be extremely limited, with coverage restricted to a small section of the road located immediately adjacent to the application site, as shown by **Viewpoint 1: A697 (at Eccles Substation), Viewpoint 2: A697 (near Puncheon Bridge), and Viewpoint 6: A697 (at Bankhead Wood).**

8.42. During the construction phase, construction traffic would use the A697 to access the application site. Landform and roadside vegetation would largely restrict visibility of construction activities to intermittent, glimpsed, and filtered views, which would be experienced at moderate speeds of travel. Owing to proximity, construction activities occurring within the application site would likely be evident, including the movement of vehicles along the A697 and the newly formed access tracks. Construction activities have the potential to influence a reasonable portion of foreground and middle-distance views, which are backclothed by vegetation.

8.43. Views of onsite activities would be seen from a moderate section of the road (approximately 2km length), with southbound road users most influenced. For northbound road users, visibility of construction activities would start to dissipate as soon as the application site falls behind the direction of travel (an approximate 700m length). Landform and intervening vegetation would combine to restrict visibility from the remaining sections. The magnitude of change during construction from this section of the road is judged to be medium. When taking account of the low sensitivity, this would result in a short-term, temporary **Moderate/minor** adverse visual effect.

8.44. The site layout has been designed to minimise prospective visibility of built form from the A697, with the BESS substation compound set back from the roadside to reduce visual impact. At year 1, views of the proposed development are therefore predicted to be briefly direct to oblique for road users travelling in a southerly direction, with road users travelling northwards largely experiencing the development in peripheral and oblique views.

8.45. Views would largely comprise visibility of the BESS substation compound. There would also be the potential to view ancillary features such as security fencing, the proposed bund, and proposed mitigation planting, as shown by **Viewpoint 1: A697 (at Eccles Substation), Viewpoint 2: A697 (near Puncheon Bridge), and Viewpoint 6: A697 (at Bankhead Wood).** Activities associated with maintenance and management of the site and equipment may also be visible.

8.46. For road users, the proposed development would be experienced in the context of built form and associated infrastructure at Eccles Substation, including electricity pylons. Consequently, the corresponding magnitude of change is predicted to be low. A low

magnitude of change combined with the low sensitivity of the receptors is judged to result in **Minor** effects at year 1.

8.47. At year 10, the proposed development would benefit from the establishment of the proposed hedgerow and woodland planting proposed on the application site. Whilst there remains the prospect to view the proposed development in gaps between planting (primarily when deciduous species are not in leaf), views into the application site would be largely limited to the site access points. Overall, the expectation is that the proposed mitigation measures would help screen or filter views of the proposed development from the A697, whilst helping to integrate the development within the local landscape. Consequently, the magnitude of change at year 10 is judged to be very low. When taking account of the low sensitivity, this would result in a long-term, temporary, neutral effects that would be no more than **Minor**.

Local Roads

8.48. There are a number of local roads which pass through the study area, the majority of which would have no visibility of the proposed development.

8.49. According to the SZTV, the local road network would lie almost entirely outside of SZTV coverage, with the SZTV showing that potential visibility would be restricted to scattered very short sections in the vicinity of Eccles Newton, Birgham Wood, Todrig, and Bankhead.

8.50. From those very small sections where views are permissible from local roads, these would be no more than intermittent glimpses, giving rise to no more than **Minor** neutral effects. Effects would further reduce as the proposed mitigation measures mature, as shown by **Viewpoint 3: Permissive/Country Path (near Todhill), Viewpoint 4: NCR 1 (near Birgham Wood), Viewpoint 5: NCR 1 (near Eccles Newton), and Viewpoint 6: A697 (at Bankhead Wood).**

Other Transport Routes within the Study Area

8.51. No notable visual effects are anticipated on other roads within the study area, including from the A698, the B6350, and the B6461.

Table 2 - Summary of Visual Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of change	Level of Effect
Residential Receptors				
Whitrig Farm (including Cottages)	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 10	Low	Moderate/minor adverse

Todrig Farm (including Cottages)	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Eccles	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Leitholm	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Birgham	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Recreational and Tourist Attraction Receptors				
The Hirsel Country Park (also a Garden and Designed Landscape)	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect

		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Recreational Route Receptors				
National Cycle Route 1	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Scottish Borders Core Paths	High	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Transport Route Receptors				
A697	Low	Construction/ Decommissioning	Medium	Moderate/minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
Local Road Network	Medium	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect

A698	Low	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
B6350	Medium	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
B6461	Medium	Construction/ Decommissioning	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 1	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect
		Year 10	Very low	Minor neutral to No effect

9. Cumulative Effects

Cumulative Developments

9.1. It is acknowledged that other major relatable built infrastructure developments are located in the vicinity of the application site. These include the following developments:

- 22/01988/FUL - Land West Of Eccles Substation, Eccles, Coldstream, Scottish Borders. **Application permitted with conditions.**
- 23/00249/FUL - Land North Of Eccles Substation, Coldstream, Scottish Borders. **Application permitted with conditions.**
- ECU00004601 - Proposed Battery Storage Facility, Coldstream, Scottish Borders. **Application permitted with conditions.**
- ECU00004804 - Eccles II Battery Energy Storage System: Land West Of Eccles Sub Station, Coldstream, Scottish Borders. **Application permitted with conditions.**

- ECU00004872 - Pittlesheugh Farm BESS Ltd: Land West Of Springwells Farmhouse, Greenlaw Duns, Scottish Borders. **Awaiting decision.**

- 23/01376/SCR - The Laundry Field BESS: Land North And East Of Stainrigg Mains Farm, Coldstream, Scottish Borders. **Pre-Application/Screening request submitted.**

9.2. **Figure 6** illustrates the location of the above cumulative developments.

Assessment of Cumulative Effects

9.3. This section of the assessment considers the potential for cumulative effects between the proposed development and the cumulative developments listed above.

9.4. The methodology used to assess cumulative effects is in accordance with the principles set out in Chapter 7 of The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3). It is important to note in particular to GLVIA paragraph 7.5, which states that such an assessment is to be kept *"reasonable and in proportion to the nature of the project under consideration".'*

Cumulative Effects on Landscape Character

9.5. It is acknowledged that when more than one similar type of development is visible at any given location in the landscape, that there would be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if just one development was visible in isolation in the landscape.

9.6. It is noted that in any given landscape where similar forms of development are already present, that the additional effect on landscape character from the proposed development may not be as impactful as the initial introduction of development. Furthermore, in general, the greater the number of developments in the baseline landscape, the less influence the addition of the proposed development may create in landscape character terms as the landscape would be more heavily characterised by the other development in the baseline situation.

9.7. When considering the proposed development in isolation, it was assessed that the proposed development would result in some limited, localised, adverse effects on landscape character. The purpose of this section is therefore to identify whether there would be any change to the assessments previously set out in relation to the proposed development, once the other developments, which are not already operational or constructed, are considered to form part of the baseline landscape.

9.8. Generally speaking, additional cumulative effects would arise when the addition of the proposed development to the baseline situation results in an increase in effects, when viewed in combination with the other developments already forming part of the baseline landscape.

9.9. In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented developments are also considered to be operational/constructed), the additional Zenobe, Eccles II, and Eccles BESS developments come into consideration. All of these additional developments lie in proximity to Eccles Substation and the proposed development.

9.10. With regards to potential effects on landscape character, both the proposed development and these developments are located in LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins. As a consequence, there would be a greater effect on this LCT when the proposed development and these developments are considered together than would be the case when considering the proposed development in isolation. When considering local topography and the screening influence provided by intervening vegetation, the overall effects when considering the proposed development and the consented developments together is predicted to be no more than a degree greater than those identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

9.11. Consideration has also been given to the overall totality of the effect, when the proposed development is considered in addition to other localised major relatable built infrastructure developments already present in the landscape (operational/under construction), those with planning consent but for which no construction activity has occurred (consented), and those developments entered into the planning system with a validated planning application.

9.12. There would be the potential for one or more of the other developments to be seen together with the proposed development in some views from the surrounding landscape. The Pittlesheugh Farm and Laundry Field BESS developments would both be located northwest of the application site, and it is judged that intervening landform and coniferous forestry plantations would considerably restrict intervisibility of these developments with the proposed development from the surrounding landscapes.

9.13. When considering these developments, it is important to recognise that Eccles Substation and its associated infrastructure already forms an existing characteristic in the landscape. Whilst the addition of the proposed development would result in a greater effect to arise to local character in cumulative terms, any such effects would be highly localised and limited in nature due to the nature of the local topography and screening influence provided by intervening vegetation, with any rise in effect no more than a degree greater than those identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

Cumulative Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

9.14. As with cumulative landscape character effects, it is acknowledged that the addition of the proposed development to the baseline situation has the potential to result in an increase in effects, when viewed in combination with the other localised major relatable built infrastructure developments that already form part of the visual baseline.

9.15. It is noted that in any given view where similar forms of development are already present, that the additional effect on visual amenity from the proposed development may not be as impactful as the initial introduction of development. Furthermore, in general, the greater the number of developments in the baseline view, the less influence the addition of the proposed development may create in visual terms, as the view would be more heavily characterised by the other development in the visual baseline. It is also recognised however that a slight additional effect on top of an existing effect, could in theory adversely tip the balance of the overall effect. Generally speaking, such additional cumulative effects would arise in instances where a visual receptor would now lie between a cumulative development in one direction and the proposed development in a different direction, resulting in the

addition of the proposed development becoming notable in multiple, usually directly opposite, directions.

Cumulative 'in combination' visual effects

9.16. An 'in combination' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further localised major relatable built infrastructure development, in addition to the proposed development, whilst standing in one location. These effects are either 'simultaneous,' where the viewer can see multiple developments in the same angle of view, or 'successive,' where the viewer can see additional developments in a different angle of view by turning their head.

9.17. In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented developments are also considered to be operational/constructed), the additional Zenobe, Eccles II, and Eccles BESS developments, which all lie in proximity to Eccles Substation and the proposed development, come into consideration. In a comparable manner to effects on landscape character, there would be a greater effect on views from a given location when the proposed development and these developments are considered together than would be the case when considering the proposed development in isolation, owing to the limited distance between the developments. When considering local topography and the additional screening influence provided by intervening vegetation, the overall effects when considering the consented developments and the proposed development together is predicted to be no more than a degree greater than those identified in relation to the proposed development which are already set out in the main assessment, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

9.18. Similarly, when considering the proposed development in addition to all baseline and cumulative developments in the study area, the overall totality of the effect would be highly localised and limited in nature, due to the concentration of the developments in one area, the nature of the local topography, and the screening influence provided by intervening vegetation. Any rise in effect would be no more than a degree greater than those identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

Cumulative 'sequential' effects

9.19. A 'sequential' cumulative visual effect is the term used to refer to the situation where a viewer is able to see one or more further localised major relatable built infrastructure development, in addition to the proposed development, whilst travelling along a linear route. This could be either on foot whilst walking on a footpath, by bicycle or car along a public road, or when travelling on a train.

9.20. The main assessment identified greater or equal to **Moderate/minor**, localised, adverse, effects from the A697 only. As a result, this route has been used as the basis for the cumulative assessment.

9.21. In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented developments are also considered to be operational/constructed), there would be four additional developments to consider, which all lie in proximity to Eccles Substation and the proposed development. When considering the proposed development in addition to these developments from the A697, the inclusion of the proposed development is judged to lead to a change to the effects on visual amenity set out in the main assessment owing to the limited distance

between the developments. As the effect would be highly localised and limited in nature, due to the nature of the local topography and screening influence provided by intervening vegetation, any rise in effect would however be no more than a degree greater than identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

9.22. Similarly, when considering the proposed development in addition to all baseline and cumulative developments in the study area from the A697, the overall totality of the effect would result in a rise in effect no more than a degree greater than those identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

10. Summary and Conclusions

Landscape Features

10.1. There would be topographical changes to the landform on the application site to accommodate the proposed development, and to achieve the relevant proposed site levels. The changes would lead to a **Moderate/minor** adverse level of effect during the construction and operational phases.

10.2. The proposed development may also influence the current water features and drainage patterns found on site, which is judged to lead to a **Minor** temporary adverse level of effect during the construction phase. The creation of a new attenuation basin as part of the proposed development is considered likely to improve conditions on the application site very slightly, resulting in a **Minor** beneficial effect over the longer-term.

10.3. The proposed development would represent an inevitable change to the current land use of the application site to an operational BESS development with associated infrastructure. A **Moderate** adverse level of effect is predicted across the lifetime of the proposed development; although, the proposed mitigation measures would provide some local landscape biodiversity benefits over the longer-term.

10.4. During construction, the proposed development would result in the localised loss of an area of arable farmland and removal of a relatively small number of mixed hedgerow species along the roadside of the A697 to facilitate the proposed access points. This results in a **Minor** adverse effect; however, the new planting proposed as part of the proposed development would result in **Minor** beneficial landscape effect over the longer-term.

Landscape Character

10.5. The proposed development would introduce a new feature into the landscape, which although of limited height and scale, and adjacent to electricity infrastructure at Eccles Substation, would adversely alter the physical and perceptual attributes of the application site in the immediately surrounding area. The proposed development is judged to give rise to **Moderate** adverse effects upon the landscape character of the application site itself; although, the landscape mitigation proposals would provide enhancement over time, with predicted effects falling to **Moderate/minor** adverse as a result.

10.6. The application site is located in LCT 106: Lowland with Drumlins. Whilst the proposed development would introduce built and anomalous development and marginally extend the

presence and influence of electricity infrastructure, the associative magnitude of change would be low to very low upon the wider LCT, resulting in **Moderate/minor to Minor** adverse effects. Given the relatively low heights of the built features associated with the proposed development and the visual screening influence provided by existing landform, built form, vegetation, and the new proposed planting, these effects are predicted to reduce to **Minor** neutral over the longer-term.

10.7. No notable effects on other neighbouring LCTs or designated landscapes are anticipated.

Visual Receptors

10.8. The proposed layout has sought to integrate and minimise potential visual effects through locating the proposed development within a site already influenced by nearby electricity infrastructure.

10.9. Visual effects on local residents arising from the proposed development are assessed as being limited to views experienced by the residents at Whitrig Farm (including Cottages), which is not unsurprising given the properties lie immediately adjacent to the western boundary.

10.10. These receptors are predicted to experience a **Moderate** adverse and temporary visual effect during construction. Following construction, the residents at these properties are judged to experience a **Moderate** adverse short-term visual effect at year 1, which reduces to **Moderate/minor** adverse as the proposed planting measures establish by year 10. No notable visual effects are anticipated from other residences in the study area, or from the villages of Eccles, Leitholm, and Birgham.

10.11. From the Hirsel Country Park (also a registered Garden and Designed Landscape), the SZTV indicates extremely limited or no visibility coverage. As a result, **Minor neutral to No effects** are considered over the lifetime of the proposed development.

10.12. From National Cycle Route 1, **Minor neutral to No effects** are predicted during the construction, operational, and decommissioning phases of the proposed development. Similar levels of effects are predicted from the closest permissive Scottish Borders Core Path routes.

10.13. From the A697, a **Moderate/minor** adverse and temporary visual effect is anticipated during the construction phase. Following construction, a **Minor** adverse short-term visual effect is anticipated at year 1, before effects reduce to **Minor** neutral at most by year 10.

10.14. No notable visual effects are anticipated to be experienced from other recreational and tourist attractions, promoted recreational routes, or main transport routes.

Cumulative Effects

10.15. Regarding cumulative effects, it is acknowledged that when one or more localised major relatable built infrastructure development is visible at any given location in the landscape, that there would be a greater overall or cumulative effect on landscape character than if the proposed development were visible in isolation in the landscape. Likewise, it is acknowledged that the more major relatable built infrastructure developments that are constructed in any given landscape, the greater the magnitude of overall (or combined) change to the landscape character.

10.16. In the first cumulative scenario considered (where other consented developments are also considered to be operational), there would be four additional developments to consider, which all lie in proximity to Eccles Substation and the proposed development. Given the limited distance between the developments, there is judged to be an increase in the landscape and visual effects set out in the main assessment; although, due to the nature of the local topography and screening influence provided by intervening vegetation, any rise in effect would be no more than a degree greater than those effects identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

10.17. When considering the proposed development in addition to all baseline and cumulative developments in the study area, there would be limited intervisibility between multiple developments and the proposed development when viewed from one location or sequentially from a linear route owing to the level of screening provided by intervening landform, built form, and vegetation. As a result, the overall totality of the effect would result in a rise in effect no more than a degree greater than those identified in relation to the proposed development when assessed in isolation, i.e. a Minor adverse effect would rise to a Moderate/minor adverse effect.

Conclusion

10.18. The proposed development would introduce an operational BESS and associated infrastructure within a landscape influenced by forestry/woodland land management and agricultural practices, the A697, and by the Eccles Substation and associated electricity infrastructure.

10.19. The proposed development has been designed so that built form is located away from residential properties, the A697 (including roadside vegetation), the existing woodland at Egerton Covert, Paxton Wood, and Crown Gorse, and existing watercourses, where practicable.

10.20. Proposed mitigation measures would include new mixed native woodland planting, incorporating shrub species, to create an appropriate woodland understory and to better integrate the proposed development in the surrounding area over the longer-term. New mixed native hedgerow species are proposed along the roadside of the A697 to infill gaps in the existing hedgerow and to compensate for any hedgerow loss to facilitate the site access points. Furthermore, areas around the proposed development and the proposed attenuation basin would be appropriately seeded with areas of wildflowers and meadow grass to enhance biodiversity.

10.21. Whilst it is acknowledged that the application site is located within a rural area, it is not considered that the area is highly sensitive due to its proximity to existing built development and infrastructure including Eccles Substation. Existing electricity pylons and poles carrying overhead lines into the substation serve to result in built structures being seen as a notable feature in many views in the immediate landscape of the application site. The addition of the proposed development would reinforce the pattern of built development in views within the immediate area.

10.22. Overall, the total extent of the landscape and visual effects would be localised and limited in nature, and this has been further reinforced following the design changes and updated mitigation proposals. These localised landscape and visual effects should be taken forward

into a wider planning balance exercise, where they are weighed alongside the benefits of the development.

11. References

11.1. The following documents have been referred to during the preparation of this LVA:

- Council of Europe (2000) European Landscape Convention.
- Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition).
- Landscape Institute (2015) GLVIA3 - Statements of clarification.
- Landscape Institute (2019) Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) Technical Guidance Note 2/19.
- Scottish Borders Council (2008) Supplementary Planning Guidance on Landscape and Development.
- Scottish Borders Council (2012) Supplementary Planning Guidance on Local Landscape Designations.
- Scottish Borders Council (2018) Supplementary Guidance. Renewable Energy.
- Scottish Borders Council (2024) Local Development Plan 2.
- Scottish Government (2023) National Planning Framework for Scotland 4.
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, September 2019.
- NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: LVIA METHODOLOGY (NON-EIA)

1. This appendix presents the assessment criteria adopted for the appraisal of landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development.

2. The primary source of best practice for LVA in the UK is The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition (GLVIA3) (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013). The assessment criteria adopted to inform the appraisal of effects has been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should however be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:

   "This edition concentrates on principles and processes. It does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe' that can be followed in every situation – it remains the responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand."

3. The criteria set out below have therefore been specifically tailored for this appraisal to ensure that the methodology is appropriate and fit for purpose.

4. The purpose of an LVA when undertaken outside the context of an EIA is to identify and describe the relative level of any landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the proposals. As confirmed in GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 (Landscape institute, 10th June 2013) an LVA for development which has been screened as not requiring EIA should avoid concluding whether the effects are significant or not and this is the approach adopted in this LVA.

5. An LVA must consider both:

   - effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right (the landscape effects); and
   - effects on specific views and visual amenity more generally (the visual effects).

6. Therefore, separate criteria are set out below for the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

7. The nature or sensitivity of an individual landscape feature or element reflects its susceptibility to change and its value. It is therefore a function of factors such as its quality, rarity, contribution to landscape character, degree to which the particular element can be replaced and cultural associations or designations that apply. A particular feature may be

more 'sensitive' in one location than in another often as a result of local values associated with the feature or in relation to its function as a key or distinctive characteristic of that local landscape. Therefore it is not possible to simply place different types of landscape features into sensitivity bands. Where individual landscape features are affected, professional judgement is used as far as possible to give an objective evaluation of its sensitivity. Justification is given for this evaluation where necessary.

8. Both the susceptibility and value of individual landscape features has been described as very high, high, medium, low or very low. These are then combined in order to establish an overall nature or sensitivity of individual landscape features which has also been described as very high, high, medium, low or very low.

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

9. Sensitivity of landscape character is also assessed through a consideration of both the susceptibility to a development of the type proposed and the value attached to the landscape. In the case of the potential for effects on landscape character, susceptibility means the ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the existing characteristics of the site. What is meant by the value of the landscape in a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is the relative value that is attached to the landscape by society as a whole, bearing in mind that different stakeholders may have differing values regarding any given landscape. Paragraphs 5.20 and Box 5.1 of GVLIA set out a range of factors that can contribute to an understanding landscape value. Consideration of whether there are any formal landscape designations covering a landscape is one element of considering the value, but also relevant is the condition of the landscape, its rarity in the local area, the recreational value it provides, and any ecological or heritage importance the landscape may hold. These are considered alongside its perceptual qualities (such as tranquillity) and any associations which may be held with the landscape, such as if it has been highlighted in art, music or poetry. Further clarification on how to consider the matter of landscape value is set out in the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (02/21) 'Assessing the Value of Landscapes Outside National Designations'.

10. In this appraisal, the nature or sensitivity of landscape character is considered with reference to published landscape character areas/types and where relevant local landscape units as defined in this LVA for the purposes of this study. Information regarding the key characteristics of these local character areas/units has been extrapolated from

relevant published studies where possible and combined with observations from on-site appraisal. With judgments undertaken employing professional judgement.

11. Both the susceptibility and value of landscape character has been described as very high, high, medium, low or very low. These are then combined in order to establish an overall nature or sensitivity of landscape character which has also been described as very high, high, medium, low or very low.

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

12. The nature or sensitivity of a visual receptor group also reflects their susceptibility to change and the value associated with the specific view in question. It varies depending on a number of factors such as the occupation of the viewer, their viewing expectations, duration of view and the angle or direction in which they would see the site. Whilst most views are valued by someone, certain viewpoints are particularly highly valued for either their cultural or historical associations and this can increase the sensitivity of the view. The following criteria are provided for guidance only and are not exclusive:

- Very Low Sensitivity – People engaged in industrial and commercial activities or military activities.
- Low Sensitivity - People at their place of work (e.g. offices); short - medium stay patients at hospital, shoppers; users of trunk/major roads and passengers on commercial railway lines (except where these form part of a recognised and promoted scenic route).
- Medium Sensitivity - Users of public rights of way and minor roads which do not appear to be used primarily for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; recreational activities not specifically focused on the landscape (e.g. football); motel users.
- High Sensitivity – Residents at home; users of long distance or recreational trails and other sign posted walks; users of public rights of way and minor roads which appear to be used for recreational activities or the specific enjoyment of the landscape; users of caravan parks, campsites and 'destination' hotels; tourist attractions with opportunities for views of the landscape (but not specifically focused on a particular vista); slow paced recreational activities which derive part of their pleasure from an appreciation of setting (e.g. bowling, golf); allotments.

- Very High Sensitivity - People at recognised vantage points (often with interpretation boards), people at tourist attractions with a focus on a specific view, visitors to historic features/estates where the setting is important to an appreciation and understanding of cultural value.

13. It is important to appreciate that it is the visual receptor (i.e. the person) that has a sensitivity and not a property, public right of way or road. Therefore, a large number of people may use a motorway for example but this does not increase the sensitivity of the receptors using it. Conversely, a residential property may only have one person living in it but this does not reduce the sensitivity of that one receptor. The number of receptors affected at any given location may be a planning consideration, but it does not alter the sensitivity of the receptor group.

14. Where judgements are made about the sensitivity of assessment viewpoints, the sensitivity rating provided is an evaluation of the sensitivity of the receptor group represented by the viewpoint and not a reflection of the number of people who may experience the view.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS – GENERAL NOTE

15. The following discussion sets out the approach adopted in this LVA in relation to a specific issue arising in GLVIA3 which requires a brief explanation.

16. Prior to the publication of GLVIA3, LVA practice had evolved over time in tandem with most other environmental disciplines to consider significance principally as a function of two factors, namely: sensitivity of the receptor and magnitude of the effect (the term 'magnitude' being a word most commonly used in LVA and most other environmental disciplines to describe the size or scale of an effect).

17. Box 3.1 on page 37 of GLVIA3 references a 2011 publication by IEMA entitled 'The State of EIA Practice in the UK' which reiterates the importance of considering not just the scale or size of effect but other factors which combine to define the 'nature of the effect' including factors such as the probability of an effect occurring and the duration, reversibility and spatial extent of the effect.

18. The flow diagram on page 39 of GLVIA3 now suggests that the magnitude of effect is a function of three factors (the size/scale of the effect, the duration of the effect and the reversibility of the effect).

19. For clarification, the approach taken in this LVA has been to consider magnitude of effect solely as the scale or size of the effect in the traditional sense of the term 'magnitude'. Having identified the magnitude of effect as defined above the LVA also describes the duration and reversibility of the identified effect before drawing a conclusion on the overall level of effect taking all of these factors into account.

20. In the context of the above discussion the following criteria have been adopted to describe the magnitude of effects.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES

21. Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude of direct physical effects on individual existing landscape features using the following criteria as guidance only:

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No loss or alteration to existing landscape features;
- Low Magnitude of Change - Minor loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature;
- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some loss or alteration to part of an existing landscape feature;
- High Magnitude of Change - Major loss or major alteration to an existing landscape feature;
- Very High Magnitude of Change - Total loss or alteration to an existing landscape feature.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

22. The magnitude of effect on landscape character is influenced by a number of factors including: the extent to which existing landscape features are lost or altered, the introduction of new features and the resulting alteration to the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape. Professional judgement has been used as appropriate to determine the magnitude using the following criteria as guidance only. In doing so, it is recognised that usually the landscape components in the immediate surroundings have a much stronger influence on the sense of landscape character than distant features whilst acknowledging the fact that more distant features can have an influence on landscape character as well.

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; no notable introduction of new features into the landscape; and negligible change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Low Magnitude of Change - Minor loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of minor new features into the landscape; or minor alteration to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of some notable new features into the landscape; or some notable change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- High Magnitude of Change - A major loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of major new features into the landscape; or a major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Very High Magnitude of Change - Total loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of dominant new features into the landscape; a very major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

23. Visual effects are caused by the introduction of new elements into the views of a landscape or the removal of elements from the existing view.

24. Professional judgement has been used to determine the magnitude of impacts using the following criteria as guidance only:

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No change or negligible change in views;
- Low Magnitude of Change - Some change in the view that is not prominent but visible to some visual receptors;
- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some change in the view that is clearly notable in the view and forms an easily identifiable component in the view;
- High Magnitude of Change - A major change in the view that is highly prominent and has a strong influence on the overall view.
- Very High Magnitude of Change – A change in the view that has a dominating or overbearing influence on the overall view.

25. Using this set of criteria, determining levels of magnitude is primarily dependant on how prominent the development would be in the landscape, and what may be judged to flow from that prominence or otherwise.

26. For clarification, the use of the term 'prominent' relates to how noticeable the features of the development would be. This is affected by how close the viewpoint is to the development but not entirely dependent on this factor. Other modifying factors include: the focus of the view, visual screening and the nature and scale of other landscape features within the view. Rather than specifying crude bands of distance at which the proposed development would be dominant, prominent or incidental to the view etc, the prominence of the proposed development in each view is described in detail for each viewpoint taking all the relevant variables into consideration.

TYPE OF EFFECT

27. The assessment identifies effects which may be 'beneficial', 'adverse' or 'neutral'. Where effects are described as 'neutral' this is where the beneficial effects are deemed to balance the adverse effects.

DURATION OF EFFECT

28. For the purposes of this appraisal, the temporal nature of each effect is described as follows:

- Long Term – over 5 years
- Medium Term – between 1 and 5 years
- Short Term – under 1 year

REVERSIBILITY OF EFFECT

29. The LVA also describes the reversibility of each identified effect using the following terms:

- Permanent – effect is non reversible
- Non-permanent – effect is reversible

LEVEL OF EFFECT

30. The purpose of an LVA when produced outside the context of an EIA is to identify the relative level of effects on landscape and visual amenity arising from the proposed

development. The judgements provided within the LVA may then inform the planning balance to be carried out by the determining authority.

31. In this LVA, the relative level of the identified landscape and visual effects has been determined by combining judgements regarding the sensitivity of the landscape or view, magnitude of change, duration of effect and the reversibility of the effect. The level of effect is described as Major, Major/Moderate, Moderate, Moderate/Minor or Minor. No Effect may also be recorded as appropriate where the effect is so negligible it is not even noteworthy. In determining the level of residual effects, all mitigation measures are taken into account.

Edinburgh
1 Lochrin Square, 92-98 Fountainbridge,
Edinburgh, EH3 9QA
T 0131 589 2774
E Edinburgh@pegasusgroup.co.uk
Offices throughout the UK.

Expertly Done.

DESIGN | ECONOMICS | ENVIRONMENT | HERITAGE | LAND & PROPERTY | PLANNING | TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Pegasus_Group pegasusgroup Pegasus_Group

PEGASUSGROUP.CO.UK