



RASHLEY BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

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1 Introduction

The proposed Rashley Battery Energy Storage System (the 'Proposed Development') is located in farmland 1.5km north of Ardrossan, North Ayrshire. This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) of the Proposed Development has been prepared by TGP Landscape Architects Ltd, a firm of independent consultants. The LVA report has been prepared with the aim of identifying the predicted landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, comprising Substation, HV Compound, Battery Containers, MV Skid, Transformers, Stores, and ancillary works including fencing, CCTV, access / parking, earthworks and landscaping.

The LVA is augmented by supporting text and graphics within the appendices. This includes the following figures within **Appendix C**:

- Figure 1 – Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoints;
- Figure 2 – Landscape Character;
- Figure 3 – Landscape Designations, Ancient Woodland and Recreational Routes;
- Figure 4 – Residential Receptors; and
- Figure 5 – Landscape Plan (TGP drg no. 2192/L01 – Rev C).

1.1 Scope of the LVA

The LVA seeks to identify the potential landscape and visual effects that would occur as a result of the Proposed Development and is organised in the following sections:

- Guidance and Methodology – outlines the general methodology, with reference to established guidance (full version in **Appendix A**);
- Planning Policy Context;
- Baseline Description – including the fabric, character and quality of the local landscape which could be affected by the Proposed Development, as well as a description of the main visual receptors within the Study Area;
- Proposed Development and Mitigation – describes the aspects of the Proposed Development which have the potential to result in landscape or visual effects, and the measures incorporated into the project design to mitigate these potential effects;
- ZTV and Viewpoint Analysis – analysis of the geographic extents of visibility and the potential magnitude of change at a selection of viewpoints;
- Construction Stage Effects – assesses the effects of the Proposed Development during the temporary construction stage;
- Landscape Effects – assesses the effects arising from the Proposed Development on the landscape fabric, landscape character and quality of the landscape designations within the Study Area;
- Visual Effects – assesses the effects arising from the Proposed Development on the visual amenity of the receptors within the Study Area;
- Cumulative Effects - considers the combined effects of the Proposed Development in combination with other notable electrical infrastructure; and
- Conclusions – a summary of the LVA results.

1.2 Study Area

A 3km radius Study Area has been adopted from the Proposed Development for the assessment of landscape and visual effects. This has been informed by analysis of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) maps and an early appraisal of potential effects for a Proposed Development of this scale. It is considered that any notable landscape or visual effects would be confined well-within this geographical area.

2 Guidance and Methodology

2.1 Guidance

The methodology presented here is based on the following best practice guidance:

- *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA3)*; Institute of Environmental Management and Appraisal and the Landscape Institute, 2013;
- *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland*; Prepared on behalf of the Countryside Agency and NatureScot, Land Use Consultants, 2002;
- *Landscape Sensitivity Assessment Guidance*; NatureScot, 2022; and
- *Visual Representation of Development Proposals; Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/2019* (2019).

In addition, reference has been made to other published guidance and the appraisal work has drawn on the following relevant baseline information:

- *National Landscape Character Assessment (web-based interactive map)*, NatureScot, 2019;
- Ordnance Survey Land ranger (1:50 000) and Explorer (1:25 000) maps;
- Field surveys; and
- Aerial photography.

2.2 Methodology

The LVA aims to identify and evaluate the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development. Wherever possible, identified effects are quantified, albeit the nature of landscape and visual appraisal requires interpretation by professional judgement. In order to provide a level of consistency to the appraisal, the prediction of magnitude and appraisal of the residual landscape and visual effects have been based on pre-defined criteria.

GLVIA3 states that: “Professional judgement is a very important part of the LVIA.” (para 2.23) “In all cases there is a need for the judgements that are made to be reasonable and based on clear and transparent methods so that the reasoning applied at different stages can be traced and examined by others” (para 2.24).

Landscape and Visual Appraisals are distinct, though linked procedures. The appraisal of the landscape effects takes cognisance of the potential changes in the physical components of the landscape and associated changes in its character and how it is experienced, which may in turn affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape.

Visual effects relate to changes in the composition of existing views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.

Level of Effect

The level of any identified landscape or visual effect has been assessed in terms of being Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible. Intermediate correlations are also possible and depend upon professional judgement, e.g. Major/Moderate. These categories are based on the juxtaposition of visual or landscape sensitivity with the predicted magnitude of change, as set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Landscape & Visual Effects Matrix

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

This juxtaposition is not used as a prescriptive tool, rather it allows for the exercise of professional judgement. Thus, in some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis. Where the landscape or visual effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate this is considered to be notable. Where Moderate effects are predicted, professional judgement is applied to ensure that the potential for notable effects arising has been thoroughly considered. The complete appraisal methodology is set out in **Appendix A**.

3 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made in respect to the LVA:

- The Site – refers to the land located within the red line boundary (as shown in Figures 1 – 4). All distances listed within this LVA are in measured in relation to this area.
- The Proposed Development – comprises the Substation, HV Compound, Battery Containers, MV Skid, Transformers, Stores, and ancillary works including fencing, CCTV, access / parking, earthworks and landscaping. The main components likely to contribute to landscape and visual impacts are described in greater detail in Section 6.
- The Proposed Development would have an operational life of up to 40 years. For the purposes of the LVA, the Proposed Development is regarded as being ‘permanent’. The construction stage would be temporary, approximately 15 months in duration.
- The landscape proposals within the Site (comprising new planting) form an integral component of the Proposed Development.
- Viewpoint locations included in the assessment are from publicly accessible locations.

- Visual effects are assessed on the basis of good visibility. Visual effects can be expected to vary e.g. poor visibility at times of low cloud, rainfall and dusk. At these times a reduction in visual clarity, colour and contrast would be experienced. Reduced visibility would limit the extent of view, particularly from mid to long distance views. Consequently, the assessment of effects is based on the worst-case scenario, where the Proposed Development would be most visible.

4 Consultation

Consultation in relation to the Proposed Development has been undertaken with the Energy Consents Unit and North Ayrshire Council. This includes an EIA Screening Request, which confirmed that the project did not constitute EIA development. Viewpoint locations agreed through consultation are listed in Table 2 below. This includes description of the rationale for their selection. The viewpoint locations are illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Table 2: Viewpoint Locations

Viewpoint	Rationale
1. View southeast from Minor Road	Representative of close proximity views experienced by road users on the local road to the north of the Site.
2. View east from Glenhead	Inland view from isolated property to the west, representative of views experienced by residents.
3. View southwest from Haupland Muir	Elevated view from hills to the northeast of the Site, which are accessible via wind farm tracks. Representative of views experienced by recreational walkers.
4. View north from the summit of Chapelhill, Ardrossan	Elevated view from open green space within the northern edge of Ardrossan, representative of views experienced by recreational walkers.
5. View south from Law Hill, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park	Elevated view from hilltop to the north, within the Regional Park and Mainland SLA. Representative of views experienced by recreational walkers.
6. View south from Minor Road, West Kilbride	View from local road south of West Kilbride, experienced by road users travelling south. Requested by North Ayrshire Council.

5 Planning Policy Context

The following section identifies the planning policy and other planning guidance material specifically relevant to the LVA. This includes consideration of the following:

- *National Planning Framework 4*, Scottish Government, 2023;

- *North Ayrshire Local Development Plan*, North Ayrshire Council, 2019; and
- Non-statutory Planning Guidance.

5.1 National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

NPF4 recognises the distinctive landscapes across the regions of Scotland and respective areas of high landscape quality. Its overarching policies seek to protect the integrity of key landscapes and landscape features from significant adverse effects. There is also general support for proposals to enhance, expand and improve woodland and tree cover.

Policy 11 focuses specifically on Energy, and sets out high-level support for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies. This includes both energy generation and energy storage developments, such as battery storage. NPF4 acknowledges that significant landscape and visual impacts are to be expected for some forms of renewable energy. Where these impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable.

5.2 North Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2019

The North Ayrshire Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out the Council’s vision for the area alongside planning policy to guide development over the next 20 years.

Policy 29: Energy Infrastructure Development relates specifically to the Proposed Development. This policy states that development proposals for energy infrastructure will be supported where they contribute positively towards a low carbon economy and have no unacceptable adverse environmental impacts. This includes consideration of potential effects upon the landscape and visual impacts.

Other relevant landscape-related policies from the LDP are summarised as follows:

- Strategic Policy 1: Spatial Strategy, sets out objectives to guide development to appropriate places. There is support for development within areas of countryside where there is demonstrable locational need.
- Strategic Policy 2: Placemaking, seeks to safeguard environmental quality and avoid unacceptable adverse environmental or amenity impacts.
- Policy 14: Green and Blue Infrastructure, supports the protection of natural features and habitats, and promotes SUDS as a means of improving biodiversity.
- Policy 15: Landscape and Seascape, seeks to enhance landscape/seascape character, and avoid unacceptable adverse impacts on designated and non-designated landscape areas. This includes Special Landscape Areas and local landscape features. The policy also supports mitigation measures to address potential impacts on landscape character or features.
- Policy 16: Protection of our Designated Sites, supports development that would not have an unacceptable adverse effect upon the natural environment. This includes nature conservation sites and priority habitats as set out in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- Policy 17: Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, states that proposals that affect Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park must have regard to the Park’s statutory purpose of providing recreational access to the countryside.

- Policy 18: Forestry, Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows, seeks to protect ancient or long-established plantation or semi-natural woodland, and requires compensatory planting wherever there is a loss of trees or hedgerows.

5.3 Planning Guidance

The LDP is augmented by a series of Planning Guidance documents, which set out additional information in relation to the interpretation of key policies.

Seascape / Landscape Assessment of the Firth of Clyde (Grant & Anderson, for the Firth of Clyde Forum, 2013) reviews landscape character across the region, taking into account the experience of both the coast and the sea, and identifies coastal character areas.

Trees and Development (North Ayrshire Council, 2015) provides guidance on proposals involving tree works, and considerations when designing and constructing development to minimise impacts on trees.

North Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2031 (North Ayrshire Council, 2019) sets out the overall vision for conservation and enhancement of biological diversity in the region as part of the wider Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The includes consideration of ecosystems, natural capital, greenspace and wildlife, including land and sea. It also seeks to connect people with the natural world and facilitate sustainable economic growth.

6 Baseline Description

6.1 Local Landscape Context

Figure 1 illustrates the geographic location of the Proposed Development, which is located in a gently rolling, rural landscape 1.5km north of Ardrossan. The local landscape comprises rolling farmland, which rises upwards from the Firth of Clyde to the west. The field pattern is demarcated by a mix of hedgerows and post-and-wire fencing, with localised areas of tree cover. Fields are generally of moderate size and regular in shape. The Study Area incorporates a series of small water courses that drain into the reservoirs at Busbie Muir and Munnoch (to the northeast of the Site) and westwards into the Firth.

In addition to Ardrossan, residential settlement within the Study Area includes West Kilbride (2.2km to the northwest of the Site). Both of these settlements are located on the lower-lying coastal landscape extending along the Firth of Clyde, and are accessed via the A78 and A738, which extend broadly parallel to the coast. Other settlement within the Study Area is limited to isolated farmsteads / dwellings, which are scattered across the rolling hillsides further inland, and accessed via a network of minor roads.

At a local level, the Site is located on land either side of a minor road, adjacent to existing commercial premises at High Boydstone that incorporates agricultural-scale sheds and a working yard to the southeast of the Site. Ground cover within the Site comprises open pastoral farmland, bounded by hedgerows. There are no other notable features within the Site, albeit the adjoining

area includes a parcel of mixed woodland to the northwest. The Site is situated on a localised plateau at an elevation of approximately 90m AOD. The surrounding landform rises steadily inland to the east, towards the summits at Hinglie Hill / Knock Jargon (219m AOD). There are also localised summits to the north at Tarbert Hill (138m AOD) and Law Hill (178m AOD). To the south and west, the terrain gradually drops down towards the Firth of Clyde.

Other elements of built form / infrastructure within the Study Area comprise overhead power lines, which extend broadly north-south (parallel to the coastline) along the hillside to the east of the Site. In addition, wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm represent notable vertical features on the upper slopes at Haupland Muir to the northeast. Sorbie Wind Farm is located to the southeast, on the hillside above Ardrossan.

6.2 Landscape Character

Figure 2 illustrates the Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the Study Area as defined within NatureScot's National Landscape Character Assessment (2019), which represents the most up-to-date assessment of landscape character across the Study Area. The Site is located within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT. The key characteristics and sensitivities are as follows:

Key Characteristics of the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT

- *'Series of rounded hills and moors rising to form a dissected plateau.*
- *Combination of comparatively gentle hills/ shallow slopes and steeper craggy escarpments.*
- *Exposed Red Sandstone dykes, sills and intrusions give the moorlands a degree of ruggedness.*
- *Land cover dominated by moorland vegetation, grading from heather and grass moorland, through rough grazing and abandoned pastures to improved pastures on the lower slopes.*
- *Higher moorlands have very extensive areas of coniferous forest.*
- *Field boundaries are marked by drystone dykes, post and wire fences and some hedges on lower slopes.*
- *Some Iron Age hut circles and hill forts occur within the hills and a line of castles mark the boundary with Garnock Valley.*
- *Modern development is generally scarce, comprising little more than a scatter of farmsteads.*
- *Tall structures (masts, pylons and turbines) are beginning to erode some of the characteristics of remoteness from certain areas.*
- *Where woodland does not foreshorten views they tend to be long distance and panoramic, focused towards the islands and peninsulas in the Firth of Clyde and Kilbrannan Sound.'*

The sensitivity of local landscape character specific to the Proposed Development and its locality is assessed within **Appendix B** as being Medium.

Relationship to Adjacent Character Types

The Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT adjoins the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT to the west of the Site, and the Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT 2.0km to the east of the Site at the closest point. The key characteristics of these LCTs are listed below in order of increasing distance from the Site. There are no other LCTs within the Study Area.

Key Characteristics of the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT

- *'Raised beach, visible as a level shelf backed by a steep, sometimes craggy escarpment representing the former cliff line, above which lies more gently rising land.*
- *Rocky coastline, sometimes with cliffs, with narrow sand and shingle beaches, and mud flats in estuarine locations.*
- *Varied land uses but mainly farmed; the raised beaches also provide a level terrace for settlement and communication.*
- *Large parts of the former cliff line are also characterised by dense, often wind sheared broadleaf woodland.*
- *A number of hillforts, promontory forts, mottes and castles reflecting the strategic importance of this coastal landscape.*
- *Small, historic settlements sit comfortably against the steep former cliff line and use building materials which reflect the local geology.*
- *Some modern growth has taken the form of ribbon development and includes caravan parks and holiday development; tall structures such as masts are relatively few.*
- *Landscape of visual drama and contrast with a strong sense of seclusion, and where less accessible a strong sense of remoteness.*
- *Views tend to be longer distance and focussed seaward.'*

Key Characteristics of the Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT

- *'Complex landform, gently increasing in height from the coastal fringe, dissected by many burns and streams draining to incised main river valleys to create an undulating lowland landscape.*
- *Geology dominated by coal measures, though basalt, sandstones, limestones, millstone grit and volcanic intrusions are also present.*
- *Generally small to medium scale landscape.*
- *Landcover is predominantly pastoral, with some arable on lower and better soils.*
- *Fields often regular in shape and enclosed by beech or hawthorn hedges, with mature hedgerow trees giving the landscape a surprisingly wooded character.*
- *Settlement pattern historic in origin based upon larger, more self-contained farmsteads set in a hinterland of fields.*
- *Number of larger towns and villages with historic cores surrounded by more modern development.*
- *Several major road corridors creating a degree of conflict between the rural character and presence of heavy traffic.*
- *Dense network of often very rural minor roads.*
- *Varying landscape character which ranges from very rural to more fragmented and developed landscapes on urban fringes.*
- *Views tend to be dictated by the local topography and landcover.'*

6.3 Seascape Character

The *Seascape / Landscape Assessment of the Firth of Clyde* (Grant & Anderson, for the Firth of Clyde Forum, 2013) reviews the coastal characteristics across the region. The seascape within the Study Area is identified as part of the Lower Firth of Clyde (East) coast, and more specifically the coastal

stretch from Farland Head to Ardrossan Harbour. The key characteristics of this area are summarised as follows:

- *‘Expansive seascape setting is open, and stretches of beach can be exposed.*
- *The isle of Arran... reinforces the broad scale of the seascape.*
- *To the north, the sea appears to be contained by a skyline of hills of similar height.*
- *Large ships going up and down the Clyde tend to travel well offshore... sailing boats, fishing boats and small cargo vessels also come and go.*
- *This coast is made up of a series of generally long open sandy beaches... The sandy beach and sculptural rocks are attractive.*
- *The immediate, level hinterland is given over to grazing and potatoes and a golf course.*
- *The dominating relict cliff line is a feature, albeit obscured by built development at West Kilbride and north Ardrossan. A line of low hills stands behind the top of the relict cliff and – with other hills where Ardrossan, Kelburn and Dalry windfarms are sited.*
- *The modern extension of Ardrossan at the south rises up from the coast.*
- *Isolated houses are tucked in randomly at the foot of the relict cliff at the back of the raised beach in no particular pattern.*
- *The A78 runs close to the coast... The railway is set back behind the top of the relict sea cliff, out of sight from the coast.*
- *Montfode Castle ruins stand beside the deep notch in the sea cliff where the new Bypass cuts inland behind Ardrossan. The tower on Horse Island marks the entrance to Ardrossan harbour.*
- *Due to the proximity of the busy A78, there is no sense of an isolated coast between Ardrossan and Seamill.*
- *The beach, paths and rocky shore are popular, with views of Arran the major attraction.*
- *Views from further out to sea towards the mainland focus on the higher hills, with wind turbines now breaking the skyline.’*

6.4 Landscape Designations

Landscape planning designations and policies are considered in the determination of the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors as they provide an indication of value ascribed to the landscape or visual resource.

With reference to **Figure 3**, the Site is not located within a landscape designation. However, the wider Study Area encompasses parts of the Mainland Special Landscape Area (SLA) 1.3km to the northeast of the Site at the closest point, and the Horse Isle SLA is located 2.8km to the southwest. There are no national-level landscape designations or Gardens and Designed Landscapes within the Study Area.

6.5 Visual Baseline and Receptors

The following section describes the visual receptors within the 3km Study Area.

Local Residents

Settlement within the Study Area comprises Ardrossan, 1.5km to the south of the Site, and West

Kilbride, 2.2km to the northwest. Other residents within the Study Area are limited to dispersed dwellings and farmsteads outside these settlements. Those located within closest proximity to the Site are illustrated in **Figure 4** and comprise:

- High Boydstone Farm & High Boydstone House, 100m to the south;
- Kirkland House, 480m to the northwest;
- Boydston Farm, 520m to the southwest;
- Kirkland Farm House, 540m to the northwest;
- Rashley, 680m to the southeast;
- Little Busbie, 700m to the east;
- Glenfoot (Glenfoot House, Glenfoot Lodge, Coach House and Gate House), 810m to the west;
- Hauplands Farm & Nos. 2-3 Hauplands Farm Cottage, 850m to the north;
- Glenlea Lodge and Glenlea Cottage, 910m to the west;
- Glenhead, 920m to the west;
- No.1 Hauplands Farm Cottage, 990m to the north;
- Millglen Lodges, 1.0km to the southeast; and
- Glenelg, 1.0km to the west.

Recreational Receptors

With reference to **Figure 3**, recreational routes and outdoor destinations / attractions within the Study Area are listed below:

- Ayrshire Coastal Path, 950m to the southwest at the closest point;
- Cycle Route 753, 950m to the southwest at the closest point;
- Core Path network, 950m to the southwest at the closest point;
- Beach at Boydston Shore, 1.0km to the southwest;
- Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, 1.3km to the northeast of the Site at the closest point (closely aligned with the extents of the Mainland SLA within the Study Area); and
- Law Castle, 3.0km to the north.

In addition, there are several Scheduled Monuments within the Study Area, which represent potential attractions for visitors / walkers. However, all of these Scheduled Monuments are located outside the ZTV and they are not considered further.

Road and Rail Receptors

Potential vehicular receptors within the Study Area are limited to road users on the following roads:

- B780, 820m to the east of the Proposed Development at the closest point;
- A78, located 900m to the southwest at the closest point;
- B7047, located 1.7km to the northwest at the closest point; and
- A738, located 1.8km to the south at the closest point.

Potential rail users within the Study Area comprise those on the Ayrshire Coast Line (between West Kilbride and Ardrossan), which is located 580m to the west of the Site at the closest point.

7 Proposed Development and Mitigation

This section describes the aspects of the Proposed Development with the potential to cause landscape and visual effects within in the Study Area.

7.1 Proposed Development Description

The Proposed Development would involve localised areas of ground clearance to facilitate construction within the Site, and the introduction of the following key elements:

- Switchroom, 4m max height;
- SPT Control room, 4m max height;
- HV Transformers and Substation 8m max height;
- 112no. Battery Containers, 3.2m max height;
- Harmonic filter, 4 m max height;
- 14no. MV Skid, 3.2m max height;
- 2no. Auxiliary Switchgear and Transformers;
- Deisel Tank and Generator;
- Emergency Water Store, 4m max height;
- Acoustic Fence, 4m max height;
- Palisade Security Fence, 3m max height;
- CCTV cameras and security lighting, 4m max height;
- Cable sealing ends, 6m max height;
- Underground cables connecting to the existing tower to the north;
- 2no Site access points onto existing minor road;
- Earthwork bund to the eastern side of the compound, 3m max height; and
- Landscape planting and mitigation features.

The LVA takes cognisance of each of these elements and makes reference to them within the appraisal where relevant.

7.2 Landscape Design and Mitigation

The location of the Proposed Development has been chosen to avoid any notable ridgelines or visually prominent hills. Instead, the Site is located on a localised plateau that is raised above the coast. This ensures it is spatially separated and visually screened from sensitive sections of the coastline / seascape by the intervening landform, whilst also avoiding the upper-most slopes and summits that contribute towards the wider skyline.

At a local level, the Site is located adjacent to existing commercial premises at High Boydstone, where there are relatively large agricultural-scale sheds and a working yard, incorporating laydown / storage areas and vehicular movement. The existing commercial sheds provide partial screening to the Site, particularly in views from the south. The geographic proximity of the Site also avoids the spread of infrastructure into wider parts of the surrounding landscape. In the adjoining landscape to the northeast of the Site, an existing parcel of mixed woodland provides further visual containment,

particularly to views from the north.

In terms of design, the proposals seek to incorporate a comprehensive mitigation strategy to effectively integrate the Proposed Development into the surrounding landscape. This involves consideration of the scale and spread of the Proposed Development, and the most appropriate methods of lessening their potential influence on landscape and visual amenity. To this end, the Proposed Development has been designed to achieve the following landscape objectives:

- Land clearance and occupation would be limited to necessary areas only to minimise the geographic spread of the infrastructure and limit the potential impact on the local landscape fabric.
- The tallest element of proposed built form comprises the HV Transformers, at 8.0m height, upon a platform with 600mm freeboard. These would be located in the eastern part of the Site, in close proximity to the existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone. This would limit their potential visibility from adjoining publically accessible areas (providing screening in views from the south, and back-clothing the infrastructure in views from the north).
- In terms of colour and materials, the security fencing would be a recessive green colour (RAL 6003 – Olive Green, or similar approved) to soften the appearance of the Proposed Development, and screen potential views of infrastructure within central parts of the Site. The battery containers would be white in colour.
- Proposed landscape works incorporate the creation of native woodland edge, hedgerow and tree planting around peripheral parts of the Site. With reference to **Figure 5** (TGP drg no. 2192/L01 – Rev C), this would extend along the outer edges of the Proposed Development, with the aim of enclosing the proposed elements of infrastructure. The planting approach would be based on native broadleaved species to provide visual containment and screening of the proposed built form (including the security fencing), whilst also reflecting local landscape characteristics and contributing towards biodiversity enhancement.
- The proposed earthwork bund would be introduced to the eastern side of the Substation compound, providing further containment of the proposed infrastructure. The proposed native woodland edge planting described above would extend over this bund, resulting in screening of the bund, whilst also providing increased height to the new areas of planting;
- In addition, species-rich wildflower meadow and wetland meadow would be introduced around peripheral parts of the Site, to further soften the appearance of the Proposed Development and provide enhancement to local biodiversity. This would be sown at the first available season and would establish rapidly thereafter.

The assessment of potential impacts presented in the following text takes cognisance of the proposed new areas of woodland, tree and hedgerow planting, in combination with the earthwork bund, within the determination of levels of effect, on the basis that they form an integral part of the Proposed Development. However, taking a ‘worst case scenario’ the assessment is based on the initial appearance of the Site immediately after completion of construction (prior to full establishment of the proposed planting). This is followed by an assessment of residual effects (at ‘Year 10’) when the proposed planting would be established.

7.3 Issues Scoped Out of Assessment

The proposed security columns within the Site would incorporate motion-detection lighting. On the basis that the Site would be unmanned during night-time hours, there would be no night-time

illumination of the Site, or light spillage into adjoining areas under normal operating conditions. Accordingly, the potential effects of lighting during hours of darkness are excluded from further consideration.

8 ZTV and Viewpoint Analysis

The potential landscape and visual effects arising from the Proposed Development have been analysed in two ways:

- Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) map analysis, to provide a general overview of the geographical extent of visibility of the Proposed Development within the Study Area; and
- Analysis of the potential effects at key viewpoints.

8.1 Zone of Theoretical Visibility Analysis

Theoretical visibility mapping of the Proposed Development is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The ZTV illustrates the maximum overall visibility of the proposed buildings / infrastructure. The ZTV has been prepared on the basis of 'bare ground' and does not take into account the potential screening effects of surrounding buildings or vegetation.

The ZTV illustrates that the geographical extent of potential visibility would be focused within approximately 200m of the Site to the east and south, extending out to approximately 1km to the north and west. This primarily encompasses areas of open farmland. At greater distances, ZTV coverage becomes more fragmented and primarily focused across areas of higher ground to the north at Law Hill, and northwest at Tarbert Hill.

8.2 Viewpoint Analysis

Viewpoint analysis has been carried out on a selection of key viewpoint locations to assess the likely level of effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development. With reference to the geographical extent of visibility illustrated within the ZTV, a total of six viewpoints have been selected as being representative of the main views from publically accessible locations within the Study Area (see **Figure 1**). The viewpoint analysis is based on the visualisation pack produced by ArcMedia.

Viewpoint 1: View southeast from Minor Road

This viewpoint is located 233m to the northwest of the Site (within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT) and represents views experienced by local road users travelling south. The existing views to the southeast are characterised by rolling farmland, demarcated by low stone walls and post-and-wire fencing. Views towards the south are foreshortened by an existing parcel of woodland / scrub on the opposite side of the road. Built form within the view comprises the commercial sheds at High Boydstone (beyond an intervening earth bund) as well as overhead power lines, and the tops of wind turbines at Sorbie Wind Farm. Ardrossan Wind Farm is located to the east, just outside the illustrated field of view.

Predicted View

Views of the Proposed Development would be limited to infrastructure within the eastern part of the Site, and the associated earthwork bund. The infrastructure would be experienced in the same sector of view as the existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone. The Proposed Development would augment the existing built form within the view without notably increasing the horizontal spread across wider parts of the landscape. The proposed infrastructure would be experienced below the skyline, and back-clothed by the rising landform in the distance. The proposed planting measures along the northern Site boundary would provide screening of the Proposed Development as it establishes over time.

Effects on Visual Amenity

The sensitivity of road users at this location is assessed as being Medium. The magnitude of change would be Substantial/Moderate based on the proximity of the view, balanced by the presence of existing commercial built form within the existing view. The resultant level of effect would be Major/Moderate, notable.

After ten years, (hereafter referred to as 'Year 10'), the establishment of planting along the northern boundary of the Site would soften the appearance of the Proposed Development and screen the majority of the infrastructure from view. The clearest views would be experienced during winter months, albeit would remain very filtered by intervening vegetation. The magnitude of change would reduce to Slight, and the residual level of effect would reduce to Moderate/Minor, not notable.

Landscape Effects

This viewpoint is located within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT. The Proposed Development would represent the introduction of new built form to the local landscape, in the context of existing commercial premises. The Proposed Development would augment the presence of existing built form, without notably increasing the overall spread. Accordingly, the magnitude of change would be Moderate and the level of effect would be Moderate. This is assessed as notable in this instance based on the proximity to the Site.

By Year 10, the established woodland / tree planting within the Site would visually contain the Proposed Development, and represent the introduction of beneficial landscape elements that would be consistent with the existing scrub in the surrounding area. The magnitude of change would be Slight, and the residual level of effect would be Moderate/Minor, not notable.

Viewpoint 2: View east from Glenhead

This viewpoint is located 1068m to the west of the Site (within the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT). It is representative of views experienced by local residents. The existing views to the east comprise rolling farmland, with field pattern demarcated by low stone walls, post-and-wire fencing, hedgerows and field trees. Built form within the view incorporates isolated farmsteads, overhead power lines and wind turbines. These comprise the upper parts / blades of the turbines at Sorbie

Wind Farm to the east, as well as the turbine array at Ardrossan Wind Farm, which extends across the skyline to the northeast at the summit of Haupland Muir.

Predicted View

The Proposed Development would be subject to screening by the intervening landform, which rises steadily towards a ridgeline in front of the Site. The proposed infrastructure would be located on the plateau beyond the ridge. Accordingly, views would be limited to the upper parts of the proposed infrastructure in the western part of the Site. These elements would be experienced in the same field of view as the wind turbines at Sorbie Wind Farm. As the proposed planting along the eastern edge of the Site establishes over time, views of the Proposed Development would become increasingly screened.

Effects on Visual Amenity

The sensitivity of residents at this location is assessed as being High. The Proposed Development would represent a discreet element in the distance, predominantly screened from view, and experienced in the context of existing wind turbines. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the level of effect would be Minor, not notable.

By Year 10, the establishment of planting within the Site, including native woodland edge, would further restrict views of the Proposed Development. There would be no views and no residual effect.

Landscape Effects

The local landscape is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity. Given the screening influence of the intervening landform, the Proposed Development would represent a very discreet element within the surrounding agricultural landscape. The existing wind turbines would continue to represent the predominant elements of built form within the view. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the level of effect would be Negligible, not notable. By Year 10, the established woodland edge within the western part of the Site would further contain the Proposed Development and represent the introduction of beneficial landscape elements that would merge with the existing vegetation in the surrounding area. There would be no views and no residual effect.

Viewpoint 3: View southwest from Haupland Muir

This viewpoint is located at an open vantage point on Haupland Muir, 1.6km to the northeast of the Proposed Development (within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT). It represents views experienced by recreational walkers. The existing views to the southwest are characterised by farmland in the foreground, which steadily slopes downwards towards the coastline at the Firth of Clyde. Beyond the firth, there are distant views of the Isle of Arran. Built form within the view incorporates wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm in the foreground, as well as isolated farmsteads and overhead power lines in the wider landscape. The settlement of Ardrossan is visible to the south (outside the illustrated field of view).

Predicted View

The Proposed Development would be partly visible on a lower-lying plateau, located beyond intervening forestry and overhead power lines. Given the elevated nature of the view, the proposed infrastructure would be experienced well-below the distant skyline, forming a distant element beyond large-scale wind turbines in the foreground. As the proposed planting within the Site establishes over time, views of the Proposed Development would soften further.

Effects on Visual Amenity

The sensitivity of walkers at this location is assessed as being High. The Proposed Development would represent the addition of a relatively discreet new element within the lower-lying area of farmland, beyond existing large-scale infrastructure. It would account for a narrow angle of view within expansive vistas. The magnitude of change would be Slight/Negligible, and the resultant level of effect would be Moderate/Minor, not notable.

By Year 10, the establishment of native trees / woodland edge planting within the Site would further soften the appearance of the Proposed Development. Parts of the of the proposed infrastructure would be fully screened (in particular the elements in the eastern side of the Site). The battery containers in the western side of the Site would remain partly visible, albeit would be contained by surrounding planting. The resultant magnitude of change would reduce to Negligible and the level of effect would reduce to Minor/Negligible, not notable.

Landscape Effects

The Proposed Development would exert limited influence on the local landscape, which is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity. Instead, local landscape character would continue to be defined by the farmland with wind turbines. The magnitude of change would be Negligible, resulting in a Minor/Negligible level of effect, not notable. By Year 10, the establishment of planting within the Site would blend with surrounding vegetation and further contain the Proposed Development from view. The magnitude of change would be Negligible, and the residual level of effect would be Negligible, not notable.

Viewpoint 4: View north from the summit of Chapelhill, Ardrossan

This viewpoint is located at an elevated vantage point on the northeastern edge of Ardrossan, 1.9km to the south of the Proposed Development. It is representative of views experienced by local residents. The existing view is characterised by residential settlement in the foreground, with open farmland extending across the rolling hills in the background. Key elements of infrastructure within the view comprise the large-scale wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm, which extend across the skyline. In addition, overhead power lines and telegraph poles form smaller-scale linear features across the surrounding farmland. The existing buildings at High Boydstone are visible on the hillside to the north, where they represent a discreet element on the horizon.

Predicted View

Potential views of the Proposed Development would be restricted by the intervening landform in

combination with the buildings at High Boydstone. Accordingly, there would be no discernible views of the proposed infrastructure, and no effect on visual amenity or landscape character.

Viewpoint 5: View southeast from Law Hill, Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

This viewpoint is located at an elevated vantage point on Law Hill, 2.6km to the northwest of the Proposed Development. It is located within the Mainland SLA, which also forms part of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park (within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT). It is representative of views experienced by recreational walkers. The existing view comprises rolling farmland with field pattern demarcated by a mix of fencing, low stone walls and hedgerows, with scattered tree cover. The landform drops steadily towards the southwest, towards the Firth of Clyde, with the Isle of Arran visible in the distance. Key elements of infrastructure within the view comprise the wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm, which form a focal point on the horizon, as well as the overhead power lines and telecoms lines across lower-lying areas. Other built form within the view incorporates isolated farmsteads and the settlement of Ardrossan on the distant coastline. The existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone are visible in the distant landscape, in the same field of view as Ardrossan.

Predicted View

The Proposed Development would be experienced in the distant landscape, beyond intervening powerlines, in the context of the existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone. The proposed infrastructure would be experienced well-below the skyline, and represent a very discreet new element within expansive vistas. As the tree / woodland edge planting within the Site establishes over time, views of the Proposed Development would soften further.

Effects on Visual Amenity

The sensitivity of recreational walkers at this location is assessed as being High. The Proposed Development would represent a very minor, distant addition to the wider views from this vantage point. The magnitude of change would be Slight/Negligible at most and the level of effect would be Minor, not notable. By Year 10, the effects would soften further as the perimeter planting establishes. The magnitude of change would reduce to Negligible, and the residual level of effect would reduce to Negligible.

Landscape Effects

The Proposed Development would exert extremely limited influence on the local landscape. Instead, local landscape character would continue to be defined by farmland with scattered built form and wind turbines. The magnitude of change would be Negligible, resulting in a Minor/Negligible level of effect, not notable. By Year 10, the residual level of effect would reduce to Negligible, not notable.

Viewpoint 6: View south from Minor Road, West Kilbride

This viewpoint is located at the side of the minor road that extends southwards from West Kilbride, 2.0km to the northwest of the Proposed Development. It is representative of views experienced by local road users. The existing view is characterised by rolling farmland with hedgerows and scattered

tree cover. Built form within the view incorporates isolated farmsteads, overhead power lines and telecoms lines, as well as wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm to the southeast.

Predicted View

Potential views of the Proposed Development would be restricted by the intervening landform in combination with tree cover extending across the intervening ridge line. Accordingly, there would be no discernible views of the proposed infrastructure, and no effect on visual amenity or landscape character.

9 Construction Stage Effects

Whilst it is the operational stage of the Proposed Development that would give rise to prolonged landscape and visual effects, temporary effects at the construction stage would also occur based on the following operations:

- Erection of temporary perimeter fencing;
- Installation of temporary construction compound (including storage and welfare facilities);
- Creation of temporary laydown areas;
- Site clearance and excavation works for foundations;
- Increased vehicular movement within the Site;
- Creation of the earthwork bund in the eastern part of the Site;
- Gradual introduction of proposed buildings / infrastructure; and
- Reinstatement works, including the removal of the temporary accommodation.

The works detailed above would give rise to some landscape and visual effects. The detailed construction programme is not known at this stage, albeit is anticipated to be of 15 months duration. The associated effects would be temporary and would mainly arise through the gradual introduction of proposed buildings/infrastructure within the Site. The effects arising from other operations, including the vehicle movement, construction of the fencing and excavation / earth works would be localised, and whilst potentially visible, would not appear prominently in views from the surrounding areas. As such, the construction phase effects would be limited in extent and duration.

9.1 Construction Stage Landscape Effects

During the construction stage, areas of the existing pastoral grassland within the Site would be removed. There would be localised areas of excavation required for the parking and access, foundations of the buildings and cable routes, in combination with the formation of the earthwork bund, resulting in a change to the current landscape fabric within the Site. There would also be a short term, temporary increase in vehicle movements to and from the Site. However, there would be no loss of existing tree cover or any other landscape features of value. The construction activities would be focused within an area adjacent to the existing commercial sheds and yard at High Boydstone to the southeast (which is characterised by built form and vehicular movement / human

activity), and neighbouring woodland to the northeast.

In terms of landscape fabric, the existing grassland ground cover within the Site is considered to be of Low sensitivity to the Proposed Development. This is due to its relative commonality, its ability to regenerate in a short period of time, and the absence of features of landscape value. The magnitude of change associated with the construction operations would be Substantial/Moderate, and the resultant level of effect on landscape fabric would be Moderate. This is assessed as being not notable in this instance based on the temporary nature of the construction phase and the rapid reinstatement of disturbed areas of ground post-completion.

In terms of landscape character; the construction operations would contrast with the more rural characteristics of the wider agricultural landscape. However, the construction stage effects would be limited to a very localised part of the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT that is already influenced by buildings, vehicle movement and human activity within the neighbouring commercial yard at High Boydstone. In summary, Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development. The magnitude of change on local landscape character during the construction stage would be Moderate, resulting in a Moderate level of effect. The effects would be notable at a local level, comprising the Site and surrounding area within approximately 200m. To the northwest and southeast these effects would be curtailed within 20m by the neighbouring woodland and commercial yard respectively. These effects would be temporary in nature. Effects across wider parts of the LCT would be extremely limited, and not notable.

9.2 Construction Phase Effects on Visual Amenity

The visual effects of the activities during the construction phase would be temporary, intermittent and limited to localised areas in the vicinity of the Site. This is due to the containing effect of the surrounding landform, vegetation and existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone, in combination with the low-lying nature of activities associated with site clearance / excavation.

In more open views, the construction activities would be experienced within a local context comprising commercial sheds and vehicular movement within the yard at High Boydstone, as well as nearby overhead power lines. The construction activities would typically be experienced below the skyline, back-clothed by the surrounding farmland. Views would be predominantly limited to local road users on the local road extending past the Site (of Medium Sensitivity), as well as more distant views experience by hill walkers on the summits of Haupland Muir and Law Hill (High sensitivity).

Along with the site clearance, excavation activities, earthwork bund formation, material storage and an increase in traffic movement at the Site, the visual effects would occur primarily from the gradual appearance of the buildings and associated infrastructure (which are considered below under 'Operational Effects').

The influence of construction activities on existing views would be tempered by the introduction of new areas of planting within peripheral parts of the Site. The effects would be further reduced through good site management and the temporary nature of the construction activities.

On balance, the visual magnitude of change from localised parts of the minor road extending past the Site during the construction phase would be Substantial/Moderate, resulting in a Major/Moderate effect (notable). These views would diminish across wider parts of the road due to reduced visibility of the construction activities, and would be Moderate/Minor overall (not notable).

The magnitude of change upon more distant views from surrounding hillsides would be tempered by the intervening distance in combination with the commercial usage of the neighbouring commercial premises at High Boydstone. The magnitude of change during the construction phase would be Slight/Negligible, resulting in a Moderate/Minor effect (not notable).

10 Operational Landscape Effects

This section examines the effects arising as a result of the Proposed Development with reference to landscape fabric within the Site, landscape character and landscape designations.

10.1 Effects on Landscape Fabric

The landscape within the Site comprises pastoral grassland, which is void of any notable features of landscape value, and accordingly is assessed as being of Low sensitivity to the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development would result in the permanent loss of a small area of farmland within the context of neighbouring woodland to the northwest and commercial yard to the southeast. The Proposed Development would introduce new elements of infrastructure within the Site, in combination with the new earthwork bund, vehicular access and parking areas. It would also incorporate new areas of native woodland edge, trees, hedgerows, and species-rich wildflower meadow (as described in Section 7.2). These elements would represent the addition of beneficial landscape features to the locality that would link with existing vegetation in the adjoining landscape. These elements would exert increasing influence over time as they become more established.

On balance, the magnitude of change upon the fabric within the Site would be Moderate, giving rise to a Moderate/Minor level of effect (not notable).

10.2 Effects on Landscape Character

The effect of the Proposed Development on landscape character largely depends on the key characteristics of the receiving environment; the degree to which the development may be considered to be consistent with or at odds with it; and how the proposal would be perceived within its setting.

Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT

The Proposed Development would be located within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT. With reference to sensitivity analysis within **Appendix B**, the local landscape character at the Site is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development. The effects on landscape character would be direct (predominantly affecting the Site itself) and indirect (affecting the visual

and perceptual characteristics of the surrounding area).

In terms of direct effects, existing ground cover within the Site comprises pastoral grassland. This is typical of the landcover across this LCT which incorporates a mix of *'rough grazing and abandoned pastures to improved pastures on the lower slopes'*. There would be no notable loss of valued natural features to facilitate introduction of the proposed buildings, associated infrastructure, or earthwork bund. Whilst modern development within the LCT is described as *'generally scarce'*, the proposed infrastructure would be introduced to a part of the LCT that already accommodates commercial sheds at High Boydstone, as well as existing electricity infrastructure in the wider surroundings in the form of overhead power lines, and wind turbines on the nearby hills. With reference to **Figure 5**, the Proposed Development would incorporate the planting of new areas of native woodland edge, trees and hedgerows along the Site boundary. These would represent beneficial elements within the local landscape that would merge with the adjoining area of existing woodland to the northwest of the Site. The influence of these new areas of planting on landscape character would steadily increase over time in accordance with their establishment.

In terms of indirect effects, ZTV coverage is focused within approximately 200m of the Site to the east and south, extending out to approximately 1km to the north and northwest. However, due to the containing influence of surrounding built form to the southeast and woodland to the northwest, the influence of the Proposed Development would be curtailed in these directions. Within the most open views obtained from nearby parts of the LCT, the Proposed Development would represent a low-lying element that would be back-clothed by neighbouring built form at High Boydstone (in particular within views from the north) and / or the surrounding landform. Accordingly, it would represent a relatively discreet addition to the landscape in contrast with the taller structures, such as pylons and wind turbines, that are described as *'beginning to erode some of the characteristics of remoteness from certain areas'* (see Viewpoints 1, 3 and 5).

The Proposed Development would exert very limited influence upon the characteristic long distance and panoramic views *'focused towards the islands and peninsulas in the Firth of Clyde and Kilbrannan Sound.'*

The proposed native woodland edge, trees and hedgerows that form an integral part of the Proposed Development would augment existing parcels of tree cover within the locality and reflect the characteristic *'hedges on lower slopes'* found throughout the wider area. There would be no loss of existing field boundaries.

In summary, the main effects would be focused within approximately 200m of the Site. To the northwest and southeast these effects would be curtailed within 20m by the neighbouring woodland and commercial yard respectively. Within this localised area, which is already partly influenced by the existing commercial premises at High Boydstone, the magnitude of change would be Moderate and the level of effect would be Moderate. This is assessed as notable in this instance based on the increased presence of built form within a predominantly agricultural landscape. These effects would diminish steadily at greater distances. Across wider parts of the LCT, the magnitude of change would

be Slight/Negligible at most, and the resultant effect would be Minor, not notable. Extensive parts of the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT would be unaffected.

By Year 10, the establishment of woodland edge, trees and hedgerow planting within the Site would further contain potential views of the Proposed Development from surrounding areas, and reduce its influence on the local landscape. The magnitude of change across the LCT as a whole would reduce to Negligible, and the residual level of effect would be Minor/Negligible, not notable.

Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT

The Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT encompasses the landscape to the immediate southwest of the Site, and is assessed as being of Medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development. ZTV coverage is limited to very localised parts of the LCT comprising fields to the south of the Site, and rolling farmland to the west, between Glenhead and Glenfoot (above the coastal edge).

From parts of the LCT to the south, the Proposed Development would be experienced at close proximity. The proposed infrastructure would be back-clothed by woodland, and experienced in the context of the commercial activities at High Boydstone.

From localised areas between Glenhead and Glenfoot, the Proposed Development would represent a more discreet addition, located beyond the ridgeline further inland (see Viewpoint 2). The proposed infrastructure would be subject to screening by the intervening landform and experienced in the same field of view as the wind turbines at Sorbie Wind Farm and Ardrossan Wind Farm. Given the limited visibility of the Proposed Development beyond the intervening landform, the landscape would continue to be strongly characterised by the existing farmland with wind turbines.

There would be no views and no effect on the characteristic *'narrow sand and shingle beaches, and mud flats in estuarine locations'* along the coastline. Similarly, there would be no effect on the characteristic views that *'tend to be longer distance and focused seaward.'* As a result, there would be no discernible influence on the existing *'sense of seclusion, and ... strong sense of remoteness'* across the LCT.

In summary, across very localised parts of the LCT within 200m to the Site to the south, the magnitude of change would be Moderate and the level of effect would be Moderate. This is assessed as notable in this instance based on the increased presence of built form. These effects would diminish abruptly at greater distances due to the screening influence of the underlying landform. Across wider parts of the LCT, the magnitude of change would be Negligible, and the resultant effect would be Minor, not notable. The vast majority of the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT would be completely unaffected.

By Year 10, the establishment of woodland edge / trees along the southern and western edges of the Site would further restrict views of the Proposed Development from neighbouring parts of the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT. The magnitude of change across the LCT would be Negligible, and the residual level of effect would be Negligible, not notable.

Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT

The Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT is located 2.0km to the east of the Proposed Development and is considered to be of Medium sensitivity to the Proposed Development. ZTV coverage across this LCT is extremely limited, and focused across a localised area north of Ardrossan (2.7km to the southeast of the Site). Within this localised area the Proposed Development would represent an extremely discreet and distant addition to the agricultural landscape to the northwest, beyond intervening overhead power lines and built form at High Boydstone. There would be no discernible change to the existing landscape characteristics. The magnitude of change would be Negligible, and the effect on landscape character would be Negligible, not notable. The vast majority of the Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT would be completely unaffected.

10.3 Effects on Seascape Character

The seascape within the Study Area is identified as the Farland Head to Ardrossan Harbour section of Lower Firth of Clyde (East) coast. With reference to the ZTV, there would be no views of the Proposed Development from the coastal landscape including the *‘series of generally long open sandy beaches’* or the *‘immediate, level hinterland is given over to grazing and potatoes’*. Instead, potential views would be limited to areas of open water and Horse Isle, looking back towards the mainland. These views towards the mainland are described as having a *‘focus on the higher hills, with wind turbines now breaking the skyline.’* Within these views the Proposed Development would represent an extremely discreet element, subject to screening by the intervening landform that forms a ridgeline in front of the Site. The existing wind turbines would continue to form the key focal points on the inland hills.

In summary, the Proposed Development would be barely perceptible, and there would be no discernible effect on the Farland Head to Ardrossan Harbour Seascape Character Area.

10.4 Effects on Landscape Designations

The landscape designations within the Study Area are assessed as being of High sensitivity to the Proposed Development in all cases.

Mainland SLA

The Mainland SLA is located 1.3km to the northeast of the Proposed Development at the closest point. ZTV coverage is very limited across the SLA and is focused upon the upper slopes and summit of Law Hill and Blackshaw Hill (>2km to the north of the Proposed Development). From the most open vantage points in these areas, the Proposed Development would represent a very minor element in the distant landscape, located well-below the skyline. It would be experienced beyond intervening overhead power lines, in the context of the existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone (see Viewpoint 5). Accordingly, the Proposed Development would exert extremely limited influence on the local landscape within the Mainland SLA. The magnitude of change would be Negligible, resulting in a Minor/Negligible level of effect, not notable.

As the tree / woodland edge planting within the Site establishes over time, views of the Proposed Development would soften further. By Year 10, the residual level of effect would reduce to Negligible, not notable. The vast majority of the Mainland SLA would be completely unaffected.

Horse Isle SLA

The Horse Isle SLA is located 2.7km to the southwest of the Proposed Development. Within inland views, the Proposed Development would represent an extremely discreet element, subject to screening by the intervening landform that forms a ridgeline in front of the Site. The existing wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm would continue to form the key focal points within northeasterly inland views. There would be no effect on views along the length of the coastline to the north or south, or upon westerly views towards Arran. In summary, the magnitude of change would be Negligible, resulting in a Negligible level of effect, not notable.

11 Operational Visual Effects

This section examines the visual effects based on changes to the existing view as experienced by people within the surrounding landscape (as described in Section 6.5). This process draws on the results of the ZTV and viewpoint analysis.

11.1 Visual effects experienced by Local Residents

The appraisal below considers the effects experienced by local residents in settlements, as well as those in isolated residential dwellings / steadings in closest proximity to the Site. In all cases, sensitivity is deemed to be High.

Ardrossan

The Proposed Development would be located 1.5km to the north of Ardrossan. Potential views of the proposed infrastructure would be restricted by the intervening landform that rises to the northwest of the settlement (see Viewpoint 4). ZTV coverage is predominantly focused across localised parts of Ardrossan outside the Study Area (>3km from the Site). Potential views from these areas would be restricted by intervening buildings within the western part of the settlement, in combination with the intervening landform in the wider landscape. Accordingly, there would be no discernible views of the Proposed Development, and no effect.

West Kilbride

West Kilbride is located 2.2km to the northwest of the Proposed Development. The settlement is entirely outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Isolated Residential Dwellings / Steadings

High Boydstone Farm & High Boydstone House are located 100m to the south of the Proposed Development. This small cluster of single-storey and two-storey properties are southwest facing. The properties and adjoining gardens are spatially separated from the Site by the intervening commercial

sheds at High Boydstone. Potential oblique views towards the Proposed Development would also be restricted by intervening hedgerows in combination with a slight rise in the local landform. Accordingly, the proposed infrastructure and earthwork bund would be predominantly screened. The magnitude of change would be Slight at most, resulting in a Moderate level of effect. This is not considered to be notable in this instance based on the oblique nature of the view. As the proposed planting within the Site steadily establishes, potential views of the proposed infrastructure would soften further. By Year 10, the magnitude of change would be Negligible and the residual level of effect would be Minor, not notable.

Kirkland House is located 480m to the northwest of the Proposed Development. The two-storey property is orientated to have open westerly views towards the Firth of Clyde and Isle of Arran. Potential views of the Proposed Development would be restricted by the intervening landform, which rises steadily towards the southeast. This forms a ridgeline in front of the Site, which would limit visibility to the infrastructure in the western edge of the Site at most. Accordingly, the Proposed Development would represent a very discreet element within inland views. There would be no effect on key views towards the coast. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the residual level of effect would be Minor, not notable. By Year 10, the proposed planting within the Site would fully screen the proposed infrastructure from view, and there would be no residual effects.

Boydston Farm is located 520m to the southwest of the Proposed Development, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Kirkland Farm House is located 540m to the northwest of the Proposed Development. Potential views of the Proposed Development would be fully screened by the intervening landform in combination with a belt of established tree cover to the south of the property. There would be no views and no effect.

Rashley is located 680m to the southeast of the Proposed Development, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Little Busbie is located 700m to the east of the Proposed Development, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

The cluster of properties at Glenfoot (comprising Glenfoot House, Glenfoot Lodge, Coach House and Gate House) are located 810m to the west of the Proposed Development. All of the properties are located outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views and no effect.

Hauptlands Farm & Nos. 2-3 Hauptlands Farm Cottage are located 850m to the north of the Proposed Development. The properties are all westerly-facing, with open views towards the Firth of Clyde and Isle of Arran. Potential oblique southerly views towards the Proposed Development would be restricted by the intervening landform in combination with field boundary hedgerows and low stone walls. Visibility would be limited to parts of the infrastructure and earthwork bund in the eastern part of the Site at most. The proposed infrastructure in the western part of the Site would be fully screened by the adjacent parcel of existing woodland. Based on the restricted nature of view, the

magnitude of change would be Slight/Negligible and the level of effect would be Minor, not notable. As the proposed planting within the Site steadily establishes, potential views of the proposed infrastructure would soften further. By Year 10, there would be no discernible views of the proposed infrastructure and no effect.

Glenlea Lodge and Glenlea Cottage are located 910m to the west of the Proposed Development, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Glenhead is located 920m to the west of the Proposed Development, and comprises the farmhouse and a neighbouring cottage. The properties are orientated to southwest, with open views towards the Firth of Clyde and Isle of Arran. Potential views of the Proposed Development would be restricted by the intervening landform, which rises steadily towards the east. This forms a ridgeline in front of the Site, which would limit visibility to the infrastructure in the western edge of the Site at most (see Viewpoint 2). Accordingly, the Proposed Development would represent a very discreet element within inland views. There would be no effect on key views towards the coast. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the residual level of effect would be Minor, not notable. By Year 10, the proposed planting within the Site would fully screen the proposed infrastructure from view, and there would be no residual effects.

No.1 Hauplands Farm Cottage is located 990m to the north of the Proposed Development, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Millglen Lodges are located 1.0km to the southeast of the Proposed Development, outside the ZTV. Residents would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Glenelg is located 1.0km to the west of the Proposed Development. The three-storey property is orientated towards the west, with open views towards the Firth of Clyde and Isle of Arran. Potential views of the Proposed Development would be limited to upper-storey windows at the east-facing rear of the property. Within these views, the Proposed Development would be subject to screening by the intervening landform, which rises steadily towards the east. Views would be limited to the upper parts of the infrastructure in the western edge of the Site at most. There would be no effect on key views towards the coast. The magnitude of change would be Negligible and the residual level of effect would be Minor, not notable. By Year 10, the proposed planting within the Site would fully screen the proposed infrastructure from view, and there would be no residual effects.

11.2 Visual effects experienced by Recreational Receptors

The Appraisal of effects experienced by recreational receptors is described below, listed in order of increasing distance from the Proposed Development. Recreational receptors are considered to be of High sensitivity unless stated otherwise.

Ayrshire Coastal Path

The Ayrshire Coastal Path is located 950m to the southwest of the Proposed Development at the closest point. The path is completely outside the ZTV. Walkers would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Cycle Route 753

Cycle Route 753 is located 950m to the southwest of the Proposed Development at the closest point, where it shares a similar route to the Ayrshire Coastal Path. The route is completely outside the ZTV. Cyclists would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Core Path network

The Core Path network within the Study Area is primarily focused around the settlements of West Kilbride and Ardrossan, also extending along the coast between the two settlements. At the closest point the Core Path network extends 950m to the southwest of the Proposed Development. In all cases, the Core Paths within the Study Area are completely outside the ZTV. Walkers would experience no views of the Proposed Development and no effect.

Beach at Boydston Shore

The Beach at Boydston Shore is located 1.0km to the southwest of the Proposed Development. With reference to the ZTV, there would be no views of the Proposed Development from the beach, and no effect upon the visual experience of visitors.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park

The Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park is located 1.3km to the northeast of the Site at the closest point. The park encompasses an expansive geographic area that aligns with the Mainland SLA within the Study Area. Potential views of the Proposed Development would be limited to the upper slopes and summit of Law Hill and Blackshaw Hill (>2km to the north of the Proposed Development). Within views from these areas, the Proposed Development would represent a very minor element in the distant landscape, beyond intervening overhead power lines, in the context of the existing commercial sheds at High Boydstone (see Viewpoint 5). The magnitude of change experienced by visitors to the Regional Park would be Slight/Negligible at most and the level of effect would be Minor, not notable. By Year 10, the effects would soften further as the perimeter planting establishes. The magnitude of change would reduce to Negligible, and the residual level of effect would reduce to Negligible. Across the vast majority of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park there would be no views and no effect.

Law Castle

Law Castle is located on the outer edge of West Kilbride, 3.0km to the north of the Proposed Development. It is outside the ZTV, hence visitors would experience no views and no effect.

11.3 Visual effects experienced by Road and Rail Receptors

The sensitivity of road users and rail passengers is considered to be Medium in all cases unless otherwise stated.

Ayrshire Coast Line (between West Kilbride and Ardrossan)

The Ayrshire Coast Line is located 580m to the west of the Proposed Development at the closest point. ZTV coverage across the route is extremely limited, and restricted to a very localised section

950m in length between Glenhead and Glenfoot. Potential views of the Proposed Development from this section of the route would be restricted by trackside embankments, in combination with the intervening landform that rises steadily towards the Site, forming a ridgeline in front of the proposed infrastructure. Within transient views from this section of the Ayrshire Coast Line, the magnitude of change would be Slight/Negligible at most, and the effect experienced by passengers would be Minor, not notable. These views would be of very short duration. Across the vast majority of the route there would be no views and no effect.

As the planting within the Site established over time, potential views of the Proposed Development would soften further. By Year 10 there would be no discernible views and no effect.

B780

The B780 is located 820m to the east of the Proposed Development at the closest point. The route is outside the ZTV, hence road users would experience no views, and no effect.

A78

The A78 is located 900m to the southwest of the Proposed Development at the closest point. From sections of the A78 within the Study Area, the ZTV illustrates there would be no views, and no effect.

B7047

The B7047 is located 1.7km to the northwest of the Proposed Development at the closest point. The route is outside the ZTV, hence road users would experience no views, and no effect.

A738

The A738 is located 1.8km to the south of the Proposed Development at the closest point. The route is entirely outside the ZTV. There would be no views and no effect.

12 Cumulative Effects

This section examines the potential cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with other large-scale development and / or elements of electrical infrastructure within the Study Area. The assessment includes consideration of the following developments:

- Existing Ardrossan Wind Farm, 600m to the northeast of the Proposed Development;
- Existing Sorbie Wind Farm, 1.8km to the southeast;
- Existing overhead power lines, 50m to the northeast; and
- Consented Meiklelaught BESS (ref: 23/00731/PPM), 3.0km to the east.

The cumulative effects in association with existing developments are considered certain, and those with consented developments are considered likely.

Landscape and visual receptors described in Sections 10 and 11 above as undergoing / experiencing a Negligible or Slight/Negligible magnitude of change (or less), are excluded from consideration in the cumulative assessment on the basis that the Proposed Development would exert such a limited effect in its own right that it would not meaningfully contribute to potential cumulative effects. As

such, it would not tip the balance from a minor cumulative effect to a notable cumulative effect.

12.1 Cumulative Landscape Effects

Cumulative Effects on the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT

In addition to the Proposed Development, the existing overhead power lines and wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm and Sorbie Wind Farm are located within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT, thus exert direct effects upon local landscape character in their own right. With reference to the preceding assessment of effects on landscape character (described in Section 10.2), the primary effects of the Proposed Development on the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT would be focused within approximately 200m of the Site (curtailed within 20m to the northwest and southeast by neighbouring woodland and built form). Within this area, the magnitude of change would typically be Moderate and the level of effect would be Moderate (notable).

These effects would coalesce with the characterising influence currently exerted by the existing overhead line and Ardrossan Wind Farm due to their geographic proximity to the Site. The Proposed Development would augment the presence of electricity infrastructure within the local landscape, albeit would not meaningfully extend its geographic spread into undeveloped areas of the LCT.

The cumulative influence of the Proposed Development would reduce steadily at distances beyond 200m from the Site. As such, the combined cumulative effects aligned to the Proposed Development would remain very localised. The wider landscape would continue to be defined by rolling farmland with scattered development (including wind turbines) and open views towards the Firth of Clyde.

Other existing and consented developments are located at greater distance from the Proposed Development. The existing characteristics of the LCT would re-exert themselves across the intervening landscape.

In summary, the Proposed Development would contribute to cumulative effects in combination with existing and consented development within the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT. However, based on its limited height and its visual containment by nearby vegetation, buildings, and surrounding landform, its cumulative influence would be very localised. The characteristics of the wider Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT would remain predominantly unchanged. The cumulative magnitude of change across the LCT would be Moderate, and the cumulative level of effect across the LCT would be Moderate (not notable). This is based primarily on the presence of the existing wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm and Sorbie Wind Farm. The Proposed Development would exert extremely limited incremental cumulative influence.

Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT

None of the existing or consented developments listed above are located within the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT. In each case, the cumulative influence of these developments is therefore indirect and limited to inland views. Based on their scale and location on the skyline, the wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm currently exert the greatest indirect effects on landscape character within the LCT, albeit these effects are generally limited to open vantage points above the coastline.

With reference to the preceding assessment of effects on landscape character, the effects of the Proposed Development on Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT would be very localised. From open vantage points it would be experienced in the same field of view as Ardrossan Wind Farm and Sorbie Wind Farm, within the undulating farmland located inland, and above the coast. The spatial separation of these developments from the coast would limit their combined cumulative influence upon the wider LCT. There would be no effect on key views towards the sea.

On balance, the cumulative magnitude of change across the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT would be Slight and the cumulative level of effect would be Moderate/Minor (not notable) based primarily on inland views of existing wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm and Sorbie Wind Farm. The Proposed Development would exert extremely limited incremental cumulative influence.

12.2 Cumulate Visual Effects

Cumulative Effects Experienced by Local Residents: High Boydstone Farm & High Boydstone House

Residents at High Boydstone Farm & High Boydstone House experience the existing overhead power line and wind turbines at Ardrossan Wind Farm within easterly / northeasterly views (from the rear of the dwellings). These existing elements extend above the skyline, and represent distinctive features on the horizon. They do not influence primary views from the property frontage towards the southwest.

With reference to the main assessment, the Proposed Development would be located at an oblique angle of view to the northwest, where it would be partly screened by intervening commercial sheds, hedgerows and the local landform. As such, it would represent a discreet element within a different sector of view to the existing developments. The Proposed Development would become increasingly screened over time in accordance with the establishment of planting within the Site, further reducing its cumulative influence on views from these properties.

In summary, the cumulative magnitude of change experienced by residents would be Substantial/Moderate, resulting in a Major/Moderate effect (notable). This is based on views of the existing Ardrossan Wind Farm and overhead power line. Conversely, the cumulative influence of the Proposed Development would be very limited, and would decrease further over time. By Year 10, the Proposed Development would be predominantly screened from view and would not exert any meaningful cumulative influence upon views from High Boydstone Farm & High Boydstone House.

13 Conclusions

In summary, the Proposed Development would be located on rolling farmland 1.5km north of Ardrossan, adjacent to the existing commercial sheds and yard at High Boydstone. The northwestern edge of the Site abuts a parcel of woodland. The local landscape forms an intermediate plateau, which is raised above the coast to the west, but below the upper slopes and summits to the east. The Proposed Development would result in the loss of pastoral grassland within the Site, which accounts for a small area within the wider surrounding agricultural landscape. The Proposed

Development would result in the introduction of new infrastructure, boundary fencing and earthwork bund, which would be located in close proximity to existing built form at High Boydstone.

In terms of landscape effects, the containment by adjacent buildings and vegetation, in combination with the surrounding landform means that the main effects would be primarily focused within a 200m of the Site, and contained within 20m to the northwest and southeast specifically. Within this area, there would be notable localised effects on the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT (where the Proposed Development would be located) and adjoining parts of the Raised Beach Coast and Cliffs LCT (which abuts the Site to the southwest). These effects would diminish steadily at greater distances, and there would be no notable effects on wider parts of these LCTs. The establishment of woodland edge, trees and hedgerow planting within the Site would reduce these effects further over time. There would be no notable effects on any other LCT or on any landscape designation.

Visual effects would also be extremely restricted based on the relatively low height of the proposed infrastructure in combination with the visual containment of the Site by surrounding built form, vegetation and landform. The intervening commercial sheds ensure that the Proposed Development is spatially and visually separated from the nearby residential dwellings at High Boydstone. As such, the effects experienced by these residents would not be notable. Similarly, there would be no notable effects on views experienced by local residents at other isolated dwellings or settlement within the Study Area.

Potential views from recreational attractions and road / rail routes would also be very limited due to the visual containment of the Site. The clearest views would be limited to upper slopes and summits in the wider area, where the Proposed Development would represent a discreet addition to the lower-lying background landscape. Accordingly, there would be no notable effects on the visual amenity of recreational receptors or road / rail users.

As the proposed planting within the Site steadily establishes, potential views of the proposed infrastructure would soften further.

In terms of cumulative effects, the Proposed Development would augment the presence of existing, power-related infrastructure in the locality. These primarily comprise the existing Ardrossan Wind Farm, Sorbie Wind Farm and overhead power lines. The Proposed Development would represent another element of electricity infrastructure within the local landscape, albeit would not meaningfully extend its geographic spread into wider, undeveloped areas. As such, the cumulative influence of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity would be very limited.

In conclusion, it is assessed that the Proposed Development could be accommodated at the Site with limited and localised effects on landscape character and visual amenity. Furthermore, these effects would reduce over time in accordance with the steady establishment of proposed planting measures within the Site. The proposed native woodland edge, trees, hedgerows, and species-rich wildflower meadow would represent beneficial landscape features that would link with existing vegetation in the adjoining landscape.

References

Publications

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North Ayrshire Local Development Plan, North Ayrshire Council, 2019.

Seascape / Landscape Assessment of the Firth of Clyde, Grant & Anderson, for the Firth of Clyde Forum, 2013.

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Appendix A: LVA methodology

Landscape Effects

The starting point for the assessment of landscape effects was a desk-based review of published landscape assessments.

The sensitivity of the landscape to change resulting from a Proposed Development is not absolute and varies according to the existing landscape, the nature of the Proposed Development and the type of change being proposed. Good practice guidance differentiates between baseline sensitivity of the landscape and the sensitivity of a landscape to a specific development proposal. Accordingly, the concept of 'sensitivity to change' to new development, as described within the baseline published landscape character assessments, is distinct from the consideration of landscape sensitivity to the specific development proposal.

The baseline for consideration of landscape effects is the established landscape character. The landscape effects of a Proposed Development are considered against the key characteristics of the receiving landscape. The degree to which the Proposed Development may change 'the distinct and recognisable pattern that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse' (Countryside Agency and NatureScot, 2002), enables a judgement to be made as to the significance of the effect in landscape character terms. This involves consideration of where the Proposed Development may give rise to a different landscape character type or sub-type.

In general terms, a distinctive landscape of acknowledged value (e.g. covered by a designation) and in good condition is likely to be more sensitive to change than a landscape in poor condition and with no designations or acknowledged value. General guidance on the evaluation of sensitivity is provided below; however, the actual sensitivity would depend on the attributes of the landscape receiving the proposals and the nature of those proposals.

In order to reach an understanding of the effects of development upon the landscape it is necessary to consider different aspects of the landscape as follows:

- Landscape Fabric / Elements: The individual features of the landscape, such as hills, valleys, woods, hedges, tree cover, vegetation, buildings and roads for example which can usually be described and quantified;
- Landscape Quality: The state of repair or condition of elements of a particular landscape, its integrity and intactness and the extent to which its distinctive character is apparent;
- Landscape Value: The importance attached to a landscape, often used as a basis for designation or recognition which expresses national or regional consensus, because of its special qualities/attributes including aesthetic or perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or nature conservation interest; and
- Landscape Key Characteristics: The particularly notable elements or combinations of elements which makes a particular contribution to defining or describing the character of an area, which may include experiential characteristics such as wildness and tranquillity.

The sensitivity of the landscape to a particular development considers the susceptibility of the landscape and its value. The overall sensitivity is described as high, medium or low. This is assessed by taking into account the existing landscape quality, landscape value, and landscape capacity or susceptibility to change, which often vary depending on the type of development proposed and the particular site location, such that sensitivity needs to be considered on a case-by-case basis. This should not be confused with ‘inherent sensitivity’ where areas of the landscape may be referred to as inherently of ‘high’ or ‘low sensitivity’.

For example, a National Park may be described as inherently of high sensitivity on account of its designation, but it may prove to be less sensitive to particular development and/or the design of that development.

Alternatively, an undesignated landscape may be of high sensitivity to a particular development and/or the design of that development regardless of the lack of local or national designation. The main factors to consider are discussed as follows:

Landscape susceptibility according to GLVIA3 means “the ability of the landscape to accommodate the Proposed Development without undue consequences for maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies”. Judgements on landscape susceptibility include references to both the physical and aesthetic characteristics and the potential scope for mitigation that would be in character with the landscape.

The judgements regarding susceptibility and value of the landscape character are identified within the sensitivity table included within **Appendix B**. These relationships can be complex and value alone does not automatically or by definition have high susceptibility to all types of change. Examples and on the evaluation of landscape sensitivity are provided below:

Table A.1: Landscape sensitivity criteria

High Sensitivity	Landscape character, characteristics and elements which would generally be of lower landscape capacity or scope for landscape change, and of notable landscape value and quality. These are landscapes that may be considered to be of particular importance to conserve and which may be particularly sensitive to change if inappropriately dealt with.
Medium Sensitivity	Landscape character, characteristics and elements where there would be a moderate landscape capacity or some scope for landscape change. Often include landscapes of moderate landscape value and quality which may be locally designated.
Low Sensitivity	Landscape Character, characteristics and elements where there would be higher landscape capacity or scope for landscape change to accommodate the proposed type of development. Usually applies to landscapes with of lesser landscape susceptibility or higher landscape capacity for the Proposed Development.

The level of landscape effects is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. It is for each assessment to determine the assessment criteria and thresholds using well informed and reasoned judgements.

The magnitude of landscape change arising from the Proposed Development at any particular location is described as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- degree of loss or alteration to key landscape features/elements or characteristics;
- distance from the development;
- duration of effect;
- landscape backdrop to the development; and
- landscape context of other built development, particularly vertical elements.

In order to differentiate between different levels of magnitude the following definitions are provided:

Table A.2: Landscape magnitude of change definitions

Substantial	Total loss or extensive alteration to key landscape elements/features/characteristics of the baseline, or introduction of uncharacteristic elements which would give rise to a fresh characterising effect.
Moderate	Partial loss or alteration to one or more key landscape elements/features/characteristics of the baseline and/or introduction of elements that may be prominent, but not necessarily substantially uncharacteristic with the attributes of the receiving landscape (which could co-characterise parts of the landscape).
Slight	Minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape elements/features/characteristics of the baseline and/or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape or may not lead to a characterising or co-characterising effect.
Negligible	Very minor loss or alteration to one or more key landscape elements/features/characteristics of the baseline and/or the introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape. Change would be barely distinguishable approximating to no change.

Having established where the observation of varying levels of change to the landscape baseline may occur, the geographical extent of the change can be identified and a judgement made as to the level of effect in landscape character terms at varying scales.

The importance of the effect on the landscape resource may be determined by correlating the magnitude of the landscape change (substantial, moderate, slight or negligible) with the sensitivity of the landscape resource (high, medium or low). The following table sets out the main correlations between magnitude and sensitivity.

Table A.3: Landscape effects matrix

Landscape sensitivity	Magnitude of Change				
		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
	High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Minor
	Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor/Negligible
	Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible

Visual Effects

The sensitivity of potential visual receptors will vary depending on the location and context of the viewpoint, the activity of the receptor and importance of the view. Visual receptor sensitivity is defined as high, medium, or low in accordance with the criteria in Table A.4.

Table A.4: Visual sensitivity criteria

High Sensitivity	Residents within the curtilage of their homes; users of outdoor recreational facilities including footpaths, cycle ways and recreational road users; people experiencing views from important landscape features of physical, cultural or historic interest, beauty spots and picnic areas.
Medium Sensitivity	Road users and travelers on trains experiencing views from transport routes. People engaged in outdoor sport other than appreciation of the landscape, e.g. nature conservation, golf and water-based recreation.
Low Sensitivity	Workers, users of facilities and commercial buildings (indoors) experiencing views from buildings.

The magnitude of visual change arising from the Proposed Development at any particular location is described as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- distance of the viewpoint/receptor from the development;
- duration of effect;
- extent of the development in the view;
- angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- proportion of the field of view occupied by the development;
- background to the development; and
- extent of other built development visible, particularly vertical elements.

It is assumed that the change would be seen in clear visibility and the assessment is carried out on that basis. Where appropriate, comment may be made on lighting and weather conditions. In order to differentiate between levels of magnitude the following definitions are provided in Table A.5:

Table A.5: Visual magnitude of change definitions

Substantial	Where the proposals would have a defining influence on the view. Change very prominent leading to substantial obstruction or complete change in character and composition of the baseline existing view.
Moderate	Where the proposals would be clearly noticeable and an important new element in the view. It may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of the baseline existing view
Slight	The proposals would be partially visible or visible at sufficient distance to be perceptible and result in limited or minor changes to the view. The character and composition, although altered will be similar to the baseline existing situation
Negligible	Change would be barely perceptible. The composition and character of the view would be substantially unaltered, approximating to little or no change.

The threshold for different levels of visual effects relies to a great extent on professional judgement. Criteria and local circumstances require close study and careful judgement.

Beneficial effects upon receptors may result from a change to a view by the removal of eyesores or through the addition of well-designed elements which add to the sense of place in a beneficial manner.

The following Table A.6 sets out the main correlations between magnitude and sensitivity.

Table A.6: Visual effects matrix

Visual sensitivity	Magnitude of Change				
		Substantial	Moderate	Slight	Negligible
High	Major	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Minor	
Medium	Major/Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor/Negligible	
Low	Moderate	Moderate/Minor	Minor	Negligible	

Level of Effect

As per the matrices in Table A.3 and Table A.6; the level of any identified landscape or visual effect has been assessed in terms of major, moderate, minor, negligible or none. Intermediate correlations are also possible and depend upon professional judgement, e.g. Major/Moderate. These categories are based on the juxtaposition of viewer or landscape sensitivity with the predicted magnitude of change. This matrix should not be used as a prescriptive tool but must allow for the exercise of professional judgement. Effects which are judged to be Major/Moderate or Major are considered to be notable. Where Moderate effects are predicted, professional judgement is applied to ensure that the potential for notable effects arising has been thoroughly considered.

Type of Effect

Landscape and visual effects are described with reference to type (direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative), timeframe (short, medium, long term, permanent, and temporary) and whether they are beneficial or adverse (beneficial or adverse). The various types of effect are described as follows:

Temporary / Residual Effects

If a proposal would result in an alteration to an environment whose attributes can be quickly recovered, then judgements concerning the significance of effects should be tempered in that light. Commercial development applications typically include permanent, long-term elements as well as minor alternations to landform resulting in residual landscape and visual effects.

Direct/Indirect

Direct and indirect landscape and visual effects are defined in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3). Direct effects may be defined “*result directly from the development itself*” (para 3.22). An indirect (or secondary) effect is one that results “*from consequential change resulting from the development*” (para 3.22) and is often produced away from the site of the Proposed Development or as a result of a complex pathway or secondary association. The direct or physical landscape effects of the Proposed Development would generally be limited to an area around the development itself. Any indirect landscape effects are concerned with the view of the changes from outside the local landscape.

Beneficial/Adverse

Landscape and visual effects can be beneficial or adverse and in some instances may be considered neutral. Beneficial effects upon landscape receptors may result from changes to the landscape involving beneficial enhancement measures or through the addition of well-designed elements, which add to the landscape experience or sense of place in a complementary manner.

The landscape impacts of the Proposed Development have been considered against the landscape baseline, taking account of the landscape characteristics. Taking a precautionary approach, changes to rural landscapes involving construction of man-made objects of a large scale are generally considered to be adverse, as they are not usually actively promoted as part of a district wide landscape strategy and therefore in the assessment of landscape effects they are assumed to be adverse, unless specified otherwise in the text.

It is important to recognise that for the same development, some may consider the visual effects for a development of this nature as adverse or beneficial. This depends to some extent on the viewer’s predisposition towards landscape change but also the principle of commercial building features in the landscape. Taking a precautionary approach in making an assessment of the ‘worst case scenario’, the assessment considers that all effects on views which would result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development to be adverse, unless specified otherwise in the text. It is noted, however, that not all people would consider the effects to be adverse.

Visualisation Methodology

Zone of Theoretical Visibility Maps

Computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Maps have been prepared to assist in viewpoint selection and to indicate the potential influence of the Proposed Development in the wider landscape.

With reference to **Figure 1**, the ZTV has been prepared at 1:30,000 scale to indicate the extent of potential visibility on the basis of bare ground, and does not include the screening effects of intervening established tree cover. The Visibility Map indicates areas from which it might be possible to secure views of part, or parts, of the Proposed Development (based on its maximum height). However, use of the Visibility Maps needs to be qualified on the following basis:

- There are a number of areas within the Visibility Maps from which there is potential to view parts of the proposal, but which comprise open moorland, or other land where the general public do not appear to exercise regular access;
- The large scale Visibility Map does not account for the screening effects and filtering of views as a result of intervening features, such as trees and forestry; and
- The Visibility Maps do not account for the likely orientation of a viewer – for example when travelling in a vehicle.

In addition, the accuracy of the Visibility Maps has to be considered. In particular, the ZTV is generated from Ordnance Survey (OS) Landform Panorama digital data based on a gridded terrain model with 5m cell sizes. The resolution of this model cannot accurately represent small-scale terrain features, which can therefore give rise to inaccuracy in the predicted visibility. This can lead to underestimation of visibility – e.g. a raised area of ground permitting views over an intervening obstruction, or can lead to overestimation of visibility – such as where a roadside embankment obscures a view.

Appendix B: Landscape Character Sensitivity

The sensitivity of the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT is assessed in detail below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location taking account of susceptibility as described in the methodology. To understand the sensitivity of a particular landscape and its location it is good practice to consider a range of criteria as set out in the table below.

The table below highlights the inherent sensitivities of this landscape to the development proposed, with reference to characteristics as described within NatureScot's 2019 National Landscape Character Assessment where relevant. Extracts from this document are included in italics.

Table B.1: Sensitivity of the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT

Factors affecting the sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity	Higher Sensitivity	Characteristics of local landscape at the Site	Sensitivity Rating
Physical				
Scale	Large scale featureless landscapes	Small to medium scale landscapes with some scaling features	There are open views towards the Firth of Clyde from parts of the LCT that contribute towards the sense of scale. At a local level, the Site is more enclosed by landform, vegetation and nearby buildings, which reduce the sense of scale.	Medium
Openness	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	The landscape is open in places, with <i>'long distance and panoramic, focused towards the islands and peninsulas in the Firth of Clyde and Kilbrannan Sound.'</i> At a local level, the Site is located on a plateau that is partly contained by the surrounding landform, in combination with existing woodland to the northwest and buildings at High Boydstone to the southwest.	Medium/Low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, flat or uniform landscapes	Dramatic, rugged and complex landscapes	The LCT comprises a <i>'combination of comparatively gentle hills / shallow slopes and steeper craggy escarpments'</i> . At a local level, the Site is located on an intermediate plateau, raised above the coast, but below the higher summits located further inland. This results in visual containment of the Site, particularly towards the south.	Low

Factors affecting the sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity	Higher Sensitivity	Characteristics of local landscape at the Site	Sensitivity Rating
Land cover	Extensive areas of simple regular land cover (including farming and forestry)	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover	The land cover is <i>'dominated by moorland vegetation, grading from heather and grass moorland, through rough grazing and abandoned pastures to improved pastures on the lower slopes.'</i> The local landscape is characterised by farmland, with pastoral grassland within the Site.	Medium/Low
Complexity and patterns	Simple and sweeping lines, linear features and patterns	Complex or irregular patterns	The landscape pattern is influence by the field boundaries, comprising <i>'drystone dykes, post and wire fences and some hedges'</i> in combination with local roads and scattered development.	Medium
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	The area is predominantly rural, and typical of a working agricultural landscape. However, the commercial sheds and working yard at High Boydstone are located to the southeast of the Site. In addition, <i>'tall structures (masts, pylons and turbines)'</i> are also present in the surrounding locality.	Medium/Low
Overall physical sensitivity				Medium/Low
Perceptual				
Wildness / Sense of Remoteness	Busy evidence of human activity	Remote, peaceful or sense and tranquillity, solitude and emptiness	The landscape is primarily under agricultural use. In combination with views of the coast, this creates a sense of tranquility. However, the commercial sheds and working yard at High Boydstone represent clear elements of human activity. The presence of wind turbines and overhead lines in the surrounding area further reduce the sense that this is a remote landscape.	Medium

Factors affecting the sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity	Higher Sensitivity	Characteristics of local landscape at the Site	Sensitivity Rating
Perception of Change	Dynamic or modern landscapes	Ancient landscapes, designed landscapes or with obvious historical continuity	As above, built form in the Site locality incorporates commercial activity and electricity infrastructure that represent modern influences within the wider agricultural landscape.	Medium/Low
Overall Perceptual Sensitivity				Medium
Visual				
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Generally low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	As described above, the Site is located on an intermediate plateau, raised above the coast, but below the higher summits located further inland. This limits its influence on the skyline or setting.	Medium/Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	The rolling landform within the LCT results in wide open vistas towards the Firth of Clyde in some areas. The key views are therefore towards the west.	Medium
Overall Visual Sensitivity				Medium/Low
Value				
Rarity	Commonplace	Rare	The Site is located within an area of working agriculture incorporating scattered buildings and electricity infrastructure, which are not considered rare. However, the proximity of the LCT to the coast and its visual relationship with the Firth of Clyde and Isle of Arran, represent characteristics that add to a sense of rarity.	Medium
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	The LCT encompasses parts of the Mainland SLA. There are no landscape designations within the Site locality.	Medium

Factors affecting the sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity	Higher Sensitivity	Characteristics of local landscape at the Site	Sensitivity Rating
Cultural associations	No specific cultural associations	Strong cultural association	The LCT incorporates scattered Scheduled Monuments. Views towards the Firth of Clyde and Isle of Arran are also considered to represent elements of cultural importance.	Medium
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity function	Well used for amenity/recreation, especially for National trails or other long distance routes	The LCT encompasses parts of the Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park, which is popular with walkers. However, there are no promoted routes or outdoor attractions in the Site locality.	Medium
Overall Value				Medium
Overall Sensitivity of the Rugged Moorland Hills and Valleys LCT				Medium

Appendix C: Landscape Figures

LVA Drawing List

2192 LVA Fig 1C-4B Rashley BESS

2192 L01C Landscape Layout (LVA Figure 5)

RASHLEY_BESS_3DVIEW_A_rev2_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_3DVIEW_B_rev2_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_VP01_rev_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_VP02_rev_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_VP03_rev_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_VP04_rev_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_VP05_rev_comp

RASHLEY_BESS_VP06_rev_comp