

BYERS GILL SOLAR DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

IP reference number BGSF-AFP412

Hearing Action Point (ISH4) submission Deadline 5

Byers Gill Solar DCO ISH4 – Wednesday 16th October 2024

<u>Hearing Action Point 5 – DBC to provide examples of other Landscape and Visual Impact</u> <u>Assessments (LVIA) where landscape character setting of villages/settlements has been</u> <u>separately assessed.</u>

<u>Hearing Action Point 7 – DBC to provide a list of specific viewpoints which are disagreed</u> <u>between the Applicant and DBC</u>

These matters are addressed within the attached document.

Byers Gill Solar Local Impact Report - Landscape and Visual Amenity Darlington Borough Council Supplementary information November 2024



Glenkemp Landscape Architects



Byers Gill Solar Local Impact Report - Landscape and Visual Amenity **Darlington Borough Council** Supplementary information November 2024

Contents

3.0 The a

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1.0 Introc	luction	1
2.0 Analysis of ES view	points	2
ssessment of setting in E	S/LVIA <mark>1</mark>	6
Арре	endix A 1	7
Addy	endix B	8

Darlington Borough Council Town Hall Feethams Darlington DL1 5QT

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Specific Hearing (ISH4) on Environmental ednesday 16 October 2024, the ExA rlington Borough Council (DBC) to identify alisation Viewpoints presented in the al Statement which DBC considered did not worst-case. This followed a discussion on nere the Council confirmed its opinion that ewpoints were not provided in the ES for all e Council also expressed concern that the of the solar panels presented in the s did not accurately represent the varied of solar farms in different light conditions during real-life conditions. The concerns due to the low (sun) light conditions many of the photographs.

provides a (tabulated) summary of the esented in the Environmental Statement. s out the Council's position with regard to s and worst-case and provides an analysis pht conditions presented in the views. is provided in this report to support this ne photography comprises viewpoints DBC LIR Landscape and Visual Amenity and additional photography where

rther requested by the ExA to provide ES/LVIA assessment where setting was as a landscape receptor and judgments e effects on setting. This information is ppendix A and B.

2.0 ANALYSIS OF ES VIEWPOINTS

Visualisatio No	n View analysis	Visibility/cloud cover/light conditions	Receptor	Representative of worst-case view	
1a		Overcast	1.Lime Lane 2. Setting of Brafferton	Yes.	Repr
2a	More extensive open panoramic view is available	Overcast	1.Bridleway No 14 between Brafferton/ Newton Ketton.	No	Photo pano from repor
3a	More extensive views of Whinfield Solar Farm are available from other locations on this public footpath.	Overcast	1 Public footpath No 8 Brafferton to High House 2. Setting of Brafferton	No.	Photo Whin footp Braffe the so obsco 3a.
3b		Overcast	1 Public footpath No 8 Brafferton to High House 2. Setting of Brafferton	Yes	
3c	More extensive views are available from this public footpath towards Byers Gill Solar Farm to the north and south of High House Lane.	Overcast	1 Public footpath No 8 Brafferton to High House 2. Setting of Brafferton	No	Wors from repor Visua route the vi villag
4a-4d		Variable cloud intermittent sun	1.Lime Lane 2. Setting of Brafferton	Yes	
5a-5d		Variable cloud intermittent sun	 Bridleway No 14 between Brafferton/ Newton Ketton. Setting of Brafferton 	Yes	Simil expe illustr

DBC comment

resentative of worst-case from Lime Lane.

otograph does not represent full extent of oramic view or the worst-case visibility/visual effect n this location. Refer to photograph V1 in this ort.

otograph V2 in this report shows visibility of infield Solar Farm (under construction) from public path No 8. Whinfield Farm falls within the setting of fferton and results in cumulative visual effects on setting of the village. This view is substantially cured by temporary bales of hay in ES viewpoint

rst-case visual effects on the setting of Brafferton n this public footpath shown in V3 and V4 in this prt.

al effects on public footpath No 8 occur where e is diverted. This results in a loss of view towards village and a change in the perceived setting of the ge.

ilar visual effects on panoramic views will be erienced from sections of the bridleway not trated in this view.

5a-5d	Variable cloud intermittent sun	1.Bridleway No 14 between Brafferton/ Newton Ketton. 2. Setting of Brafferton	Yes	Similar be exp illustra
6a-6b	Variable cloud intermittent sun	 1.Bridleway No 4 between Brafferton/ Ketton Hall. 2. Setting of Brafferton/Ketton Hall 	Yes	
7a	Overcast	1.Beaumont Hill	Yes	Alterna illustra photog
8a-8b	Overcast	1.Bridelway No 8 nr. Moor House	Yes	
9a	Overcast	1.Bridelway No 11 2. Newton Ketton	Yes	
10a-10b	Overcast	1.Salters Lane	Yes	
11a-11d	Overcast	1.Salters Lane	Yes	
12a-12b	Overcast	1.Lodge Lane 2. Preston Lodge	Yes	
13a-13c	Overcast	1.Footpath No 4 2. Huxley Farm	Yes	
14a-14c	Overcast	1.Footpath No 4 2. Huxley Farm	Yes	
15a	Overcast	1. Lodge Lane	Yes	
16a-16d	Variable cloud intermittent sun	1.Footpath No 6 2. Huxley Farm	Yes	
1 7a	Variable cloud intermittent sun	1 Public footpath No 3 Great Stainton 2. Setting of Great Stainton	No.	More e availat will be See ph

ar visual effects on existing panoramic views will
perienced from sections of the bridleway not
ated in this view.

native viewpoints are also available which rate a similar change in view to that illustrated ograph 7a

e extensive panoramic countryside views are able from this footpath to the east. These views be lost due to the Development. photograph V5 in this report.

17b	View substantially obscured by small agricultural which limits views to the south. The view with building in the foreground is not typical	Variable cloud intermittent sun	1 Public footpath No 3 Great Stainton 2. Setting of Great Stainton	No	Open availal photog Visual report. See al DBC L case v Stainto
18a	Panoramic view substantially obscured by low mound in foreground.	Overcast	1 Elstob Lane 2. Setting of Great Stainton	No	Open availal photog Visual report
19a-19c		Variable cloud intermittent sun	1 Elstob Lane	Yes	
20a-20b		Overcast	1 Catkill Lane	Yes	
21a		Overcast	1 Local road west of Bishopton	No	Refer LIR La photog
22a-22d		Overcast	1. Folly Bank	Yes	There from p with th surrou Bishop
23a		Overcast	1. Public footpath No 3	Yes	
24a		Overcast	1 Bishopton recreation ground	Yes	
25a-25b		Overcast	1.Old Stillington	Yes	

panoramic views to the south of the village are able several metres from viewpoint 17b. Refer to ograph 5 (Example B) in DBC LIR Landscape and Amenity July 2023. See photograph V6 in this

also additional views presented in Example B in LIR Landscape and Visual Amenity for worstviews of the Development on the setting of Great ton.

panoramic views to the south of the village are able 20 metres from viewpoint 18a. Refer to ograph 2 (Example B) in DBC LIR Landscape and Amenity July 2023. See photograph V7 in this

to photographs 2, 3 and 4 (Example C) in DBC andscape and Visual Amenity July 2023. See graphs V8, V9 and V10 in this report.

are views to the north of this location and views public footpath No 2 which show intervisibility he edge of Bishopton and confirm the unding farmland forms part of the setting of pton.

26a-26b	Overcast	1. Mill Lane, Bishopton	Yes**	** Loca hedger views of the hed photog Visual <i>J</i> There a potenti 5 betwo Farm) a Bishop report.
27a	Generally, overcast with intermittent sun	1. Bridleway between Stillington and Whitton	Yes	
28a-28b	Variable or heavy cloud intermittent sun	1. Public footpath at Redmarshall	Yes	
29a-29d	Variable or heavy cloud intermittent sun	1. Road south of Bishopton	Yes	
30a	Variable cloud intermittent sun	1.Foxton	Yes	
31a-31b	Variable or heavy cloud intermittent sun	1.Darlington Back Lane	No	More e country becom this rep

cation 26 shows typical views from Mill Lane with erow screening, but more extensive intermittent s of open farmland are available through gaps in edge and across the field gates. Refer to ographs in Example D in DBC LIR Landscape and al Amenity July 2023.

e are no views presented in the ES which show ntial visibility of the Solar Farm from bridleway No ween Mill Lane and Stillington (via West House) and also from the road into Bishopton, west of opton Bank. See photographs V11 and V12 in this t.

extensive elevated views across open tryside are available to the west where the road mes Norton Back Lane. See photograph V13 in eport.

32a	Variable or heavy cloud intermittent sun	1. Sadberge	No	More count See p
33a	Overcast	1.Public footpath No 10 nr Coatham Lane	Yes	
34a-34d	Variable or light cloud/	1.Public footpath No 10 Brafferton	Yes	

* Worst-case public view based on potential visibility of the solar panels and/or the nature and quality of existing views.

ES photography should, where possible, represent the worst-case accessible public view, however, there may be some locations where the worst-case can be reasonably assessed without the need for photography. This occurs where a change in view is inevitable and predictable (without photography) due to the juxtaposition of the receptor and development i.e. public footpaths located within the solar panel areas. However, it is generally accepted as good practice that photography may be beneficial even in these circumstances to illustrate the loss of key views which inform the assessment of significance, illustrate harm or demonstrate the potential benefit of mitigation.

In some cases, the ES photographic viewpoints are very close to locations which would be considered the worst-case, however, due to the nature of the undulating landscape even minor discrepancies can significantly alter the nature of the view, where for instance, key features can be exposed or screened by landform and vegetation. Day light and weather conditions can also affect the prominence of features in the landscape and how the viewer responds to the landscape.

e extensive elevated views across open tryside are available from Sadberge Village Hall. photograph V14 in this report.

CONCLUSION OF WORST-CASE ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Out of a total of 75 ES photographs taken from 34 locations, 9 photographs are not considered to represent the worst-case. (Note. There are additional worst-case locations where photography may not be necessary to inform the visual assessment where, for instance, the visual effect can be reasonablely predicted without photography due to an inevitable and substantial change in view).
- 2.2 Additionally, only 13 of the total number of photographs contain any blue sky or direct sunlight. At best, these 13 photographs show heavy or variable cloud with intermittent sun. Most (80%+) of the photographs presented in the ES are overcast or taken in low light conditions. No photographs are taken in full sun. Consequently, the photographs are not representative of the varied sunlight conditions which inform how the local landscape is perceived and the visualisations are not representative of the significant natural variation in the appearance of solar panels.
- 2.3 None of the photographs in the ES taken around the edge of Great Stainton or the roads leading to the village are considered to represent the worst-case and therefore these cannot be relied upon to illustrate the magnitude of change on local views and the setting of the village or the effects of landscape mitigation. Reference should be made to photographs in this report and DBC LIR for examples of worst-case viewpoints from local receptors.
- 2.4 There are 12 ES photographs taken from 5 locations around or towards Brafferton from public viewpoints. Four of these photographs are considered not to represent the worst-case view although the viewpoints are in close proximity to what would be considered the worst-case location. The worst-case views show greater potential visibility of the development and potential for greater cumulative visual effects.

2.5

2.6

2.7

The are worst-case views of the proposed development around Bishopton which are not represented in the ES. These include views from bridleway No 5 between Mill Lane and Stillington (via West House Farm) and also from the road into Bishopton, west of Bishopton Bank. Indeed, the ES provides no photographic views whatsoever from these receptors despite the road forming the main vehicular route into the village from the north and the bridleway forming part of the most popular pedestrian route between Bishopton and Stillington.

The main public highway in the study area runs between Bishopton and Great Stainton. This route connects the main villages in the study area. The section between Bishopton and Great Stainton will experience the greatest magnitude of visual change due to the nature of open views along this route and the proximity to the solar panels. ES photograph 21a does not represent the worst-case view along this section of highway and does not illustrate the effects on the setting of Great Stainton experienced from this route. Photograph 21a cannot be relied upon to illustrate the magnitude of change on this section of highway, the magnitude of change on the setting of Great Stainton or to assess the potential benefit of landscape mitigation. It is clear from analysis of worst-case views from this section of road that the visual effects on the setting of Great Stainton cannot be substantially mitigated by screen planting.

Where an analysis of worst-case has not been provided in the ES, especially in relation to views around the villages and within the setting, it may cast doubt on the (ES) assessment of magnitude of change on these receptors if the photography cannot be relied upon to guide the decision making process with regard to acceptable harm.



Ketton Hall

Panel Area A

Tell .

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High House







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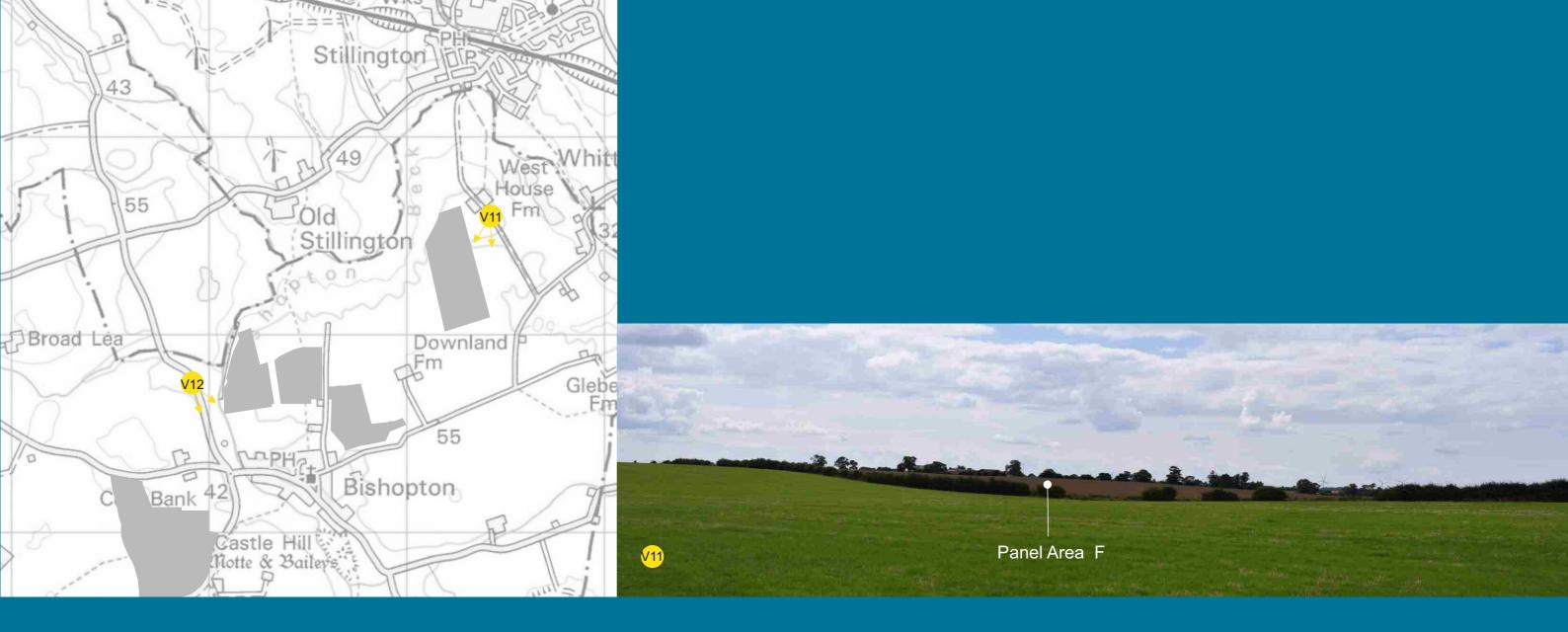






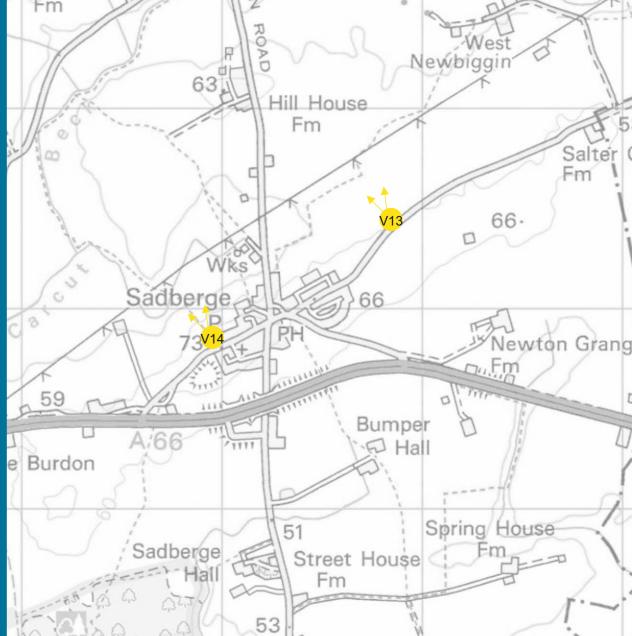
Byers Gill Solar. Darlington Borough Council Local Impact Report. Landscape and Visual Amenity 12 Supplementary Information













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3.0 THE ASSESSMENT OF SETTING IN ES/LVIA

- 3.1 The value and importance of landscape setting is recognised in NPPF under paragraphs 84,128,143, and 182 in relation to isolated homes, development, green belt and designated landscapes. Setting is also referenced under paragraphs 200, 201 and 212 in relation to heritage assets.
- 3.2 The principle of landscape setting as a planning matter is therefore firmly established in the planning system. Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) makes similar references to NPPF in relation to setting and landscape and visual effects (paragraph 5.10.1) and heritage assets. Many local plans also contain policies which refer to the protection and enhancement of landscape setting. These policies are used to inform planning decisions.
- 3.3 Landscape setting is not defined in NPPF whereas the setting of a heritage asset is described as, 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral'.
- 3.4 GLVIA does not provide specific guidance on defining setting or evaluating change on landscape setting. Similarly, it does not offer guidance on other common planning policy matters such as green belt and settlement gap, although these issues clearly relate to aspects of landscape and visual assessment. In the absence of GLVIA guidance, many landscape consultants have taken an individual approach to the assessment of setting based on experience or by adapting methodologies described in publications such as The Setting of Heritage Assets by Historic England.
- 3.5 Regardless of the approach taken by landscape consultants to assess the effects on landscape setting, it is clear that setting, in itself, is a legitimate planning concern and the effects on setting would be taken into account where there are national and local policies in place to protect landscape settings (on settlement, valued or designated landscapes or heritage assets).

LUC is one of the leading environmental consultants in the country. The practice has undertaken numerous landscape character assessment studies and evidence base studies for planning authorities throughout the UK including the Darlington Landscape Character Assessment (2019). LUC define landscape setting as "the surroundings that add to the significance and experience of a defined place".

3.6

3.7

3.8

Appendix A in this report provides an example of an assessment of settlement setting as described in the ES for North Angle Solar Farm in Cambridgshire undertaken by PDP Associates for Propus Group. The landscape and visual chapter assessed the effects on landscape character areas, the site and adjoining land and the setting of settlement as separate landscape receptors.

Appendix B in this report provides an example of an assessment of landscape setting relating to a rural village. The landscape statement was prepared by ONE ENVIRONMENTS to support the application for a development which was previously refused planning permission for, among other things, the adverse effects on the rural setting of settlement. The landscape statement is a standalone report which also contains an appraisal of landscape and visual effects.

APPENDIX A

LANDSCAPE RECEPTOR 3. THE SETTING OF LOCAL SETTLEMENT

NORTH ANGLE SOLAR FARM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

PDP ASSOCIATES

TABLE 5.9 FROM ES CHAPTER 5 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

Table 5.9. Landscape receptor 3. The setting of local settlement.

Sensitivity of receptor	High/medium
Baseline	Refer to paragraphs 5.6.10 5.6.15.
Nature of Impact	At completion, the proposed development wor adjoining Triangle Farm Solar Farm. The existi perceptible from public viewpoints around the connecting the villages. Where the existing solar farm is visible, it form however, the effect on setting is significantly of Triangle Farm. Field observations confirm that been successfully assimilated within the broad middle distance views of the villages or more of The proposed development would have similar Soham as Triangle Farm Solar Farm however, j magnitude due to the proximity to Wicken, th development and potential cumulative effects on setting would gradually diminish as propose substantial screening of the development. There would be no loss of views of key landma setting of the villages) from public viewpoints, All landscape effects, due to a change in land u decommissioning.
Construction	
Magnitude	Medium
Significance	Moderate - Moderate/minor adverse
Operation /Co	mpletion
Magnitude	Medium
Significance	Moderate - Moderate/minor adverse

ould be perceived as an extension to the ting solar farm is visible but generally, barely ne edge of the villages or from public footpaths

ms part of the wider setting of the villages, diminished by landscape screening around at the existing solar farm development has l farmland landscape without interrupting distant views of Ely Cathedral.

ar impacts on the setting of Wicken and , potential effects would be of a higher he increased visibility of the proposed with Triangle Farm Solar Farm. The effect sed screen planting matures and provides

nark buildings (which contribute to the special , at any stage of the proposed development.

use would be reversible following

APPENDIX B

ONE ENVIRONMENTS

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LANDSCAPE STATEMENT LAND NORTH OF SPRINGWOOD COAST VIEW. SWARLAND



LANDSCAPE STATEMENT

LAND NORTH WEST OF SPRINGWOOD COAST VIEW SWARLAND

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY REFRENCE 19/01687/FUL

MAY 2022

One Environments Ltd

Landscape Statement Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland Local planning authority reference 19/01687/FUL

CONTENTS

SECTION 1	NTRODUCT ON
SECTION 2	BASELINE CONDITIONS
SECTION 3	_ANDSCAPE APPRA SAL
SECTION 4	V SUAL APPRA SA_
SECTION 5	SETTING OF SWAR_AND
SECTION 6	CUMULAT VE EFFECTS
SECTION 7	CONCLUSION

APPENDIX APPRIASAL CRITERIA

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

May 2022

Page 3 Page 8 Page 19 Page 21 Page 23 Page 32 Page 33

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

Introduction

One Environments Limited has been appointed by Litchfields to prepare this landscape statement in 1.1 support of the appeal on the refusal of planning permission for the siting of 60 static caravans and associated infrastructure on land within Percy Wood Holiday Park. The site is located north west of Springwood Coast View in Swarland. Cne Environments Limited is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute. This report has been prepared by Stephen Laws, a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute since 1990.

Development description

- 1.2 The development comprises 60 static caravans on the site of the existing golf driving range with associated infrastructure and landscape works. The site layout and landscape proposals are illustrated on Figure 2. The site vehicular access is proposed from Learnington Lane via the existing holiday park and a track through adjoining woodland leading to the site. The existing 18 hole golf course is unaffected by the proposals.
- The proposals include enhancement of the existing woodland block and scattered trees with 13 additional native trees and shrubs, including evergreen species, the widening of the existing ditch on the eastern boundary and the introduction of aquatic marginal planting to provide additional habitat.
- The Application Site covers land in the western part of the golf course at Percy Wood Holiday Park to 1.4 the south of the main caravan park. The site covers approximately 2.5 hectares. It is bounded by woodland and the golf course in the ownership of the applicant. The field to the east of the application site, now fenced and partially cleared, has outline planning permission for nine dwellings (17/00500/CUT, granted 31 May 2019). The Application Site location and context are shown on Figure
- 1.5 The Planning Committee Report dated 24 March 2022 confirmed that land on the Application Site is not allocated for any particular purpose within the Development Plan. It lies within the risk zone of a 1222

Scope of the report

1.6 This report considers matters relating to landscape character, visual impact/amenity and setting as set out below in the Council's refusal for planning permission on 29 March 2022. Text has been highlighted in bold to emphasise key matters relating to the refusal and policy.

Application No 19/01687/FUL

Schedule of Reasons for Refusal

- 1. The proposed development, by itself and cumulatively with existing caravan park development, would result in an obtrusive development in the rural landscape, which would adversely affect the rural setting fundamentally altering the visual relationship between Swarland and its wider countryside setting. This would be contrary to Alnwick Core Strategy Policies S13 and S14 and the provisions and intentions of the NPPF.
- The reason for refusal refers to Policy S13 in the Alnwick Core Strategy. The Core Strategy has now 1.7 been withdrawn and replaced by the Northumberland _ocal Plan 2016-2036 (Adopted March 2022). Policy S13 stated.

All proposals for development and change will be considered against the need to protect and enhance the distinctive landscape character of the district. All proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape features and should respect the prevailing landscape quality, character and

I and north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

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sensitivity of each area as defined in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.

1.8 Core Strategy. This is set out below.

> Development will be informed by, and be sympathetic to, the prevailing landscape character and quality. It will contribute to the policy objective for the landscape management guideline in which it is located comprising re-creation, restoration, enhancement, repair and maintenance or proactive conservation of the landscape likely to be affected.

Development with landscape and visual implications will be assessed against the extent it will:

(a) cause significant visual harm;

(b) introduce or remove incongruous landscape elements;

(c) maintain or cause the loss of:

(i) landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness

(ii) historic elements that contribute to landscape character and quality

(iii) semi - natural vegetation that is characteristic of the landscape type

(iv) the visual condition of landscape elements that combine to create the distinctive character with particular regard to the impact of surface water.

(v) tranquillity of the area

- 1.9 Former Policy S14 deals with development in the open countryside. It refers to former policy S2 which landscape effects.
- The landscape and visual matters set out in the reason for refusal and relevant policy are summarised 1.10 below with brief descriptions.

Obtrusive development in the countryside; relates to visual effects, the prominence of visual effects and the uncharacteristic nature of visual effects within the local and wider landscape/urban context.

Adverse effects on rural setting; relates to (negative) impacts on the setting of Swarland, dealing with aspects of landscape character, the nature of views, the relationship with the settlement and adverse changes due to development.

Cumulative effects; the reason for refusal clearly states that this relates to the combined effects with existing caravan park development. Cumulative effects may concern both landscape and visual effects and also the effect on setting.

Fundamentally altering the visual relationship between Swarland and its wider countryside setting; relates to the change in the visual relationship between Swarland and the surrounding landscape. A fundamental change would normally be regarded as significant.

Impact of landscape features; effects on land cover, vegetation, green infrastructure, ecology, boundaries and topographical features, in particular the effects on landscape features which define landscape character.

Respect landscape quality, character and sensitivity of each (landscape) area; as defined in in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment.

May 2022

The Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document provides further guidance in relation to former policy S13 of the Alnwick District Local Development Framework

is not relevant to this report and also former policy S3 which sets out sustainability criteria. Item 5 under former policy S3 deals with adverse environmental effects which does relate, in part, to

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Methodology and approach

- Landscape and visual matters will be considered individually in this report as recommended in The 1.11 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. The effect on setting combines analysis of both landscape and visual impacts. Setting will be considered under a separate heading. Section 6 assesses potential cumulative effects due to the proposed development in combination with the existing caravan park. A description of background baseline information is provided prior to the analysis of potential landscape and visual effects.
- 1.12 The approach adopted in this study for landscape and visual assessment follows the advice contained in The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013), published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. The appraisal criteria is set out in the Appendix to this report. The approach taken to assess the effect on setting is described under Section 5.

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SECTION 2 - BASELINE CONDITIONS

The study area

The study area was largely defined by land which forms the setting around Swarland. It focuses on 2.1 the scope of this report and are normally covered by heritage appraisal.

Planning context

2.2 planning statement prepared by Lichfields.

Designations

- 2.3 the Application Site has planning permission for up to 9 dwellings.
- There are several listed buildings located throughout the study area, illustrated on Figure 3. The nearest 2.4 Statement (2019) prepared by Lichfields.

2.5 Historic background

The Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared by Northern Archaeological Associates (2021) 2.6 provides a brief history of Swarland Hall and the surrounding parkland. A summary extract is provided below;

Swarland Hall and Parkland

From the 1807 Swarland Estate Plan.... (the Application Site) lies within the area of estate parkland to the north-west of the 18th century Swarland Hall and to the north of the Avenue. It occupies part of a large field plot called West Pasture enclosed by estate woodland to the north and east, and open parkland fields to the south and west.

The early history of the parkland associated with Swarland Hall is unclear. Its origins undoubtedly date to the construction of Swarland Hall in 1765 but the original extent and landscape design of the 1765 gardens and parkland is unknown. The 1807 plan depicts the layout of the estate at the turn of the 19th century following the completion of Davison's redesign but there is no evidence to suggest that any structures or buildings were present...... prior to 1807.

(the Application Site) 'remained as undeveloped fields throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, probably until the construction of the golf and country park facilities in the later 20th century. The 1866 OS shows West Pasture divided into three plots, with one of the field boundaries running north-west to south-east...'

May 2022

land surrounding the village which has intervisibility with the settlement edge and is inextricably linked to the village through visual and physical connectivity. There may be other land in the wider landscape which has cultural and historical associations with the settlement, but these considerations are beyond

The Alnwick Core Strategy has now been withdrawn and replaced by the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036 (Adopted March 2022). The planning context for the development is described in the

No part of the Application Site or any other land within the study area falls within a designated landscape. There is no ancient woodland located in the study area. Land immediately to the east of

listed building to the Application Site is Swarland Village Hall (Grade II listed), located approximately 80 metres to the east. Potential effects on this listed property are considered in the Heritage

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May 2022

- Former parkland to the east of Swarland Hall has been developed with properties located off Park Road. 27 Some of the former parkland has been converted to farmland and paddocks. Woodland associated with the former estate to the west of Swarland Hall has been partly incorporated into Percy Wood Holiday Park. The woods within the holiday park have remained relatively intact since the C19th although there have been minor extensions around Swarland Wood to the south of the caravan park. Former fields enclosed by the woodland have been altered to parkland due to construction of the golf course
- 28 Swarland Hall was demolished in the early 1930s and in 1936 a new village of 77 cottages was established on the estate by the Fountains Abbey Settlers Trust. The village was built to house unemployed men and their families from the Tyneside area. Each stone house had a rectilinear plot of 1.5 acres for gardens and cultivation. The layout and concept of the settlement reflected the garden village movement, popular during the early part of the C20th. The village spread out across open fields to the east of the hall, accessed of Learnington Lane and The Avenue. Over time, as vegetation became established on the large plots, the landscape transformed from open farmland to a heavily wooded village with properties surrounded by high canopy trees and hedges. On larger plots, the vegetation provides a high degree of visual separation and seclusion between dwellings. Visual enclosure is one of the defining features of the village although it is less pronounced where there are pockets of new development or where older plots have been sub-divided for development.
- 29 Planning permission for the caravan site was first granted in the mid-1970s with subsequent permissions allowing development of associated infrastructure and further extension of the caravan park. Planning permission was granted for the golf course in 1989.

Vegetation/landscape features

The Ecological Appraisal (2019) undertaken by E3 Ecology Ltd confirms the habitats on the Application Site are predominantly amenity grassland with plantation woodland and scattered trees. The woodland tree species comprise silver birch, beech, larch, hawthorn, alder, sycamore, Scots pine and ash. There is a narrow band of silver birch on the eastern boundary, next to an open ditch. The amenity grassland is of low habitat value. The woodland is of local value. All habitats associated with the parkland landscape would have been introduced in the 1990s when the golf course was constructed.

Access and linkages

There is no public access across the Application Site or on adjoining land. All tracks and paths through 2.11 Percy Wood Holiday Park are for users/visitors/residents/maintenance of the golf course and caravan park except for public footpaths 127/018 and 127/019 which extend around the western part of the holiday park and between Swarland Wood and the club house. See Figure 3.

Intervisibility

- 2.12 The visual envelope describes land which has visual connectivity with the Application Site and the proposed development. In this instance, the visual envelope is restricted by properties off Coast View, Springwood and The Old Treadmill and also by surrounding tree/woodland cover.
- 2.13 There is no visibility of the Application Site from publicly accessible land except from the public highway access to properties noted above. All such views will be screened by new residential development (with planning approval) on land to the east of the Application Site.
- 2.14 There is some intervisibility from adjoining private tracks and land on part of the golf course which lies within Percy Wood Holiday Park and is in the control of the Applicant. There is no visibility of the Application Site from any of the public footpaths within the holiday park.

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Landscape character

National level

2.15 The Application Site and land within the study area fall within National Character Area (NCA) 12 Mid Northumberland (total area 63,726ha). The NCA contains the following description.

This is a rural area of generally high tranquility, with a great diversity of heritage assets, from the earthworks of prehistoric and medieval settlements to bastles, tower houses, farmsteads and designed parklands. These present the landscape framework and sense of place within which pressures for change will need to be accommodated'.

2.16 There is no potential for significant effects on this National Character Area due to the scale and nature be undertaken in this report.

Regional level

The Application Site and land within the study area fall within landscape character type 38; Lowland 2.17 Rolling Farmland contain the following extracts relevant to the study area.

Key aualities

- Open, medium-scale farmland,
- Remaining areas of strong enclasure pattern, with intact hedges and hedgerow trees
- Desianed parkland landscapes. ٠
- Stone-built estate villages around greens.

Vision stotement

Where key qualities are intact, their long-term viability should be secured, and where these are damaged, the approach for this landscape is to manage their restoration and replacement.

Land Management Guidelines

- to integrate with local topography.
- where arable land or intensive grazing impinges on the water's edge.
- The maintenance of country estates must aim to retain their special character within this ensure their contribution to the landscape character.

Development Guidelines

Redevelopment or reuse of country estates may be an option, and in some cases, due to aspects such as woodlands, which contribute to the wider character.

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

May 2022

of the development and the scale and nature of this part of the character area. No further study will

Rolling Farmland and character area 38a Long-ramlington as classified in the Northumberland andscape Character Assessment Part B. The Changing Landscape, produced by Land Use Consultants, August 2010. Part of the 5 The descriptions for landscape character type 38; Lowland

• Encourage the felling and restocking of coniferous plantations and shelterbelts. Seek softer plantation outlines with an increase in native and locally typical species and shapes designed

Creation of landscape margins and buffers adjacent to watercourses would be beneficial

iandscape. Protection of the key features, especially woodland but also built features, will

financial pressures, may be the only way that these can remain intact. Such redevelopment should ideally retain the core of any parkland landscape, as well as important landscape

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May 2022

_ocal level

2.18 The Application Site and land within the study area fall within landscape character area 18; Longframlington, Shilbottle Rolling Farmland as classified in the Alnwick Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, Adopted May 2010. This character area covers the same area of land described under character area 38a _ongframlington in the Northumberland Landscape Character Assessment Part 3. The Alnwick Landscape Character Assessment is a local landscape assessment undertaken at a district scale and therefore provides more detailed descriptions of the landscape. The descriptions for landscape character area 18; Longframlington, Shilbottle Rolling Farmland contain the following extracts relevant to the study area.

Key Characteristics:

- Medium scale parliamentary enclosure landscape bisected by the A1 .
- Undulating high ground between the Aln and Coquet valleys ٠
- Predominantly arable with declining hedgerow condition .

General description

This character area occupies undulating relatively high ground on the coastal plain between the Ain and Coquet valleys. The dominant influence is agriculture, characterised in the main by regular and rectilinear field units bounded by hedgerows and hedgerow trees originating from the parliamentary enclosures. Agriculture is mixed, though arable is predominant, particularly towards the east. Sizeable coniferous plantations can be found around Swarland and north of Shilbottle. Ancient woodland is also found around Rugiey and Swarland.

Specific Landscape Guidance

An expansion of broad leaved woodiand cover and active management of the remaining ancient woodland resource would be beneficial. Consideration should also be given to re-planting of coniferous plantations so as to broaden their ecological benefit.

Land management: Intensive forming methods have reduced the opportunities for wildlife to co-exist with agriculture. In parallel with the restoration of landscape features, increased widths of uncultivated field margins and nature conservation buffer strips along water courses should be promoted.

The Application Site and adjoining land

- The following description has been informed by studies and field work undertaken for this report. 2.19
- 2.20 The Application Site covers land currently used as a driving range, next to a private golf course within Percy Wood Holiday Park. There is no public access across the site. The land is predominately amenity grassland with a small, mixed woodland area in the western part and scattered trees along the eastern boundary, next to a ditch. At the time of the site visit, the driving range building was partly dismantled.
- 2.21 The Application Site and golf course is a relatively recent wooded, parkland landscape. It is not part of the historic parkland associated with Swarland Hall although it is enclosed by woodland which formed part of the estate of Swarland Hall. The landscape was developed specifically for the gol² course during the 1990s and is associated with the caravan park. The historic landscape pattern across the Application Site has been previously altered by the construction of the golf course/driving range. The woodland/trees within the Application Site are not part of the historic parkland landscape. Swarland Wood, which adjoins the Application Site has also been partly altered during development of the caravan site. The habitats across the Application Site are no more than of local value. The amenity grassland has low habitat value.

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

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Land on the Application Site has low visibility in the wider landscape. It is not visible from the public 2.23 Application Site.

May 2022

footpaths through Percy Wood Holiday Park. It is not visible in any public view except from part of the public highway off Coast View and Springwood. Such views would be screened by new residential development with planning approval on land adjacent to the Application Site. This proposed residential development would extend the existing settlement boundary to the east, almost abutting the

SECTION 3 - LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Landscape features

31 There would be no loss of existing tree groups. These would be enhanced and enlarged with additional native trees and shrubs including pine and other evergreen species. The additional planting would slightly increase the extent of green infrastructure in terms of tree cover. There would be no significant change in topography and site levels. The existing drainage ditch would be slightly widened and planted with native aquatic plants on the margins. There would be no significant loss of amenity grass cover except for the construction of new access, the caravan plots and associated car parking. The amenity grass cover has low ecological value. Overall, the effect on landscape features is considered to be low and beneficial.

Landscape effects on the site and adjoining land

Land use on the site would change from a driving range to the caravan site. There would be no direct 3.2 effect on other parts of the golf course or on adjoining land which has planning approval for residential development. The change in use would not appear incongruous on a holiday park where there is similar land use and leisure activity. The proposed caravan site would be well contained within the existing and enhanced landscape structure and would not be visible from public footpaths. The landscape pattern, defined by existing tree belts and surrounding woodland would be retained. In any event, the local landscape pattern is not historic, but the result of development within the holiday park over the last 45 years and also earlier changes to the original agricultural field pattern. The sensitivity of the site to a development of this scale and nature is considered to be low. The magnitude of change would be medium resulting in a minor landscape effect. Landscapes effects due to the siting of the caravans would be reversible after decommissioning.

Effects on landscape character areas

3.3 The reason for refusal refers to landscape effects with reference to former policy S13 which states:

' proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on landscape features and should respect the prevailing londscape quality, character and sensitivity of each area as defined in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document'.

- 3.4 The Application Site and land within the study area fall within landscape character area 18; Long^{*}ramlington, Shilbottle Rolling Farmland as classified in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document. At the local scale, the site and adjoining land lies within a parcel of land which is a parkland landscape typically associated with a modern golf course development, contained within a wooded estate.
- 3.5 The minor effects on the site due to the development are described in paragraph 3.2 above. These changes would have no significant effect on the wider landscape pattern, land use, landscape features or visual quality. The minor site changes would occur within a large private site operating as a holiday park containing similar development. There would be no effect on the wider parkland character and estate woodlands and no change in the character of the wider holiday park where similar leisure developed is already a key feature of the landscape.
- The extent of visibility in the wider landscape is limited by dwellings on the existing settlement edge 3.6 and by surrounding woodland and tree belts. Any intervisibility with existing properties would be significantly reduced following completion of approved residential development on land adjacent to the settlement boundary, immediately east of the Application Site. There is no potential intervisibility from public footpaths located in the holiday park.

Land north west of Sprindwood Coast View, Swarland

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- The landscape proposals associated with the development are in accordance with the landscape features which define this landscape character area.
- 3.8 Overall, the sensitively of landscape character area 18; _ongframlington, Shilbottle Rolling Farmland to character area is considered to be negligible. The effect on the landscape character is neutral.

Conclusion

- The predicted landscape effects on the landscape character area as defined in Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document are assessed to be neutral.
- This assessment concurs with paragraphs 8.16 8.24 of the Planning Committee report dated 24 out below.

8.22 It is accepted the application site itself will fundamentally change in character from golf course to use for static caravans and this will be apparent to residents adjacent to the site. However, it is considered the change will not be to the detriment to the character of the wider landscape. The site itself is self-contained within the existing golf course and haliday park. The development relates well to the existing urban form of Swarland and would be well screened by existing and proposed landscaping belts. As such the development would not be highly visible and as such the development would fit comfortably into the wider landscape in this case.

8.24 Having regard to the above the development is deemed acceptable in terms of impact on landscape character. The development complies with the existing and emerging local plan and the provisions of the NPPF.

Based on the above analysis, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposals would not be contrary to 3.11 insofar as these policies relate to landscape and effects on landscape character.

I and north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

May 2022

guidance for the character area. The proposals safeguard existing green infrastructure and will enhance tree cover, habitat value and biodiversity. There would be no loss or alteration of landscape

a development of this scale and nature in this location, is considered to be low. The change in the

March 2022, under the heading, Impact on Landscape Character. A summary extract of the text is set

former Policies S13 and S14 in Alnwick Core Strategy and the provisions and intentions of the NPPF

SECTION 5 - SETTING OF SWARLAND

Introduction

- The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Third Edition (2013) does not contain 5.1 specific guidance on a methodology for assessing changes in landscape setting. The assessment of setting and changes in setting, deals with aspects of landscape character and visual impacts, either in combination or individually but it also embraces cultural/historic associations and also geographic connections.
- The National Planning Policy Framework includes a number of paragraphs which deal with setting in 52 relation to designated landscape areas, historic towns, conservation areas and heritage assets. Annex 2: Glossary defines the setting of a heritage asset as ;

'The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

- 5.3 It is clear from this description, that setting relates to the surroundings of a landscape element (heritage asset or a town, village etc...) and it is land from where a landscape element is experienced i.e. there is some visual connection between the landscape element and surrounding land. The setting can be positive or negative and it may make some or no contribution to the appreciation of a place.
- Historic England sets out principles in relation to the assessment of setting of heritage assets in the 54 March 2015 publication. The setting of Heritage Assets. The publication sets out a stepped approach to understand the setting of Heritage Assets and the effects of changes to the surroundings. This can be adapted and applied to the setting of other buildings, settlement or other elements in the landscape. This report has adopted a modified version of the stepped approach in order to evaluate the setting of Swarland and potential changes due to the proposed development.

Step 1 dentify the extent and nature of the landscape setting around Swarland.

Step 2 Assess the contribution of the setting to the character and identity of Swarland.

Step 3 Assess the effects of the development on the setting of the settlement.

Step 1 Identify the extent and nature of the landscape setting around Swarland.

- For the purpose of this report it is assumed that the village of Swarland follows the settlement 5.5 boundary shown on the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036 Policy Map (March 2022) illustrated on Figure 1 in this report. It is noted that outline planning approval was granted for approximately 9 dwellings on land adjoining the Application Site in March 2017. When complete, this development will inevitably alter the setting of the existing settlement and result in a shift in the settlement boundary.
- The setting of Swarland is defined by land which has visual connectivity with the settlement edge. n 5.6 some locations the extent of the visible setting is restricted by landscape features such as mature woodland and tree belts, most notably the wooded estates to the west of the village and also the parkland within Percy Wood Holiday Park. Mature trees on Learnington Lane contain the setting to the north, although open farmland can be seen in fleeting views from the highway across hedges and field gates. The setting to the east is more open. Paddocks and open fields allow extensive views towards the east coast from the settlement edge. There are also panoramic views towards Rothbury Forest from land to the west of Percy Wood Holiday Park. The settlement edge is not visible from this land and therefore the relationship between the village and the Rothbury hills is weak with panoramic views making limited contribution to the setting of Swarland.

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

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Figure 10 identifies 7 landscape types which form part of the visible setting of Swarland. This land has visual connectively with the settlement edge or is historically associated with the settlement, Percy Wood Holiday Park covers approximately 72 hectares of land to the immediate west to the village (Swarland village covers approximately 53 hectares). The settlement abuts part of the eastern edge of the holiday park. The holiday park contains 4 distinct landscape types including golf course parkland, woodland and caravan sites. The parkland was created as part of the development of the golf course and only exists in its present form due to commercial operations associated with the holiday park. The woodland within Percy Wood Holiday Park is similarly maintained as part of the management of the holiday park.

Step 2 Assess the contribution of the setting to the character and identity of Swarland.

- extensive coastal views to the east.
- 58 to the village and is closely associated with the immediate setting of the village.

Step 3 Assess the effects of the development on the setting of the settlement.

- 59 native planting to the benefit of local biodiversity.
- 5.10 planning consent for this residential development.

It is a notable feature of Swarland that the intervisibility between the village and surrounding landscape and also physical connectivity with the surrounding countryside is generally quite limited. This is due to the fact that the village is a relatively new settlement established on a former private estate with limited public access. Moreover, the original settlement was developed as a garden village with individual houses set within large garden plots. Over time, these plots have been planted with high canopy trees. This has resulted in extensive tree cover across the entire village. Residential plots are often enclosed with mature trees and hedges. This contributes to a sense of seclusion and visual separation between the plots. Buildings are often set back and screened from the settlement edge and there is a sense that the landscape setting of Swarland is secondary to its garden village character with extensive tree cover providing protection from the otherwise exposed location. The exception is development fronting Park Road, where open farmland adjoins the settlement edge and offers

It is notable that the only direct public footpath links between Swarland and the surrounding countryside are routed through Percy Wood Holiday Park except for a short path between the club house and Park Road. The footpaths through the holiday park allow public access around the edge of the golf course and through the caravan sites. The holiday park and the designed, managed landscapes within it, clearly form part of the established setting of the village despite the fact the settlement edge is not visible from the public footpaths. Nevertheless, the caravan site is visible from Learnington Lane at the western gateway to the village. The holiday park is signposted at the entrance

The development would not introduce a landscape use or type which does not already form part of the existing (visual or physical) setting of Swarland. The development would be located on Percy Wood Holiday Park which contains a number of landscape types, including caravan sites which are commonly associated with this type of leisure/tourism use. The proposed development would not appear incongruous within the immediate setting of the holiday park and the wider setting of the Swarland. The proposed development would not affect the adjoining parkland golf course which is managed and maintained as part of the facilities and on the wider resort area. There would be no loss of local green infrastructure. Existing tree groups would be extended and enhanced with additional

The proposed development would not be visible from public footpaths within the holiday park and there would be no change in the visible setting of the village from these footpaths following development. The Application Site is visible from approximately 9 properties on the western edge of Swarland. Views are generally limited to secondary and upper floor windows due to existing garden vegetation and garden fencing. Almost all these properties are set back from the settlement edge and contained within large garden plots. The principal views from these properties do not focus on land within the holiday park although there is likely to be sense of surrounding woodland due to the visibility of the tree canopy. In any event, the immediate setting of these properties and this part of the village will inevitably change due to approved residential development on land to the east of the Application Site. It is noted that the impact on setting was not raised in matters relating to landscape in the

SECTION 4 – VISUAL APPRAISAL

Photographic viewpoints

- The appraisal of visual effects is based on field work and photographic viewpoint analysis as 4.1 recommended in best practice guidance. Photography and survey work was undertaken from publicly accessible roads and footpaths. Additional on-site photographs were taken to illustrate specific landscape features or visual effects.
- The photographs are used to help illustrate potential effects on visual receptors within the study area, 42 however, the visual assessment is primarily based on observations made in the field. The absence of photographic evidence does not imply that a receptor has not been assessed but may indicate issues with accessibility on private land or that the assessment is based on analysis of other illustrative photographs taken within the locality.
- 43 The photographic viewpoints are used as a tool to evaluate potential landscape and visual impacts on local receptors and to illustrate specific landscape features and visual characteristics. They do not represent every potential view or landscape feature in the study area. Photographs may illustrate potential effects on one or more local visual receptors. Others provide a general illustration of local views which are then used to inform the assessment on local receptors.
- 44 The location of each viewpoint is shown on Figure 4.
- 4.5 Photographs were taken using a Digital SLR camera using a high-quality lens to provide the equivalent of a 50mm lens on a traditional SLR camera. In some instances, an alternative lens was used were this was useful in illustrating detailed features or the wider landscape context. The photographs have been stitched together using Adobe Photoshop or Microsoft ICE software. Where possible, the photographs have been cropped to illustrate specific views, landscape features and landscape/visual context. During the stitching process none of the photographs were distorted in terms of scaling.

Appraisal of visual effects of the development

- 4.6 Field work and analysis of the photographic views confirm that the Application Site is not visible from any of the public footpaths which pass through or around the edge of the Percy Wood Holiday Park (public footpaths 127/017, 127/018, 127/019). The proposed development will not be visible from these routes and there are no predicted visual effects on users of these public footpaths.
- 47 The Application Site is visible from the main track between the club house and the existing caravan site and also from some paths crossing the golf course. These are not public footpaths. The paths/tracks are on private land and accessible by users of the golf course and caravan sites. Any use by local residents is at the discretion of the landowner. Views of the Application Site are substantially screened by existing tree belts which limits the extent of visibility from other parts of the holiday park. This vegetation will be further enhanced with new planting undertaken as part of the development. Generally, views of the Application Site within the holiday park do not extent beyond the surrounding woodland/tree groups. In any event, the introduction of caravans on the Application Site would not appear incongruous on a holiday park where existing caravan accommodation is clearly visible from paths throughout the grounds and would be an expected visual element. The sensitivity of these receptors (users of the holiday park) is low. The magnitude of change in views is considered to be medium/low, resulting in minor or minor/neutral visual effects, which are not considered significant.
- 4.8 The Application Site is visible from several public locations on the settlement boundary, primarily from the northern edge of Springwood Close and also around the Swarland Village Hall, off Coast View. See viewpoints V1 and V2 shown on Figure 5. Where visible, it forms part of golf course, backgrounded by tree belts and woodland. The golf course is substantially screened by intervening vegetation. The Application Site sits behind the foreground view of the approved residential site, located on adjacent land abutting the settlement edge. This land is fenced and partially cleared for future development. It

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

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is likely that the Application Site would be completely screened from viewpoints V1 and V2 after completion of the approved residential development.

4.9 development. The proposed development is also likely to be completely or substantially screened.

Conclusion

- 4.10 The appraisal of potential visual effects confirms that there would be no views of the proposed surrounding countryside.
- 4.11 The Application Site is visible from the track between the clubhouse and caravan sites within the would be an expected visual element.
- 4.12 Based on the above visual appraisal, it would be reasonable to conclude that the proposed incongruous on an established holiday park with caravan accommodation.

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

There are views across the Application Site and the golf course from approximately 9 dwellings located on the western edge of the Swarland overlooking the holiday park. See viewpoints V5 and V6 shown on Figure 7. Where available, views are likely to be confined to secondary or upper windows. Views from gardens and ground floor windows are likely to be substantially screened by garden vegetation and fencing. There is also likely to be partially screening of views from upper windows by intervening vegetation. Where visible, the Application Site forms the eastern edge of the golf course with the approved residential development site visible in the foreground. It is likely that the Application Site would be completely screened from these properties after completion of the approved residential

development from public footpaths within Percy Wood Holiday Park (or any other public footpath within the study area). There are several public viewpoints on the western settlement boundary with views towards the Application Site and the golf course, but these would be substantially lost with the construction of residential development on adjoining land. Similar screening would be expected in views from properties on the western edge of Swarland which overlook the holiday park. There are no other potential views of the proposed development from the settlement of Swarland or the

holiday park. This is not a public footpath. Views of the Application Site are substantially screened by existing tree belts which limits the extent of visibility from other parts of the holiday park. n any event, the introduction of caravans on the Application Site would not appear incongruous on a holiday park where existing caravan accommodation is clearly visible from paths throughout the grounds and

development would not create an obtrusive development in the rural landscape. It is likely to be visible from few local receptors and such views would be substantially or completely screened by approved residential development on adjoining land. There are no predicted views from any public footpath in the study area. Furthermore, the development would be substantially screened from other parts of the holiday park by existing tree belts and woodland and even where visible, it would not appear

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The boundary of the approved residential development would be separated from the Application Site 5.11 by garden fencing, garden vegetation and the existing watercourse. The existing tree belt and ditch would be widened. The proposed dwellings would be set back from the site boundary of the approved development (the new settlement edge) in a similar fashion to existing properties. The gap between the settlement edge and Percy Wood Holiday Park (in this location) would reduce as a result of the approved residential development and the proposed caravans, however, this juxtaposition would be similar to the relationship between existing properties off Percy Drive and the existing caravan park. It would also be similar to the relationship between Swarland and Percy Wood Holiday Park as perceived and observed from Learnington Lane.

Conclusion

- 5.12 The setting of Swarland comprises 7 distinct landscape types of which 4 are associated with Percy Wood Holiday Park. The holiday park includes golf course parkland, woodland and caravan sites. The parkland was created as part of the development of the golf course and only exists in its present form due to commercial operations associated with the holiday park. The woodland within Percy Wood Holiday Park is similarly maintained as part of the management of the holiday park. The landscape types within the holiday park are an integral part of the setting of Swarland and are visible from the public footpath through Swarland Wood.
- The Application Site is visible from approximately 9 properties on the western edge of Swarland. 5.13 Views are generally limited to secondary and upper floor windows. The immediate setting of these properties and this part of the village will inevitably change due to approved residential development on land to the east of the Application Site. The proposed dwellings would be set back from the site boundary of the approved development (the new settlement edge) in a similar fashion to existing properties. The gap between the new settlement edge and Percy Wood Holiday Park would reduce as a result of the approved residential development and the proposed caravans, however, this juxtaposition would be similar to the relationship between existing properties off Percy Drive and the existing caravan park. It would also be similar to the relationship between Swarland and Percy Wood Holiday Park as perceived and observed from Learnington Lane. As a result, there would be no fundamental change in the visual relationship between Swarland and Percy Wood Holiday Park or indeed, between Swarland and the wider countryside setting. The proposed caravan site would not introduce a land use and activity within the holiday park which would appear incongruous or be of a scale which would fundamentally change the nature and character of the holiday park such that it would alter the wider countryside setting of the village.





- 3 Mandaconfer rise
- 4 Open familand
- 5 Paddocka 6 Allotments/garden

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Figure 10 Swattand - setting analysir

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SECTION 6 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- Fieldwork and analysis of photographic views undertaken for this report confirm that there is no 61 intervisibility between the existing caravan sites on Percy Wood Holiday Park and the proposed caravan development. As a result, there is no potential for cumulative visual effects.
- 6.2 The proposed development is well contained within the existing landscape framework of the holiday park, forming part of the wider golf course parkland. There would be no loss of existing landscape features as a result of the development. There would a slight increase in local green infrastructure in relation to tree cover. Existing tree groups would be extended and enhanced with native tree planting. Native, marginal aquatic planting would be introduced. There would be no loss of trees associated with the woodland estates of the former Swarland Hall or the golf course parkland.
- There would be no cumulative effect on landscape features or local views which define the landscape 63 character as described in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.

Conclusion

There is no potential for combined cumulative visual effects with the existing caravan park as there 6.4 is no intervisibility between the sites. The proposed caravan site would not introduce a land use and activity within the holiday park which would appear incongruous or be of a scale which would fundamentally change or overwhelm the main characteristics of the holiday park or the local landscape character area (defined in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document) such that it would alter the wider countryside setting of the village

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SECTION 7 - CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The reason for refusal states that the development would result in an obstructive development in the settlement edge.
- There are no predicted views from any public footpath in the study area. Furthermore, the 7.2 adioining land.
- 7.3 public footpath through Swarland Wood.
- 7.4 Swarland and the wider countryside setting
- 7.5 The reason for refusal states that the cumulative effects of the proposed development and existing wider countryside setting of the village.
- amenity

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

Land north west of Springwood Coast View, Swarland

May 2022

rural landscape, however, studies undertaken for this report confirm that the development would only be partially visible from the secondary windows from 9 properties on the western edge of the village. Any such views would be substantially or completely screened by approved residential development or adjoining land. In any event, the development would be separated and substantially screened by intervening garden fences and vegetation due to the fact all existing properties are set back from the

development would be substantially screened from other parts of the holiday park by existing tree belts and woodland and even where visible, would not appear incongruous on an established holiday park with caravan accommodation. All existing public views of land on the Application Site from within the village would be substantially or completely screened by approved residential development on

The reason for refusal states that the development would adversely affect the rural setting of Swarland and fundamentally alter the visual relationship between Swarland and its wider countryside setting. Studies undertaken for this report confirm the development would not introduce a landscape use or type which does not already form part of the existing [visual or physical] setting of Swarland. The setting of Swarland comprises 7 distinct landscape types of which 4 are associated with Percy Wood Holiday Park. The holiday park includes golf course parkland, woodland and caravan sites. The parkland was created as part of the development of the golf course and only exists in its present form due to commercial operations associated with the holiday park. The woodland within Percy Wood Holiday Park is similarly maintained as part of the management of the holiday park. The landscape types within the holiday park are an integral part of the setting of Swarland and are visible from the

The gap between the settlement edge and this part of Percy Wood Holiday Park would reduce as a result of the approved residential development and caravans, however, this juxtaposition would be similar to the relationship between existing properties off Percy Drive and the existing caravan park. It would also be similar to the relationship between Swarland and Percy Wood Holiday Park as perceived and observed from Learnington Lane. As a result, there would be no fundamental change in the visual relationship between Swarland and Percy Wood Holiday Park or indeed, between

caravans would result in unacceptable landscape and visual effects and effects on the setting of the village. Studies undertaken for this report confirm that there is no potential for combined cumulative visual effects with the existing caravan park as there is no intervisibility between the sites. The proposed caravan site would not introduce a land use and activity within the holiday park which would appear incongruous or be of a scale which would fundamentally change or overwhelm the main characteristics of the holiday park or the local landscape character area (defined in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document) such that it would alter the

Among other things former Policy S13 states that development should be assessed against the extent it will affect landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness. Studies undertaken for this report confirm there would be no loss of existing tree groups. These would be enhanced and enlarged with additional native trees and shrubs including pine and other evergreen species. The additional planting would slightly increase the extent of green infrastructure in terms of tree cover. There would be no significant change in topography and site levels. The existing drainage ditch would be slightly widened and planted with native aquatic plants on the margins. There would be no significant loss of

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grass cover except for the construction of new access, the caravan plots and associated car parking. The amenity grass cover has low ecological value. Overall, the effect on landscape features is considered to be low and beneficial. Any minor landscape effects on the site would be reversible after decommissioning.

- 7.7 Former Policy S13 states that development should respect landscape quality, character and sensitivity of each (landscape) area as defined in in the Alnwick District Landscape Character Assessment. Studies undertaken for this report confirm that the predicted landscape effects on the landscape character area will be neutral. This assessment concurs with paragraphs 8.16 - 8.24 of the Planning Committee report dated 24 March 2022, under the heading, Impact on Landscape Character. The landscape proposals associated with the development are in accordance with the landscape guidance for the character area. The proposals safeguard existing green infrastructure and will enhance tree cover, habitat value and biodiversity. There would be no loss or alteration of landscape features which define this landscape character area.
- Based on the above analysis, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposals would not be contrary to 7.8 Former Policies S13 and S14 in the Alnwick Core Strategy (replaced by the Northumberland Local Plan 2016-2036) and the provisions and intentions of the NPPF insofar as these policies relate to landscape and effects on landscape character.

May 2022

Byers Gill Solar Local Impact Report - Landscape and Visual Amenity **Darlington Borough Council**

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Supplementary information

November 2024

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