



OAKLANDS FARM SOLAR PARK

Applicant: Oaklands Farm Solar Ltd

Environmental Statement

Appendix 5.3 – Landscape Assessment Tables

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Oaklands Farm Solar Park - Environmental Statement Volume 3

Appendix 5.3: Landscape Assessment Tables

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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Appendix 5.3

Landscape Assessment Tables

Introduction

A5.3.1 The tables in this appendix identify the significance of the effect for each landscape receptor following the methodology (as described in detail in **Appendix 5.1: LVIA and CLVIA Methodology**). The tables establish the landscape sensitivity of the receptor (by considering landscape susceptibility and landscape value); the magnitude of landscape change (including the scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the landscape effect) and concludes with the overall level and significance of the landscape effect. Consideration is given to the landscape effects during construction and during operation (at Year 1 and Year 10).

Landscape Assessment

Table A5.3.1: Village Estate farmlands

Location and Baseline Description
<p>This LCT forms the northern tip of the wider Mease/Sence Lowlands National Character Area. Almost all of the LCT is located within the study area (covering a large proportion of its south-eastern part), and the LCT encompasses all of the Site. The key characteristics of this LCT are set out in paragraph 5.68 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual.</p> <p>Representative views from this LCT are illustrated by Viewpoints 1-10.</p>
Judgement of Landscape Sensitivity
<p>Landscape Susceptibility</p> <p>The landscape susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be medium due to a balance of indicators of higher and lower susceptibility.</p> <p>The indicators of higher susceptibility include:</p>

- The gently rolling nature of the landscape which provides some topographical variety;
- Some historic time depth with 18th/19th century (parliamentary) enclosure and presence of estates, country houses and landscaped parks;
- Distinctive settlement pattern of small, nucleated villages with traditional building materials and village church spires that punctuate the skyline; and
- Some sense of tranquility with the entire LCT being within the top three bands of tranquility values of Derbyshire County Council's tranquility study¹ (although data was from 2007) and dark skies experienced away from populations as evidenced through CPREs night blight map².

The indicators of lower susceptibility include:

- The large-scale landscape comprising a simple landcover pattern of mixed agriculture (with medium-large regular fields), small and intermittent woodland and occasional trees, with limited semi-natural habitats;
- Loss of historic field patterns due to intensification of agriculture;
- Man-made influence of powerlines and pylons which extend from power stations in the Trent Valley and are prominent on skylines;
- Existing solar development at Drakelow and Coton Park (Linton); and
- Limited intervisibility with surrounding landscape due to lack of elevation and vantage points.

Landscape Value

The LCT is not designated and is limited in both natural and cultural heritage interest. Its condition is variable, although poor management has resulted in the important unimproved grassland habitats becoming diminished, and hedgerows having been lost or becoming gappy. As part of the AMES study³, the area scored low in terms of visual unity (i.e.

¹ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/technical-support-document-2-tranquillity.pdf>

² <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

³ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/technical-support-document-1-ames.pdf>

intactness of the landscape). It does however have some recreational value with public rights of way running through it (including the Cross Britain Way/National Forest Way long distance footpaths) and some open access land around the Rosliston Forestry Centre. The increased coverage of woodland (as part of the National Forest initiative) is giving the area a strong sense of identity. Despite its openness and rural character, scenic quality is relatively low due to intensive agriculture. Overall, the LCT is judged to be of **low** value.

Landscape Sensitivity

By combining the separate judgements on landscape susceptibility and landscape value, the landscape sensitivity of this LCT is judged to be **medium**. The Site forms a relatively large proportion of the LCT and displays many of its key characteristics. The **medium** landscape sensitivity therefore also applies to the Site. This reflects the 'moderate' landscape sensitivity identified in the Derbyshire Spatial Renewable Energy Study (2023)⁴ for the area that the Site is located within.

Judgement of Magnitude of Landscape Change

Scale of Landscape Effect

During construction there will be direct effects upon part of this LCT as a result of the implementation of PV panels, transformers and fencing; the construction of the tracks (including access), the Proposed Development's substation, control building and battery storage area near to the centre of the Oaklands Farm landholding (field O12), the temporary construction compounds in fields O1 and O4; and the excavations associated with the underground grid cabling between the Proposed Development's substation and the existing substation at the disused Drakelow Power Station. Changes will include the removal and alteration of existing landscape elements including arable and pastoral landcover; limited removal of vegetation (see **Chapter 6: Ecology** for further information); some subtle changes to the topography; the introduction of partially constructed infrastructure; transport and storage of materials; additional movement and activity through construction vehicles and plant; and a perceived change from an agricultural landscape to a construction site. The scale

⁴ DCC (2023) Derbyshire Spatial Renewable Energy Study. Available at: <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/environment/planning/planning-policy/renewable-energy-study/renewable-energy-study.aspx>

of landscape effect at construction is judged to be **large** within the area directly affected by the works, declining with distance from the works.

Direct operational effects (at Year 1) will arise for the extent of the Site within this LCT, as a result of the introduction of new energy generating infrastructure, slight changes to the topography (to accommodate the Proposed Development's substation and battery storage area as well as underground cabling) and limited loss of vegetation. Generally, the existing field pattern within the Site will be retained although will become slightly altered in places by fencing around the panels (in areas where they do not extend up to the edge of field boundaries) and from some of the tracks (although these generally follow existing field boundaries). The gently rolling landform will be retained as PV panels follow the contours and therefore unlikely to notably alter the skyline in views from the wider landscape. As the PV panels are to be mounted on posts, the underlying landcover will be restored to grass through reseeded (to be grazed by sheep) and areas free from PV panels will be seeded for species rich meadow grassland to establish. The proposed planting designed to provide landscape and visual mitigation will be implemented, but will be yet to establish.

In terms of wider effects on the LCT, the PV panels will be theoretically visible from parts of the area within around 3km of the Site boundary. The Proposed Development's substation/battery storage components will be visible from up to around 2km from their proposed location. In practice, visibility will be reduced by the mature vegetation which surrounds the Site including the existing network of field boundary vegetation, where it is retained and enhanced. There will be some loss of rural setting afforded to villages surrounding the Site. This will slightly reduce the distinction between arriving at and leaving a settlement. The sense of tranquility of the landscape, and dark skies away from populations will largely remain (although with some human activity on the Site from occasional maintenance operations).

Overall, it is considered that there would be a **large** change to the area directly affected by the Proposed Development (i.e. the Site) and in its immediate setting, changing this area to an energy generating landscape. The scale of landscape effect will reduce with distance from the Proposed Development (the large scale of landscape effect will extend to around 0.5km from the Proposed Development), and in terms of the wider effects on the LCT there will be a

small change to the perceptual character, extending to a distance of approximately 1km from the Proposed Development.

Geographical Extent

The large direct scale of landscape effect will occur at the level of the Site and its immediate surroundings (i.e. a **small** geographical extent). The Proposed Development will theoretically be visible across parts of the LCT (although actual visibility will be reduced by vegetation), so the small scale of landscape effect to the perceptual character of the LCT will occur over a **medium** geographical extent.

Duration/Reversibility

During construction the changes to the landscape character would be **short-term** (up to 2 years) and **largely reversible**.

During operation land that has undergone excavations will be reinstated, but other parts of the Proposed Development will remain for the **long-term** (beyond 10 years). The long-term changes will be **partially reversible** as the PV panels, transformers fencing, the Proposed Development's substation and battery storage area will be dismantled and removed from the Site once the operational period has ceased. The proposed planting will remain in place. The tracks will either be left in situ providing a continuation of improved access for farmers or removed depending on the requirement of the landowner at the time.

Overall Judgement on Magnitude of Landscape Change

During operation (at Year 1), the large scale of landscape effect over a small geographical area (over a long term) for the Site and its immediate surroundings is judged to result in an overall **high** magnitude of landscape change. The small scale of landscape effect over a medium geographical area (over a long term) for the wider LCT is judged to result in an overall **low** magnitude of landscape change.

Although the construction period is shorter in duration, the nature of construction can be more detracting than at operation because of on-site activity and part-built structures. Therefore, the overall magnitude of landscape change at construction is also judged to be **high** for the Site and its immediate surroundings and **low** for the wider LCT.

At Year 10, the planting will have established and will be close to maturity resulting in some beneficial effects on the landscape character in terms of landcover. The magnitude of landscape change will reduce to **medium** for the Site and its immediate surroundings. It is anticipated that there will be changes to the landscape character due to further woodland planting as part of the initiatives associated with the National Forest, building upon the changes that have already happened. Whilst it is acknowledged that this is not guaranteed, if it is the case then the planting as part of the Proposed Development is expected to be congruous with the landscape character at Year 10.

Overall Level and Direction of Effect, and Significance

A medium landscape sensitivity combined with a high magnitude of landscape change is judged to result in a **major (Significant)** effect for the Site and its immediate surroundings during construction and during operation (Year 1). This will reduce to **moderate (Significant)** at Year 10.

A medium landscape sensitivity combined with a low magnitude of landscape change is judged to result in a **minor (Not Significant)** effect for the wider LCT during construction and during operation (Year 1 and Year 10).

The Proposed Development is considered to result in both adverse and beneficial effects on the landscape character, as it will introduce man made elements to a rural area (adverse) but will also improve the quality of the landscape through new planting (beneficial). On balance, however, the overall effect is expected to be perceived as **adverse** as a result of the introduction of infrastructure into a rural landscape.

Additional Cumulative Effects

All of the proposed projects set out in **Table 5.8 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual** are located within this LCT. These consist of five battery/ energy storage facilities, a Renewable Energy Centre and the Swadlincote Resource Recovery Park, which would increase the presence of industrial elements within the northern part of the LCT. However, cumulative interactions with the Proposed Development will be limited as the projects are located between 0.8km and 4km from the Oaklands Farm landholding (where the proposed solar PV panels will be located), and intervening vegetation and buildings will limit views of them. The

introduction of the Proposed Development will still result in a **large** scale of landscape effect to the Site and its immediate surroundings and a **low** scale of landscape effect for the wider LCT when considered against a baseline containing the proposed Projects so there will be **no additional cumulative effects over and above those set out in the LVIA above.**

Table A5.3.2: Coalfield Village Farmlands

Location and Baseline Description
<p>This LCT forms the north-western edge of the wider Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfield National Character Area. A small part of the LCT is located within the north-eastern extent of the study area, and the LCT is approximately 2.5km to the east of the Site. The key characteristics of this LCT are set out in paragraph 5.74 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual.</p> <p>A representative view from this LCT is illustrated by Viewpoint 11.</p>
Judgement of Landscape Sensitivity
<p>Landscape Susceptibility</p> <p>The landscape susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be low due to the presence of a number of indicators of lower susceptibility which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Extensive and detracting post-war development around Swadlincote which dominates the area and has a typical urban fringe character;■ Human influence throughout as a result of past land-use of large-scale clay extraction and opencast coal mining with spoil heaps, dereliction and clay pits present in the landscape; and■ Limited tranquility with the entire LCT being within the bottom two bands of tranquility values of Derbyshire County Council's tranquility study⁵ (although data was from 2007) and lack of dark skies as evidenced through CPREs night blight map⁶.

⁵ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/technical-support-document-2-tranquillity.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

In comparison there are a few indicators of higher susceptibility including some intervisibility with the Estate Village Farmlands landscape from the edge of Swadlincote.

Landscape Value

The LCT is not designated and both natural and cultural heritage interest has been eroded as a consequence of mining. This has resulted in the poor condition of the landscape with dereliction present, although some areas are being reclaimed by woodland, and with semi-natural vegetation slowly colonising these areas. As part of the AMES study⁷, the area scored low in terms of visual unity (i.e. intactness of the landscape). It does however have some recreational value with public rights of way running through it. The increased coverage of woodland (as part of the National Forest initiative) is giving the area a strong sense of identity. Despite some areas of rural character, scenic quality is low due to remnants of mining activity, extensive development and intensive agriculture. Overall, the LCT is judged to be of **low** value.

Landscape Sensitivity

By combining the separate judgements on landscape susceptibility and landscape value, the landscape sensitivity of this LCT is judged to be low.

Judgement of Magnitude of Landscape Change

Scale of Landscape Effect

During construction there will be indirect effects from construction activities as a result of the limited views (3-5km to the south-west) towards the Site. Views of construction activity are likely to be glimpsed through intervening vegetation and backclothed by wooded skylines. The scale of landscape effect to the perceptual character of the LCT at construction is judged to be **barely perceptible**.

During operation (at Year 1), there will be limited views of the Proposed Development from small parts of the LCT. The ZTV on **Figure 5.5b** indicates that a small amount of the Proposed Development will be seen from the LCT (at a distance between 4-5km from the Oaklands Farm area) but this will generally be limited to glimpses due to layers of intervening

⁷ <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/site-elements/documents/pdf/environment/conservation/landscapecharacter/technical-support-document-1-ames.pdf>

vegetation. The key characteristics and character of this LCT will be unaffected while there will be a **barely perceptible** change to perceptual characteristics.

At Year 10 the proposed planting will have established and be close to maturity providing further filtering to the Proposed Development. The scale of landscape effect will remain as **barely perceptible**.

Geographical Extent

Not applicable as the scale of landscape effect is judged to be barely perceptible.

Duration/Reversibility

During construction the changes to the landscape character would be **short-term** (up to 2 years) and **reversible**.

During operation the changes to the landscape character would be **long-term** (beyond 10 years) and **reversible** as the PV panels, fencing, the Proposed Development's substation and battery storage area will be dismantled and removed from the Site once the operational period has ceased.

Overall Judgement on Magnitude of Landscape Change

As the scale of landscape effect is barely perceptible, so is the overall magnitude of landscape change, both at construction and during operation (at Years 1 and 10).

Overall Level and Direction of Effect, and Significance

A low landscape sensitivity combined with a barely perceptible magnitude of landscape change is judged to result in a **negligible (Not Significant)** effect during construction and operation (at Years 1 and 10).

Additional Cumulative Effects

None of the proposed projects set out in **Table 5.8 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual** are located within the LCT. However, the area will be influenced by the proposed Swadlincote Resource Recovery Park (CW9/1022/22) which would be adjacent to the boundary of the LCT and increase the presence of industrial elements on the edge of Swadlincote. There may also be views of the proposed energy storage facility off Mount Road (DMPA/2021/1698) and the proposed energy storage scheme at Breach Farm (DMPA/2020/0542) which are near to the

boundary of the LCT. However, cumulative interactions with the Proposed Development (as viewed from the LCT) will be limited as these projects are located between 3.5km and 4km from the Oaklands Farm landholding (where the proposed solar PV panels will be located), and intervening vegetation and buildings will limit views of them. The introduction of the Proposed Development will still result in a **barely perceptible** scale of landscape effect to the LCT and so there will be **no additional cumulative effects over and above those set out in the LVIA above.**

Table A5.3.3: Terrace alluvial lowlands

Location and Baseline Description
<p>This LCT comprises small separate parts along the south-western arm of the Trent Valley Washlands National Character Area. One part of the LCT is located within the north-western extent of the study area, and the LCT is approximately 2.5km to the west of the Site. The key characteristics of this LCT are set out in paragraph 5.75 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual</p>
Judgement of Landscape Sensitivity
<p>Landscape Susceptibility</p> <p>The landscape susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be low due to the presence of a number of indicators of lower susceptibility which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Flat landscape with intact hedgerows and dense tree cover limiting intervisibility with surrounding landscapes;■ Human influence with sand and gravel quarrying activities, large modern farm buildings and the existing Blakenhall Park Solar Farm; and■ Sense of tranquility disturbed by busy roads and proximity to the industrialised lowland river valley, and with a lack of dark skies as evidenced through CPREs night blight map⁸. <p>Landscape Value</p> <p>The LCT is not designated and is limited in both natural and cultural heritage interest. Landscape quality is limited by the relatively poor representation of characteristic semi-natural vegetation, the loss of some characteristic landscape features, a decline in the condition of features that remain and an increase in the representation of incongruous features (as detailed in Staffordshire County Council's <i>Planning for Landscape Change</i>⁹). There is however some recreational value with public rights of way running through it. Despite rural villages having retained much of their traditional character, scenic quality is low due to the</p>

⁸ <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

⁹ <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/Environment-and-countryside/Documents/StaffordshireSPGVolume3.pdf>

influence of industrial elements and intensive agriculture. Overall, the LCT is judged to be of **low** value.

Landscape Sensitivity

By combining the separate judgements on landscape susceptibility and landscape value, the landscape sensitivity of this LCT is judged to be **low**.

Judgement of Magnitude of Landscape Change

Scale of Landscape Effect

During construction there will be indirect effects from construction activities as a result of the limited views (3-5km to the east) towards the Site. There will be limited views of construction activity as a result of the screening/ filtering from intervening features (e.g. development along the A38, intact field boundary hedgerows and woodland). Any available views of the Proposed Development will be glimpsed through intervening vegetation. The scale of landscape effect to the perceptual character of the LCT at construction is judged to be **barely perceptible**.

During operation (at Year 1), there will be limited views of the Proposed Development from small parts of the LCT. The ZTV on **Figure 5.5b** indicates that a small amount of the Proposed Development will be seen from the LCT (at a distance between 3-5km from the Oaklands Farm area) but this will generally be limited to glimpses due to layers of intervening vegetation. The key characteristics and character of this LCT will be unaffected while there will be a **barely perceptible** change to perceptual characteristics.

At Year 10 the proposed planting will have established and be close to maturity providing further filtering to the Proposed Development. The scale of landscape effect will remain as **barely perceptible**.

Geographical Extent

Not applicable as the scale of landscape effect is judged to be barely perceptible.

Duration/Reversibility

During construction the changes to the landscape character would be **short-term** (up to 2 years) and **reversible**.

During operation the changes to the landscape character would be **long-term** (beyond 10 years) and **reversible** as the PV panels, fencing, the Proposed Development's substation and battery storage area will be dismantled and removed from the Site once the operational period has ceased.

Overall Judgement on Magnitude of Landscape Change

As the scale of landscape effect is barely perceptible, so is the overall magnitude of landscape change, both at construction and during operation (at Years 1 and 10).

Overall Level and Direction of Effect, and Significance

A low landscape sensitivity combined with a barely perceptible magnitude of landscape change is judged to result in a **negligible (Not Significant)** effect during construction and operation (at Year 1 and Year 10).

Additional Cumulative Effects

None of the proposed projects set out in **Table 5.8 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual** are located within the LCT. The projects are located between 2km and 7km from the edge of the LCT and cumulative interactions with the Proposed Development (as viewed from the LCT) will be limited as intervening vegetation and buildings will limit views of them. The introduction of the Proposed Development will still result in a **barely perceptible** scale of landscape effect to the LCT and so there will be **no additional cumulative effects over and above those set out in the LVIA above.**

Table A5.3.4: Settled plateau farmlands (Estatelands sub-type)

Location and Baseline Description
<p>This LCT comprises small separate parts within the south-eastern extent of the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands National Character Area. A very small part of the LCT is located within the north-western extent of the study area, and the LCT is approximately 3.5km to the north-west of the Site. The key characteristics of this LCT are set out in paragraph 5.76 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual.</p>
Judgement of Landscape Sensitivity
<p>Landscape Susceptibility</p> <p>The landscape susceptibility of this LCT is judged to be medium due to a balance of indicators of higher and lower susceptibility.</p> <p>The indicators of higher susceptibility include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The steeply sloping stream valleys and hill tops; ■ Some historic time depth with manor houses and parkland; and ■ Some sense of tranquility and dark skies experienced away from populations as evidenced through CPREs night blight map¹⁰. <p>The indicators of lower susceptibility include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Man-made influence of powerlines and pylons visible on skylines and inappropriate village expansion; and ■ Limited intervisibility with surrounding landscape due to the wooded character of the LCT. <p>Landscape Value</p> <p>The LCT is not designated but has some natural and cultural heritage interest. The landscape is of high quality with a few limiting factors (e.g. loss of some semi-natural vegetation). It is generally in good condition with features intact and has some recreational value with public rights of way running through it (including the Cross Britain Way/National Forest Way long</p>

¹⁰ <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

distance footpaths) and some access land near Tatenhill. The wooded pastoral landscape contributes towards its sense of identity and the scenic quality of the area. Overall, the LCT is judged to be of **medium** value.

Landscape Sensitivity

By combining the separate judgements on landscape susceptibility and landscape value, the landscape sensitivity of this LCT is judged to be **medium**.

Judgement of Magnitude of Landscape Change

Scale of Landscape Effect

During construction there will be indirect effects from construction activities as a result of the limited views (3.5-5km to the south-east) towards the Site. Due to the wooded character of the LCT, views of construction activity are likely to be only available from open and elevated areas (e.g. Tatenhill Common) although will be glimpsed through layers of intervening vegetation and backclothed by wooded skylines. The scale of landscape effect to the perceptual character of the LCT at construction is judged to be **barely perceptible**.

During operation (at Year 1), there will be limited views of the Proposed Development from very small parts of the LCT (e.g. Tatenhill Common). The ZTV on **Figure 5.5b** indicates that a small-medium amount of the Proposed Development will be seen from the LCT (at a distance between 4-5km from the Oaklands Farm area) but this will generally be limited to glimpses due to layers of intervening vegetation and seen in the context of built development along the A34 corridor. The key characteristics and character of this LCT will be unaffected while there will be a **barely perceptible** change to perceptual characteristics.

At Year 10 the proposed planting will have established and be close to maturity providing further filtering to the Proposed Development. The scale of landscape effect will remain as **barely perceptible**.

Geographical Extent

Not applicable as the scale of landscape effect is judged to be barely perceptible.

Duration/Reversibility

During construction the changes to the landscape character would be **short-term** (up to 2 years) and **reversible**.

During operation the changes to the landscape character would be **long-term** (beyond 10 years) and **reversible** as the PV panels, fencing, the Proposed Development's substation and battery storage area will be dismantled and removed from the Site once the operational period has ceased.

Overall Judgement on Magnitude of Landscape Change

As the scale of landscape effect is barely perceptible, so is the overall magnitude of landscape change, both at construction and during operation (at Years 1 and 10).

Overall Level and Direction of Effect, and Significance

A medium landscape sensitivity combined with a barely perceptible magnitude of landscape change is judged to result in a **negligible (Not Significant)** effect during construction and operation (at Years 1 and 10).

Additional Cumulative Effects

None of the proposed projects set out in **Table 5.8 of Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual** are located within the LCT. The projects are located between 3km and 7.5km from the edge of the LCT and cumulative interactions with the Proposed Development (as viewed from the LCT) will be limited as intervening vegetation and buildings will limit views of them. The introduction of the Proposed Development will still result in a **barely perceptible** scale of landscape effect to the LCT and so there will be **no additional cumulative effects over and above those set out in the LVIA above**.