

SP MANWEB

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network



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Environmental Statement Appendix 6.2
Landscape Baseline, LCA Sheets and Assessment

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November 2018

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APPENDIX 6.2

LANDSCAPE BASELINE, LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (LCA SHEETS) AND ASSESSMENT

Environmental Statement

DCO Document 6.6.2

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The Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

Regulation 5(2)(a)

Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

Environmental Statement: Appendix 6.2 – Landscape Baseline, Landscape Character Assessment (LCA Sheets) and Assessment

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APPENDIX 6.2: LANDSCAPE BASELINE, LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT (LCA SHEETS) AND ASSESSMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This section describes the landscape baseline and assesses the effects on landscape, with reference to the Proposed Development.

The Proposed Development

1.1.2 The Proposed Development and the works involved in its construction are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 'The Proposed Development' (**DCO Document 6.3**). In summary the Proposed Development would comprise a new 132kV electrical circuit between Oswestry and Wem Substations in North Shropshire, together with associated temporary construction works. The circuit would be a combination of underground cables and overhead line. Works would also be required at the existing Oswestry and Wem Substations to accommodate the new circuit.

1.1.3 The circuit would originate in Oswestry Substation, and works within the boundary of the existing SP Manweb Substation at Oswestry including underground cabling ('underground cable') and the installation of electrical switchgear and associated equipment. Approximately 1.2km of 132kV underground cable would then run between Oswestry Substation and a 132kV terminal wood structure at Long Wood (SJ 31132 29877). The 132kV overhead line would originate at this point and then approximately 21.3km of 132kV of overhead conductor supported by Trident wood poles (explained further below) ('overhead line') would run roughly east to west from the terminal structure at Long Wood to the existing SP Manweb Wem Substation. Works within the existing Wem Substation would including the installation of a new 132kV to 33kV transformer.

1.2 BASELINE ENVIRONMENT

1.2.1 The landscape baseline forms the basis for the identification and description of the landscape changes that may result from the Proposed Development. It establishes the character of the area, based on on-site surveys and reference to published characterisation studies, such as the National Character Area profiles¹ and The Shropshire Landscape Typology², which resulted from the integration of Shropshire Council's Landscape Character Assessment work, and its' Historic Landscape Character Assessment³. Designated landscapes (national and local) and other sensitive landscape receptors are identified via GIS data sets, other desk based research and responses from consultation feedback.

1.2.2 Potential landscape receptors were identified through a review of the baseline studies, by responses from consultees and through site survey. The landscape receptors for the Proposed Development are outlined below in the remainder of Section 1.2.

Existing Baseline

Figures

1.2.3 The following figures provide mapping of the study area:

- Figure 6.2: Shropshire Landscape Typology (**DCO Document 6.14**);
- Figure 6.3: Landscape Character Areas (**DCO Document 6.14**);

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making/national-character-area-profiles#ncas-in-west-midlands>

² Shropshire County Council, The Shropshire Landscape Typologies, September 2006, Available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/1803/the-shropshire-landscape-typology.pdf>

³ Shropshire County Council, The Shropshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment, Andy Wigley, June 2007 (Final Report), Available at: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/1803/the-shropshire-landscape-typology.pdf>

- Figure 6.4: Landscape Receptors (**DCO Document 6.14**);
- Figure 6.5: Topography – Elevation (**DCO Document 6.14**); and,
- Figure 6.6: Public Rights of Way and Areas of Open Access (**DCO Document 6.14**).

Proposed Development

1.2.4 As described above, the Proposed Development comprises a new 132kV electrical circuit between Oswestry and Wem Substations in North Shropshire. The alignment crosses the Principal Settled Farmlands, Settled Pastoral Farmlands, Estate Farmlands and Lowland Moors of north Shropshire, as identified in The Shropshire Landscape Typology document.

Study Area

1.2.5 The 1km study area extends from the eastern residential area of Oswestry to the centre of Wem. To the north, the boundary of the study area intersects the small settlements of Whittington, Hordley, Cockshutt and Loppington. To the south, the boundary of the study area passes through Middleton village, Woodhouse Estate, Lower Hordley village, the area south of Stanwardine, Petton Park and Tilley village, and skirts north of Rednal village and airfield, Bagley village, and Sleaf airfield.

1.2.6 The wider 5km survey area extends from the west of Oswestry on the edge of the Oswestry Uplands at Old Oswestry Racecourse to 3km east of Wem, taking in the high ground at Lee Brockhurst. To the north the boundary of the wider 5km survey area passes north of Gobowen, passes through the town of Ellesmere and through the small settlement and mere at Colemere. The southern edge of the wider 5km survey area the boundary crosses Maesbury Marsh, Boreatton Park and lies just to the north of Baschurch and Harmer Hill, and south of Myddle and Clive.

National Character Areas

1.2.7 A regional study developed as part of the Character of England project and published by the then Countryside Agency⁴, now Natural England, identified a number of National Character Areas (NCAs). Much of the wider 5km survey area lies within the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA 61⁵, with a small section to the west of Oswestry that falls within the Oswestry Uplands NCA 63. Details of the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA 61 are provided below.

1.2.8 The key characteristics of the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA 61, as recorded in the Natural England NCA profile are:

- Extensive, gently undulating plain, dominated by thick glacial till from the late Pleistocene Period, producing productive, clay soils and exemplifying characteristic glacial landforms including eskers, glacial fans, kettle holes, moraines and a landscape of meres and mosses;
- Prominent discontinuous sandstone ridges of Triassic age, characterised by steep sides and freely draining, generally infertile soil that supports broadleaved and mixed woodland;
- Few woodlands, confined to the area around Northwich and to estates, cloughs and deciduous and mixed woods on the steeper slopes of the wind-swept sandstone ridges. Locally extensive tracts of coniferous woodland and locally distinctive orchards scattered throughout;

⁴ Character of England project published by the then Countryside Agency in 1999 and updated between 2011 and 2014 by Natural England

⁵ Updated study published by Natural England 29 April 2014

- Strong field patterns with generally well-maintained boundaries, predominantly hedgerows, with dense, mature hedgerow trees. Sandstone walls occur on the ridges and estate walls and Cheshire-style (curved topped) metal railing fences occur locally on estates in Cheshire;
- Dairy farming dominates on the plain, with patches of mixed farming and arable in the north and large areas in the south-east;
- Diversity of wetland habitats includes internationally important meres and mosses comprising lowland raised bog, fen, wet woodland, reedbed and standing water, supporting populations of a host of rare wildlife, including some species of national and international importance;
- Extensive peat flood plains where flood plain grazing marsh habitats support regionally important populations of breeding waders in areas such as Baggy Moor, Weald Moor and Doxey Marshes;
- Many main rivers and their flood plains lie in this area, including the Dee, Dane, Severn, Penk and Sow. Significant areas of grazing marsh, alluvial flood meadows and hay meadows associated with the rivers Dee, Sow, Gowy and Severn. The area has the highest density of field ponds in western Europe;
- Rich archaeological evidence of iron-age hill forts concentrated on the sandstone ridges and the Weald Moors. Remnant ridge and furrow and moated houses are features of the plain. The Roman road, Watling Street, crosses the plain linking London to Wales via Wroxeter. Chester was an important Roman settlement;
- Regularly spaced, large farmsteads, dispersed hamlets, market towns and many other settlements including Macclesfield and Telford. Timber-frame buildings are a distinctive feature of the plain, often highly decorated in Cheshire, for example, the moated Little Moreton Hall. The historic towns including Stafford, Shrewsbury and the city of Chester have a wealth of 17th- and 18th-century half-timber, brick and red sandstone buildings;
- Parklands and gardens associated with estates such as Chillington, Trentham, Tatton and Attingham; country houses such as Gawsworth Hall, Arley Hall and Adlington Hall; and fortified manor houses and castles such as at Shrewsbury, Stafford, Beeston, Acton Burnell and Cholmondeley;
- Nationally important reserves of silica sand and salt. Active extraction of salt has developed a locally distinctive landscape of subsidence flashes, particularly around the area of Sandbach. Adjacent to these saline flashes are areas of salt marsh rarely found at inland sites; and,
- The numerous canals are important for recreation as well as habitat. Several National Cycle Routes and nearly 5,000 km of public rights of way cross the plain. Six National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are scattered throughout, close to large population centres and well used for recreation.

1.2.9 Potential effects on the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA 61 are considered in Table A6.2.2 below.

1.2.10 As noted above, the Oswestry Uplands NCA 63 lies to the west and outside of the 1km study area. This is described as a small yet distinct landscape of steep-sided, flat-topped hills mainly of limestone and narrow, wooded valleys and streams. It forms the eastern edge of the Clwydian Hills which extend from Mid Wales. The area has strong Welsh cultural associations which blend into the western edge of Shropshire. The hills rise quite steeply from gentle foothills crossing into the Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA and overlook Oswestry, a typical market town of the Welsh Marches. Much of the area is deeply rural with small, irregular fields, copses, shelterbelts and woodlands. Scattered farms and hamlets are reached by narrow, winding and usually deeply sunken lanes. Due to the geographical area covered by the Oswestry Uplands NCA 63, the intervening distance from the Proposed Development, and the scale of the proposed Trident wood line, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not noticeably affect the landscape or character of the NCA and the likely landscape and visual effects on the NCA as a whole are not considered further within this ES.

Regional Landscape Character Areas

- 1.2.11 The regional landscape through which the Proposed Development passes is largely agricultural with small pockets of settlement and scattered properties and farmsteads, and a network of rural lanes serviced by 3no. 'B' class roads and 2no. 'A' class roads. The landscape within the study area displays differing landscape characteristics with areas of settled farmland sitting alongside estate farmland with evidence of a more considered parkland layout, and lowland areas associated with watercourses and a higher historical chance of flooding. These variations in character are represented in more detail by the landscape character areas identified in Shropshire Council's Shropshire Landscape Typology (September 2006), which are illustrated in the Shropshire Landscape Typology Figure 6.2 (**DCO Document 6.14**). The key characteristics of these landscape typologies are described below. As noted in paragraph 1.2.1 above, the Shropshire landscape typologies were established following a study of the cultural (land use, settlement, tree cover) and physiographic (soils, landform, geology) character of the landscape, and were informed by the results of Shropshire Council's Historic Landscape Characterisation Project. The following Shropshire landscape typologies are present within the study area:
- 1.2.12 The key characteristics of the **Principal Settled Farmlands**, as identified in The Shropshire Landscape Typology report, are:
- Mixed farming land-use; and,
 - Varied patterns of sub-regular hedged fields.
- 1.2.13 The key characteristics of the **Settled Pastoral Farmlands**, as identified in The Shropshire Landscape Typology report, are:
- Heavy, poorly drained soils;
 - Pastoral land use;
 - Scattered hedgerow trees;
 - Irregular field pattern; and,
 - Small to medium scale landscapes.
- 1.2.14 The key characteristics of the **Lowland Moors**, as identified in The Shropshire Landscape Typology report, are:
- Flat, low-lying topography;
 - Peaty soils;
 - Wet ditches and drains; and,
 - Open, unsettled landscapes.
- 1.2.15 The key characteristics of the **Estate Farmlands**, as identified in The Shropshire Landscape Typology report, are:
- Mixed farming land-use;
 - Clustered settlement pattern;
 - Large country houses with associated parklands;

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- Planned wooded character; and,
 - Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.

1.2.16 The Proposed Development would not pass directly through any areas identified as 'Urban' in the Shropshire Landscape Typology study.

Localised Landscape Character Areas within the study area

1.2.17 To inform the sensitivity appraisal, Gillespies undertook a more detailed survey of the Shropshire landscape typologies within the study area. The outcome of this work was the identification of 11 localised landscape character areas (LCAs) as shown in Figure 6.3: Landscape Character Areas (**DCO Document 6.14**). Each LCA exhibits a distinct set of localised landscape characteristics. Specific details of these localised LCAs and the likely effects of the Proposed Development on them are provided below in the individual 'Landscape Character Area Assessment Sheets'.

1.2.18 The 11 localised LCAs are:

- LCA1 Urban: Oswestry East;
- LCA2 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Middleton to Babbinswood;
- LCA3 Principal Timbered Farmlands: Halston Hall;
- LCA4 Estate Farmlands: Woodhouse;
- LCA5 Lowland Moors: River Perry;
- LCA6 Estate Farmlands (Semi-Industrial): Lower Hordley and Bagley;
- LCA7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge;
- LCA8 Lowland Moors: Wackley Brook and River Roden;
- LCA9 Principal Settled Farmlands: Cockshutt to Ruewood;
- LCA10 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Wem Fringe; and,
- LCA11 Urban: Wem.

1.2.19 The Proposed Development originates at Oswestry Substation, just west of the A5(T) and runs through LCA1 (Urban: Oswestry East) as an underground cable to the terminal pole (pole no.1) near Long Wood, just east of the A5(T) in LCA2 (Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Middleton to Babbinswood). The intervening A5(T) carriageway and its mature boundary treatment facilitate a change in character from suburban settlement of LCA1 to flatter and lower-lying, settled pastoral farmland of LCA2 (approximately 80-100m AOD). The overhead line would originate in LCA2 at the terminal pole (pole no. 1) near Long Wood, some 400m east of the edge of the urban settlement at Oswestry in LCA1. Scattered hedgerow trees, small woodland blocks and a small to medium-scale field pattern are interspersed with small pockets of settlement and farmsteads, generally featuring red brick buildings, small pockets of industry and a large scale agricultural building. This landscape is intersected by linear transport infrastructure.

- 1.2.20 The overhead line would then pass close to the edge of more sparsely populated farmed landscape (LCA3 Principal Timbered Farmlands: Halston Hall), before crossing the Montgomery Canal and heading into the more private estate farmland at Woodhouse (LCA4 Estate Farmlands: Woodhouse), which features more mature trees and has more of a parkland feel. Estate Farmlands landscape typology typifies the landscape of the middle section of the Proposed Development near Woodhouse, Lower Hordley and Bagley [LCA6 Estate Farmlands (Semi-Industrial): Lower Hordley and Bagley], Kenwick, Stanwardine and Petton (LCA7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge). These are gently rolling with some slightly more elevated sections, including the low ridge which rises to the north and runs northwest to southeast between Kenwick Grange Farm and Petton (approximately 80-115m AOD) within the study area. Views from these elevated areas extend beyond the study area, giving a sense of openness in parts of this landscape. They include some areas of farmland which have more of a parkland character, including large mature trees, small woodland blocks and some areas of planned woodland character, and a medium to large, and occasionally irregular, field pattern. The settlement pattern is one of villages, small hamlets and scattered individual properties and farmsteads, with some country houses and occasional historic buildings.
- 1.2.21 Beyond the Woodhouse Estate (LCA4), the overhead line would continue to run east crossing the open and flat, low-lying flood plain landscape between Lower Lees and Dandyford Farm, which is associated with the River Perry (LCA5 Lowland Moors: River Perry). Similar lowland moor (approximately 75-85m AOD) landscapes are associated with the local watercourses (rivers, canals and brooks) that cross or lie within the study area. The largest of these floodplains lie close to the Montgomery Canal and River Perry to the west and centre of the 1km study area (LCA5), and near Wackley Brook, Sleaf Brook and the River Roden to the east of the study area (LCA8 Lowland Moors: Wackley Brook and River Roden). These are often marked by networks of ditches and drains, and tend to have fewer landscape features such as trees and woodland, with the exception of the area around Moor Fields where historic strip hedges are evident, and along the banks of some of the watercourses, such as Sleaf Brook. Fields are varied in scale, but with a tendency towards medium-large fields resulting from more recent (20th century) field amalgamation.
- 1.2.22 From Dandyford, the overhead line would continue east through the landscape associated with the LCA7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge (described above), following the lower-lying contours on the ridge south of Top House Farm and Kenwick Lodge, before crossing over the narrowest section of the ridge to the north of Stanwardine-in-the-Wood.
- 1.2.23 Sections of the middle and eastern parts of the study area run through an area of principal settled farmland between Cockshutt and Loppington, Noneley, Commonwood, Ruewood and Tilley (LCA9 Principal Settled Farmlands: Cockshutt to Ruewood). This landscape features mixed farming, a varied field pattern, with hedgerows containing numerous mature trees, isolated mature trees which mark the historic line of now defunct hedgerow boundaries, scattered hamlets, farmsteads and small historic villages featuring listed buildings (such as at Cockshutt, Noneley, Ruewood and Tilley) and a Conservation Area (Loppington Village). The overhead line would cross a very short section of this LCA, in the relatively flat, low-lying farming landscape to the south of Cockshutt, and then would cross alternately through sections of LCA8 and LCA9, as it runs east between Cockshutt, Noneley, Commonwood, across the River Roden and to the western edge of Wem.
- 1.2.24 The point at which the overhead line would cross into the substation at Wem is on the very edge of LCA11 Urban: Wem, a small historic market town on level ground, characterised by a mixture of modern and historic development, including small-scale residential settlement, Wem Conservation Area, and retail and commercial development that are all serviced by a network of B roads and a train station.
- 1.2.25 A small section of a wider character area identified as LCA10 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Wem Fringe, borders the settlement at Wem and lies just within the study area. The LCA is characterised by rising pastoral land with small clusters of settlement including residential properties, farmsteads and listed buildings.

Wider 5km survey area

- 1.2.26 Within the wider 5km survey area, the Sandstone Hills to the south form discrete elevated areas near Haughton, just south of the disused Rednal Airfield, and near Boreatton Park, rising to an elevation of 125-130m AOD. Sandstone Hills also feature to the east of the Proposed Development near Lee Brockhurst. The northern edge of the study area, near Colemere, contains the Shropshire Meres and Mosses, a mosaic of wetlands important for wildlife, which extend north into neighbouring Wales and north-west into Cheshire. To the west of the urban centre at Oswestry, the landscape becomes more elevated with farmed hills and plateaus forming the edge of the study area, close to the Welsh border, and the Shropshire Way and Offa's Dyke at Baker's Hill (352m AOD). This area is marked by an increase in woodland, including the large stretch of woodland adjacent to the River Morda, east of Llawnt.
- 1.2.27 The Proposed Development crosses or passes close to a number of rivers, brooks and a canal. To the west is Common Brook and the Montgomery Canal. The Canal connects into the Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal near Lower Frankton, and sits within a flat low-lying landscape. The Proposed Development crosses it adjacent to the relatively well-wooded Woodhouse Estate. At this location the canal is bordered by mature trees and lies adjacent to pasture and arable fields. The River Perry (which feeds into the River Severn south of Baschurch) flows from the north-west of the study area near Gobowen, to the south of the study area near Boreatton Park, and is crossed by the Proposed Development to the west of Lower Hordley, just north of Baggy Moor. The river follows a gently curved path through this low-lying area marked by ditches and drains, and the landscape is notable for its openness, the sparse scattering of mature trees and woodland, and the distinctive linear field pattern orientated towards the river as a result of the presence of drainage ditches. Wackley and Sleaf Brook, and a linear stretch of the River Roden, lie close to the eastern end of the Proposed Development near Noneley and Ruewood in a sparsely settled low-lying landscape of arable fields and pasture. The tightly meandering course of Sleaf Brook is marked by mature trees and lies close to the airfield at Sleaf. Within the wider study area, the Llangollen Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal can be found to the north near Colemere and Lower Frankton. The River Morda flows through the south-western edge of the study area.
- 1.2.28 The transport and communications pattern within the study area includes road and rail networks, including a section of the A5(T), from Weirbrook (to the south-east of Oswestry) to Gobowen (north of Oswestry). The A5(T) lies to the west of the Proposed Development. The A495 crosses the north-west of the study area from the A5(T) and through Whittington. The A528 passes from the south-east of the study area at Myddle, to Ellesmere in the north. The A483 connects the south-western corner of the study area between Llyncllys and the A5(T) junction at Mile End. These roads are supplemented by a network of B roads and minor roads, lanes and access tracks. The Shrewsbury to Crewe main line railway extends from Gobowen in the north-west of the study area, to Baschurch in the south. In addition there are two local airfields, one at Rednal and one at Sleaf, although Rednal is no longer in use.

Designated Landscapes and Sensitive Receptors within the 1km Study Area

- 1.2.29 Landscape receptors identified within the study area are shown on Figure 6.4 (**DCO Document 6.14**). There are no nationally important designated landscapes or sites within the 1km study area. Designated sites, which are related to the landscape, within the 1km study area are limited to:
- Gravenhall Ancient Woodland: east of Babbinswood, approximately 750m north of the Proposed Development at its closest point;
 - Montgomery Canal, Aston Locks – Keepers Bridge SSSI: west of Rednal, the northern end of the SSSI is approximately 840m south of the Proposed Development (or approximately 1km along the path of the canal); and
 - Ruewood Pastures Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): east of Commonwood, 250m south of the Proposed Development at its closest point.
- 1.2.30 There are three local conservation areas within the 1km study area:
- The southern boundary of the Whittington Conservation Area is approximately 960m from the Proposed Development. Almost the entire conservation area is outside the study area;

- Approximately the southern third of Loppington Conservation Area lies within the north of study area and its southern boundary is approximately 940m north-west of the Proposed Development; and
- Approximately the western half of Wem Conservation Area is within the study area and its western boundary is approximately 650m east of the Proposed Development.

1.2.31 There is one Grade I listed building and five Grade II* listed buildings within the 1km study area. These are:

- Church of St Michael, Loppington, Grade I listed, 910m north-west of the Proposed Development;
- Woodhouse Hall (and also the adjacent stable block), Rednal, 600m south of the Proposed Development;
- Stanwardine Hall, Stanwardine-in-the-Wood, 370m south of the Proposed Development;
- The Ditches Hall, Wem, 770m west of the Proposed Development;
- Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wem, 950m east of the Proposed Development; and
- Tilley Hall, Tilley, 990m south-east of the Proposed Development.

1.2.32 Whilst the presence of historic assets and their contribution to landscape character are taken into consideration when establishing Landscape Character Areas, there are no direct landscape effects predicted and therefore potential environmental effects on listed buildings are not considered further in this appendix. The potential effects on the visual amenity of Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings are assessed in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**) and the potential effects on the setting and cultural impact of Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings are covered in Chapter 8 'Historic Environment' (**DCO Document 6.8**) and Appendices.

1.2.33 There are three ancient Scheduled Monuments within the 1km study area. These are:

- Stanwardine moated site and associated fishpond, 465m south of the Proposed Development;
- Sundial in parish churchyard, Loppington, 890m north-west of the Proposed Development; and
- Wem Castle, 830m east of the Proposed Development.

1.2.34 Whilst the presence of historic assets and their contribution to landscape character are taken into consideration when establishing Landscape Character Areas, there are no direct landscape effects predicted and therefore potential environmental effects on Scheduled Monuments are not considered further in this appendix. The potential effects on the visual amenity of Scheduled Monuments are detailed in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**) and the potential effects on the setting and cultural impact of Scheduled Monuments are covered in Chapter 8 'Historic Environment' (**DCO Document 6.8**) and Appendices.

1.2.35 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens within the 1km study area.

1.2.36 There are numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the 1km study area and their presence has been considered when establishing the landscape value and the sensitivity of each Landscape Character Area to the Proposed Development. The visual effects on these PRoW are detailed in Appendix 6.3 (**DCO Document 6.6.3**), as are the effects on national and regional trails The Shropshire Way, Montgomery Canal Path and National Cycle Route 445.

1.2.37 The effects on landscape receptors within the 1km study area, other than the individual LCAs, are detailed in Table A6.2.2 below. The effects on the visual amenity of the above receptors are considered in Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3) if relevant.

Designated Landscapes and Sensitive Receptors within the 5km Survey Area

1.2.38 There are no nationally designated landscape areas, such as National Parks or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the 5km survey area. The closest nationally designated landscapes are The Clwydian Range (Bryniau Clwyd) AONB some 8km to the north-west of the Proposed Development, at its closest point and the Shropshire Hills AONB approximately 21km to the south of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would not be discernable from either of these AONBs.

1.2.39 Locally valued landscapes in the wider 5km survey area include those where important views can be experienced (e.g., Old Oswestry Racecourse), landscapes experienced from recreation and important tourist routes (e.g. Offa's Dyke Path and the Shropshire Union Canal), designed landscapes (e.g. Tedsmore, Stanwardine Hall and Woodhouse Estate), landscapes valued for distinctiveness or cultural associations (e.g. Whittington Castle), notable landscape features and characteristics of the landscape, in particular trees and woodlands.

1.2.40 Other important designated and sensitive landscape receptors which were considered during the initial 5km survey and from which the effects on visual amenity have been considered, even though they lie outside the final 1km study area are:

- Oswestry Iron Age Hillfort;
- Pradoc Registered Park and Garden;
- Brogyntyn Registered Park and Garden;
- Old Oswestry Racecourse;
- Whittington Castle;
- Oswestry Castle; and
- The Meres and Mosses sites within the survey area.

1.3 ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Landscape Character Sensitivity

1.3.1 As part of the assessment, desk and field based work using information from The Shropshire Landscape Typology was carried out to establish the sensitivity of each of the localised LCAs to the Proposed Development. These demonstrated that the sensitivity varies across the study area. LCAs with the highest sensitivity typically include:

- Culturally important landscapes and landscape landscapes with evidence of planned design such as Woodhouse Estate which sits within the Estate Farmlands of Shropshire;
- Landscapes associated with recreation including those close to recreational routes such as the Montgomery Canal;
- More elevated landscapes which are visible over a wider area (e.g. towards the middle section of the Proposed Development near Stanwardine and Kenwick);
- Landscapes that are open and where longer views can be experienced, including those associated with the Lowland Moors and watercourses identified within flood risk areas;

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- Landscapes containing distinctive features such as field patterns (e.g. near Moor Fields Local Wildlife Site); and,
 - Landscapes which contribute to the wider setting of a conservation area, a listed building or a hamlet (e.g. near Loppington and Noneley).

Construction

- 1.3.2 The most immediate effects arising from construction of the proposed overhead line would be those associated with access and clearance of the line corridor. Landscape pattern can be affected by the felling of individual mature trees, woodland, shelterbelts or screen planting as these often provide the landscape with a distinctive character or local identity. Woodland cover also has an important role in defining landscape spaces and scale. The removal of tree cover may cause the opening up of landscape spaces by reducing the sense of enclosure provided by woodland cover and allowing views into other landscape spaces beyond. Wayleave corridors are required when a line passes through a wooded area and the straight and linear nature of these can be visually intrusive. The removal of hedgerows may be required to provide access for construction. Where new access tracks are required, landscape effects may potentially occur when a new straight access track is routed across a grassy hillside or peat moor, creating a visible man-made mark on the landscape. Visual intrusion and contrast within an agricultural landscape, can be created by temporary laydown areas, compounds and the movement of construction vehicles and machinery, and digging of trenches and other works associated with installation of underground cables and substation equipment.
- 1.3.3 Construction would take approximately 12 months, but this would be phased across the length of the route. For the overhead line works in any one pole location would take approximately one to two days. The likely effects resulting from the construction of the proposed overhead line would be almost immediate. The construction works within Oswestry Substation would last up to three months and the works in Wem Substation up to six months.
- 1.3.4 Removal of trees is normally regarded as a long term effect whereas hedges removed for construction access can be stored on site and reinstated within 48 hours. Creation of access tracks and temporary laydown areas may affect local landscape character, although in most instances such effects would be temporary.

Operation

- 1.3.5 The main effects of the Proposed Development during its operational life would be the presence of additional wood pole structures within the countryside. Once constructed, however, there would be no moving parts or lighting and the line would only require very occasional visits by SP Manweb for maintenance and repair.
- 1.3.6 The main features of the overhead line which would give rise to landscape and visual effects would be the Trident wood poles (including the conductors, the metal bracing, and other elements mounted on the poles, and any stays associated with the pole), their appearance, height and spacing. As with any external material, wood poles are susceptible to weathering and consequent colour variations. The colour of the poles at the time of construction would be dark brown but this would fade over time to a noticeably lighter silver-grey. The rate of colour change would depend on the prevailing weather conditions and to some degree on the type of timber and timber treatment that were used. Over time these changes would tend to reduce the perceptibility of elements viewed above the skyline, but may increase the visibility of structures when viewed against a dark background such as coniferous plantation. The metal bracing and the conductors would be constructed from aluminium, which is initially shiny but tends to dull over time to dark matt silver.
- 1.3.7 The findings of the surveys undertaken and discussions with stakeholders have led to the identification of the following locations, which are considered sensitive and required particular consideration in the iterative detailed design and assessment process:
- Localised areas of the Estate Farmlands LCA, with the potential for landscape effects on the parkland character near Woodhouse and Petton, and on areas of localised higher ground close to Kenwick and Stanwardine;

- Localised areas of the low-lying landscape of the Lowland Moors LCA, close to the Montgomery Canal, the River Perry, Wackley Brook, Sleaf Brook, Moor Fields Local Wildlife Site and the River Roden; and
- Localised areas of the Principal Settled Farmlands LCA close to The Wood and Malt Kiln Farm, and the hamlets at Noneley and Commonwood.

1.3.8 Consideration has been given to likely landscape effects during the construction phase (as noted above), and at Year 1 during both summer and winter in the operational phase. This allows for consideration of seasonal variations in leaf cover and screening. The impacts at Year 15 are considered to be broadly similar to those at Year 1. Whilst there is potential for a slight reduction in any minor effects, for example, as a result of additional vegetation growth and areas of natural regeneration, it is anticipated that effects would remain within the same category of effect.

1.4 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT SHEETS AND ASSESSMENT

1.4.1 The LCA baseline and assessment of likely impacts on each of the identified LCA are provided below. These LCA sheets also detail the likely direct landscape effects on the landscape of the route of the Proposed Development within the Order Limits. Direct landscape losses are summarised in Section 1.5 'Landscape Assessment' later in this document.

1.4.2 A summary of the LCA assessments is provided below in Table A6.2.1. The magnitude of change and level of effects, during operation, are provided for the summer and winter of Year 1, which would be the worst case scenario with respect to the landscape impact of the Proposed Development.

Table A6.2.1 – Summary of LCA Assessment Sheets							
Landscape Character Area	Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change			Level of Effect		
		Construction	Operation Winter	Operation Summer	Construction	Operation Winter	Operation Summer
LCA1 Urban: Oswestry East	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Negligible	Negligible	Negligible
LCA2 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Middleton to Babbinswood	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA3 Principal Timbered Farmlands: Halston Hall	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA4 Estate Farmlands: Woodhouse	Medium	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA5 Lowland Moors:	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Minor	Minor	Minor

Table A6.2.1 – Summary of LCA Assessment Sheets							
Landscape Character Area	Overall Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change			Level of Effect		
		Construction	Operation Winter	Operation Summer	Construction	Operation Winter	Operation Summer
River Perry							
LCA6 Estate Farmlands (Semi-Industrial): Lower Hordley and Bagley	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge	Medium	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA8 Lowland Moors: Wackley Brook and River Roden	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Medium-Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA9 Principal Settled Farmlands: Cockshutt to Ruewood	Medium	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA10 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Wem Fringe	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Low	Minor	Minor	Minor
LCA11 Urban: Wem	Medium	Medium-Low	Low	Low	Minor	Minor	Minor

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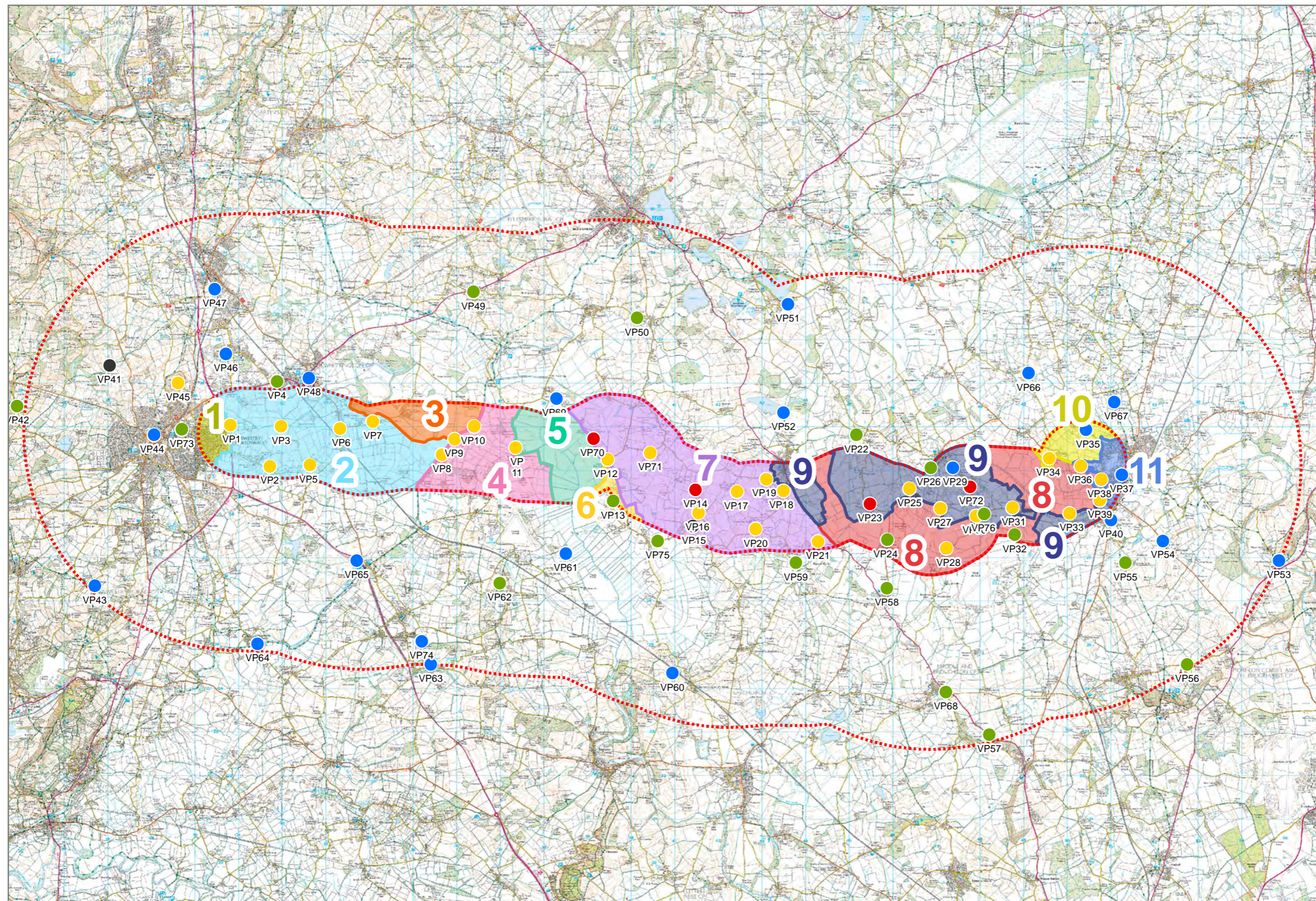
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENT SHEETS

- Landscape Character Location Overview Map 19
- LCA 1 Urban: Oswestry East. 20
- LCA 2 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Middleton to Babbinswood 22
- LCA 3 Principal Timbered Farmlands: Halston Hall 24
- LCA 4 Estate Farmlands: Woodhouse 26
- LCA 5 Lowland Moors: River Perry 28
- LCA 6 Estate Farmlands (Semi-Industrial): Lower Hordley and Bagley 30
- LCA 7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge..... 32
- LCA 8 Lowland Moors: Wackley Brook and River Roden 34
- LCA 9 Principal Settled Farmlands: Cockshutt to Ruewood. 36
- LCA 10 Settled Pastoral Farmlands: Wem Fringe. 38
- LCA 11 Urban: Wem. 40



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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS OVERVIEW MAP



- LEGEND**
- VP - MODERATE ADVERSE
 - VP - MINOR ADVERSE
 - VP - NEGLIGIBLE
 - VP - NO VIEW
 - VP - NO ACCESS
 - 1KM STUDY AREA
 - 5KM SURVEY AREA

LCA 1 URBAN: OSWESTRY EAST - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

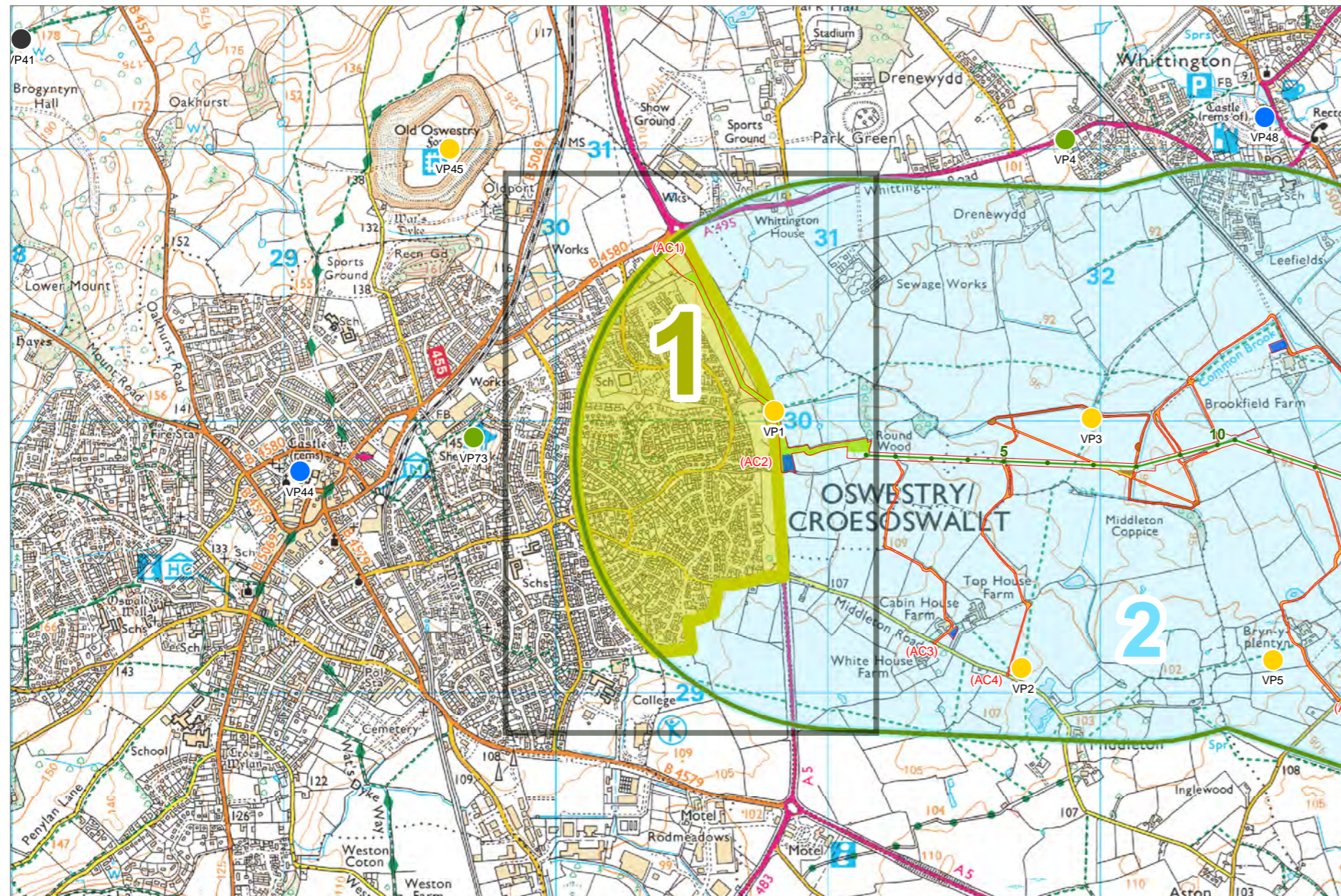
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: An area identified as 'Urban.'

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report identifies this area as 'Urban.' No other detail is provided.

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: An area of mostly modern residential development east of Oswestry; located on very gently rising ground; forms a discrete residential character area, and is separated from the remainder of the study area by the A5(T); development is largely small in scale and comprises housing, schools, a church, a community centre and the edge of Oswestry Substation in the north; landscape features include street trees, private gardens, recreational grounds, and informal recreation areas; a network of small roads connect the area to Oswestry and nearby villages, and cul-de-sac based suburban road layouts serve the estates; views are generally contained by development, with glimpses of higher ground to the west of Oswestry.

DESCRIPTION: This LCA consists of modern residential settlement on the eastern edge of the large historic market town of Oswestry. The LCA is located on relatively level ground that rises very gently from east to west, and forms a discrete and planned residential character area. This LCA is separated from the remainder of the landscape character study area by the A5(T), which is screened by a well-vegetated informal recreational area to the east of the housing estates. Development is largely small in scale and comprises single and two storey housing on planned housing estates, along with the Eastern Oswestry Community Centre, Cabin Lane Church and Meadows Primary School, all of which are modern development (dating from the late twentieth and early twenty-first century). The edge of Oswestry Substation is located in the north of the LCA. Small areas of more historic housing and period properties (some with outhouses) have been retained, including those along Middleton Road. These properties are generally surrounded by more modern housing. The grade II listed Lys House is the only listed building within the LCA, a historic farmhouse now converted into flats, which sits surrounded by modern development. Landscape features include street trees, private gardens, recreational grounds, and the informal recreation area to the west of the LCA that borders the A5(T). This recreational area contains a small network of paths, a children's play area, grassed areas and densely planted trees that form part of the National Forest Inventory. One PRoW connects the LCA to Oswestry in the west, and Middleton village in the east. A network of small roads connect the residential settlement to Oswestry and nearby villages, and cul-de-sac based suburban road layouts serve the roads and houses within the residential estates. Views are generally contained by development, with occasional glimpses of higher ground to the west of Oswestry, in the direction of the Welsh border, and Old Oswestry Hill Fort to the northwest. Roof tops and trees are visible on the skyline, with taller equipment associated with the substation at Oswestry (including overhead lines) also visible in the north of the LCA. There is a sense of visual containment within much of this settled residential LCA.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

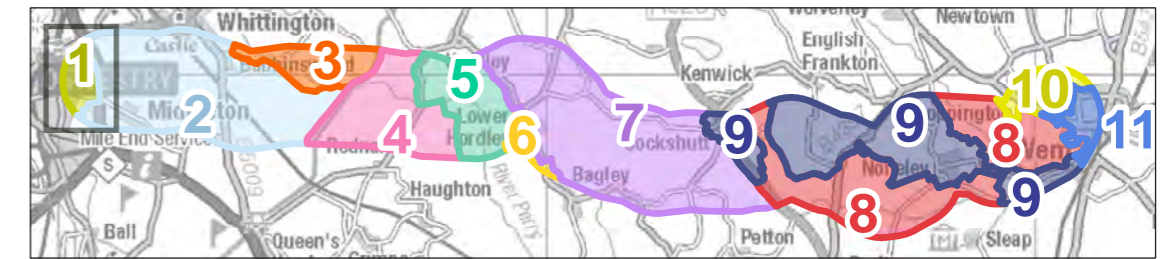


FIGURE 2: View over LCA 1 showing the modern estate housing adjacent to the well-vegetated path of the A5(T). LCA 2 is visible beyond the A5(T).

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTIC:
SCENIC QUALITY

Views are generally contained within the residential development due to the level ground and relatively dense pattern of settlement and trees along the A5(T).



FIGURE 3: Aerial image showing the road and housing layout within LCA1

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTIC:
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

This LCA is characterised by planned modern residential development set within estates, on the eastern edge of Oswestry settlement, and bordered by the A5(T) to the east.

LCA 1 URBAN: OSWESTRY EAST - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM OLD OSWESTRY HILL FORT OVERLOOKING LCA1, WHICH IS VISIBLE TO THE RIGHT OF THE VIEW (VP45)



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: This roads and housing developments within this character area are generally well kept, but there are few naturalistic features remaining. Existing landscape features include occasional street trees, private gardens, recreational grounds, and an area of informal recreational ground alongside the A5(T), which features trees that are included in the National Forest Inventory. The area lacks a distinctive identity and there are few remaining historic features. Scenic value is limited by the dense settlement pattern, with only occasional views to upland areas in the west. A PRoW provides local connections through to the town centre in the west, and to Middleton in the east. There is an area of informal recreation alongside the well-screened A5(T), which is predominantly used by dog walkers and local residents. The dense settlement pattern and lack of open areas reduces the tranquility and perceptual aspects of the LCA, as does the influence of the substation on the northern edge of the LCA, and the A5(T) to the east. The overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The Proposed Development is of a similar scale and height to existing features found in neighbouring landscapes, with skylines that already include wood pole OHLs and a substation on the edge of the LCA. The small-scale and densely settled LCA would struggle to accommodate the Proposed Development, and whilst of a similar scale to some of the existing features (taller trees and buildings), such a development would be visible on the skyline. No changes to landform would be required to accommodate this type of development on this level ground, and since there are relatively small numbers of trees and no woodland present in the LCA, few landscape features would be lost. Overall, the susceptibility is medium.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: Whilst the LCA has limited scenic and historic value, it would be difficult to accommodate an OHL within the dense settlement and landcover pattern. The edge of the LCA is influenced by the presence of existing electricity infrastructure near the Oswestry Substation in the north. Given the overall value (medium-low) and susceptibility (medium) the overall sensitivity of the LCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

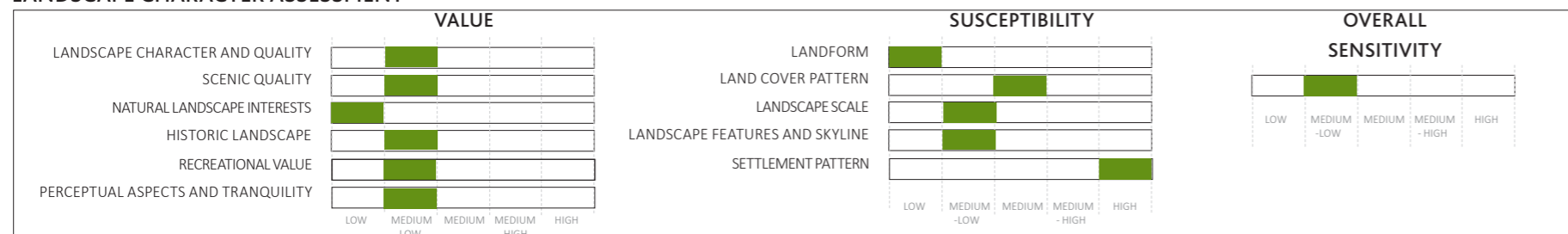
Construction: The alignment of the proposed overhead wood pole line does not pass through the LCA, and the alignment is not visible from the LCA due to the level nature of the landscape and the intervening screen of densely planted trees along the A5(T), to the east. Construction access AC1 (refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) is within the existing substation. Approx. 600m of the proposed underground cable from Oswestry Substation passes through the northeastern edge of the LCA, along an open area within an informal wooded recreational area. There would be short-term disruption to this grassed recreational area. Tree losses are not anticipated due to the directional drilling construction method employed in undergrounding the cable as it turns east to cross underneath the A5(T). The magnitude of change would be low, since there would be a very localised loss of a small number of trees in one location, and likely effects are minor (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The alignment of the proposed overhead wood pole line does not pass through the LCA, and the alignment is not visible from the LCA due to the level nature of the landscape and the intervening screen of densely planted trees along the A5(T), to the east. Any changes resulting from the laying of the underground cable are likely to be temporary and only felt during the construction phase. Likely effects are negligible (not significant).

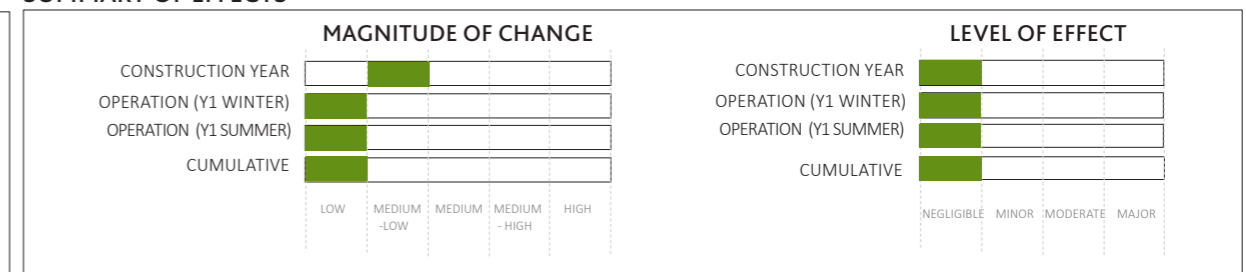
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter. Likely effects are negligible (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 2 SETTLED PASTORAL FARMLANDS: MIDDLETON TO BABBINSWOOD - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

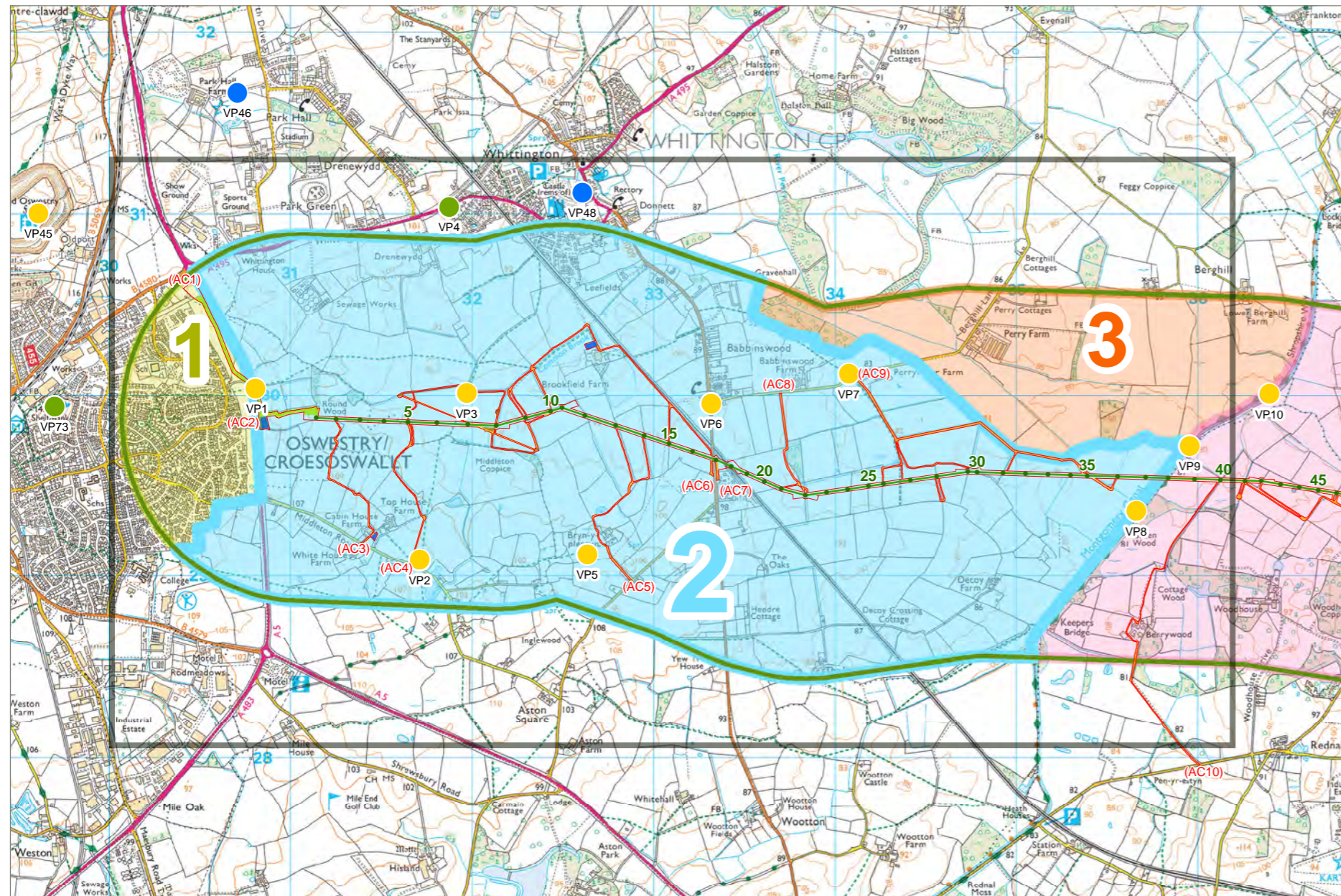
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Heavy poorly drained soils; Pastoral land use; Scattered hedgerow trees; Irregular field pattern; Small to medium scale landscapes.

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that the Settled Pastoral Farmlands are '... lowland agricultural landscapes. Heavy, often poorly drained soils... traditionally associated with livestock farming... the historic pattern of small to medium, sub-regular, hedged fields has been retained in most places... tree cover is largely provided by scattered hedgerow oaks and ash trees... a small to medium scale landscape with predominantly filtered views. A medium to high density dispersal of farmsteads and wayside cottages, linked by a sinuous network of lanes, represents the prevailing settlement pattern... the historic field patterns remain largely unchanged.'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Scattered red brick farmsteads and agricultural buildings; small pockets of industry (e.g., poultry farming and oil/fuel terminal); landscape intersected by linear infrastructure including the A5(T), A495, B5009, the Shrewsbury to Chester rail line and the Montgomery Canal, and existing electricity networks east of the A5(T).

DESCRIPTION: This is one of the larger LCAs in the study area. Generally level with very gentle undulations as it rises slightly in the south and west, this is an agricultural landscape with neighbouring settlement to the west (Oswestry), south (Middleton) and north and east (Whittington/Babbinswood). The landscape is influenced by linear transport routes and electricity infrastructure that cross through this area. Fields are set aside to arable farming or pasture, with livestock farming evident. The historic pattern of small, sub-regular, hedged fields has been retained around Middleton and Decoy Farm. During the later 20th century agricultural intensification has resulted in some pasture improvement and the introduction of intensive arable cropping, particularly to the north and east, where the hedgerow pattern has been eroded and fields are medium in scale. Tree cover includes scattered hedgerow oaks and trees, and trees adjacent to ponds that are present in the more irregular fields around Middleton. A small number of relict pieces of woodland remain. Trees and field patterns result in a small to medium scale landscape with predominantly filtered views that extend across neighbouring low-lying fields. Where hedgerow trees are absent and in the larger scale fields to the north and east, longer views extend to more distant upland areas. There is a north-south/east-west network of (in places, inaccessible) public footpaths. Dispersed farmsteads and cottages, linked by local lanes, represent the prevailing settlement pattern in the more secluded and tranquil south (Middleton), with a denser and more modern residential pattern to the north and west (at Whittington and Babbinswood). The LCA just clips approx. 50m of the southern boundary of the Whittington Conservation Area, though there is little visual connectivity between the LCA and the conservation area due to intervening settlement. A grade II barn at Pool Farm in Middleton clips the southern boundary of the LCA, and Grade II Drenwydd Farm clips the northern boundary. Small pockets of industry include a poultry farm and oil tank distributor close to the B5009 at Babbinswood. There is a sewage works to the north-west and a greater prevalence of electricity infrastructure to the east of the A5(T), though its influence is contained by screening from intervening field hedgerows and trees. Linear transport routes (including the A5(T), B5009, rail line and Montgomery Canal) intersect the landscape.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

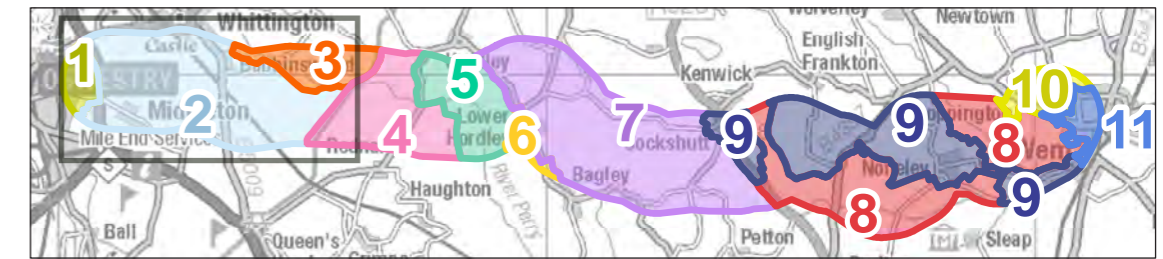


FIGURE 2: View over small scale pastoral field east of Middleton with lower voltage OHL visible and scattered hedgerow trees.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**
- Fields are set aside to arable farming or pasture, with livestock farming evident.



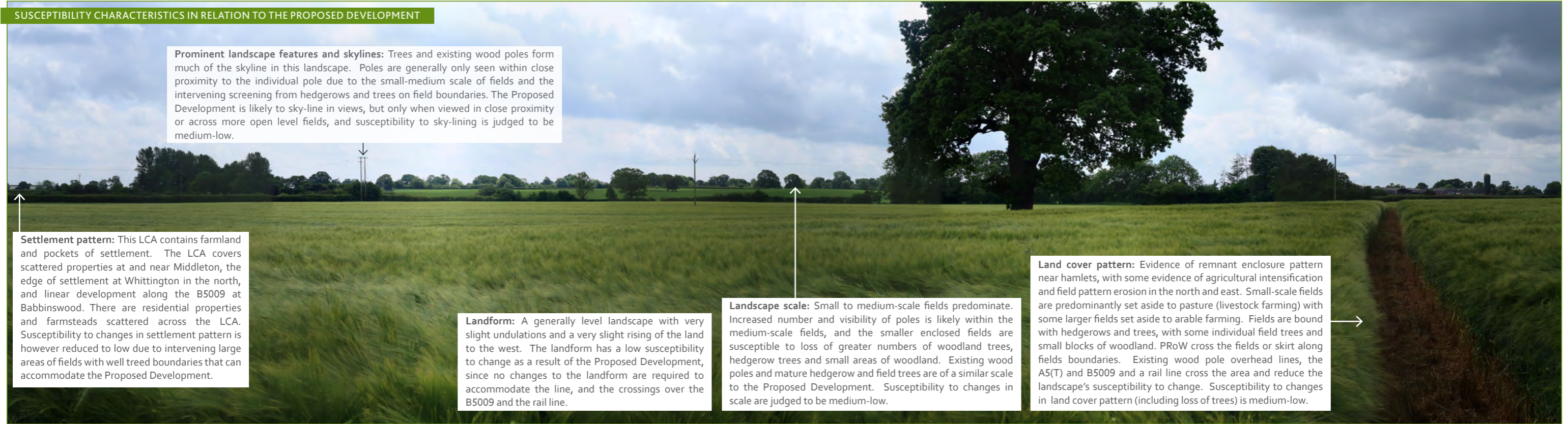
FIGURE 3: View northwest from the Shrewsbury - Chester rail line, taken from the B5009 south of Babbinswood.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- **LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**
 - **PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND TRANQUILITY**
- Landscape intersected by linear infrastructure including the A5(T), A495, B5009, the Shrewsbury to Chester rail line.

LCA 2 SETTLED PASTORAL FARMLANDS: MIDDLETON TO BABBINSWOOD - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY EAST OF OSWESTRY WITHIN SETTLED PASTORAL FARMLANDS LCA, NORTH OF MIDDLETON (VP03)



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Parts of this LCA display small-scale remnant enclosure pattern with land set aside for pasture, livestock farming and arable crops, with fewer landscape features (such as woodland belts) that could be lost. To the north and east, the traditional field pattern has been eroded through 20th century field amalgamation and encroachment of settlement. PRoWs cross fields in the area and follow field boundaries, though access to some PRoWs is restricted by overgrown hedges and lack of boundary crossings (styles). Farms are generally well maintained, though there is evidence of partially derelict farms, e.g., Perrymoor Farm. Building styles vary, with modern properties scattered amongst more traditional buildings. There are no listed buildings. Transport routes intersect this landscape. Screening along the A5(T)'s eastern edge reduces its influence on the character of the area. The rail line lies in cutting near Babbinswood thus reducing its influence. The visibility of other roads and overhead lines generally extends across one or two field boundaries due to the screening effect of hedgerows and trees, and the relatively level topography. Planting on field boundaries also adds to a very localised sense of tranquility, which can change from one field to the next depending on the presence of agricultural sheds, local roads and overhead lines. This is a settled rural scene influenced by modern infrastructure and small pockets of industry and the overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The generally level, small to medium-scale agricultural landscape has the potential to accommodate change relating to the Proposed Development. The presence of transport routes, existing wood pole lines, edge of settlement and some large agricultural sheds (near Babbinswood) reduce susceptibility to the Proposed Development since the skyline, landcover pattern, settlement pattern and the perception of remoteness and tranquility have already been impacted, and the Proposed Development is of a similar scale to existing wood poles and mature trees. No changes to landform are anticipated and there is enough space between pockets of settlement to accommodate the line. The most prominent landscape features are trees and there is potential for loss of trees and hedgerows. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: The landscape has a sense of enclosure due to the small-medium scale, generally level topography and screening from hedgerows with trees, and its visual connection to neighbouring landscapes is contained, particularly to the south, east and west. The presence of wood lines, scattered properties, edge of settlement, transport routes and small pockets of industry/modern farm buildings further reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from the Proposed Development. Given the above, the overall sensitivity is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

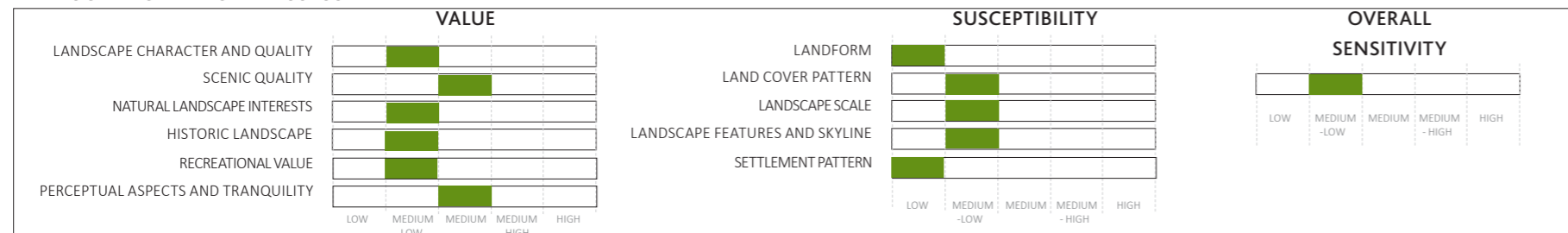
Construction: Approx. 600m of the proposed underground cable from Oswestry Substation passes through the western edge of this large LCA, underneath a small section of road-side trees next to the A5(T) and then alongside field boundaries. There would be short-term disruption, but no direct landscape losses (i.e., trees) are anticipated due to the use of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) beneath the road and trees. Approx. 4.7km of OHL (over 22% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. Overhead line (OHL) construction activity would include work at pole positions, stringing locations, undergrounding of the existing 11kV OHL north of Middleton and introduction of a new terminal pole, use of construction access tracks (ACs2-9 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) and temporary lay down areas located east of the A5(T), at Middleton, and Brookfield Farm. There would be temporary loss of short sections of hedgerow to accommodate double poles (11, 18, 22, 29) set within the hedgerows. Felling of at least 6No trees and 2No tree groups would occur within the construction corridor near Brookfield Farm, the B5009 and rail crossing, and south of Perrymoor Farm, for safety clearances. Subject to clearances, other trees would be subject to felling or reduction as low as reasonably practicable within the works corridor south and east of Babbinswood. The losses would be within the construction corridor, and would not be felt within the wider LCA. No woodland losses are anticipated. No permanent losses of trees as a result of the construction access areas are anticipated. No earthworks are required. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene, although this is a working landscape with pockets of industry, transport routes and larger-scale farming activities. Overall, magnitude of change would be medium-low and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development is in keeping with the scale of this well treed landscape, which features existing wood poles and pockets of farming, commercial activity, transport routes and settlement. The influence of the development on the character of the area would be localised due to existing screening on field boundaries, and anticipated landscape losses resulting from the construction phase would not be felt across the wider LCA and would improve over time. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

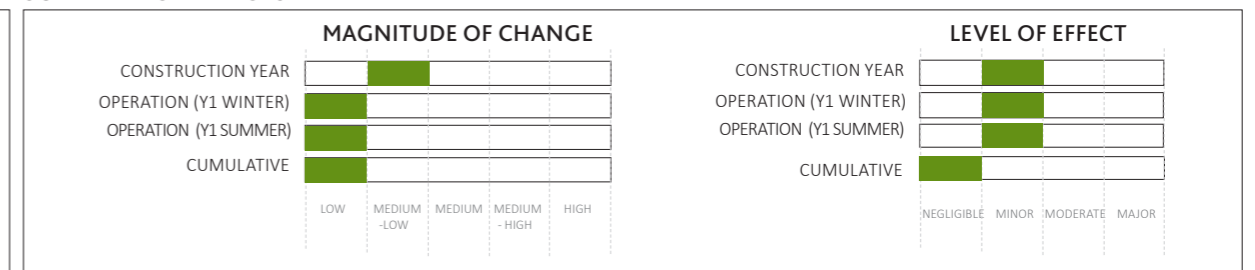
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to screening from trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 3 PRINCIPAL TIMBERED FARMLANDS: HALSTON HALL - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

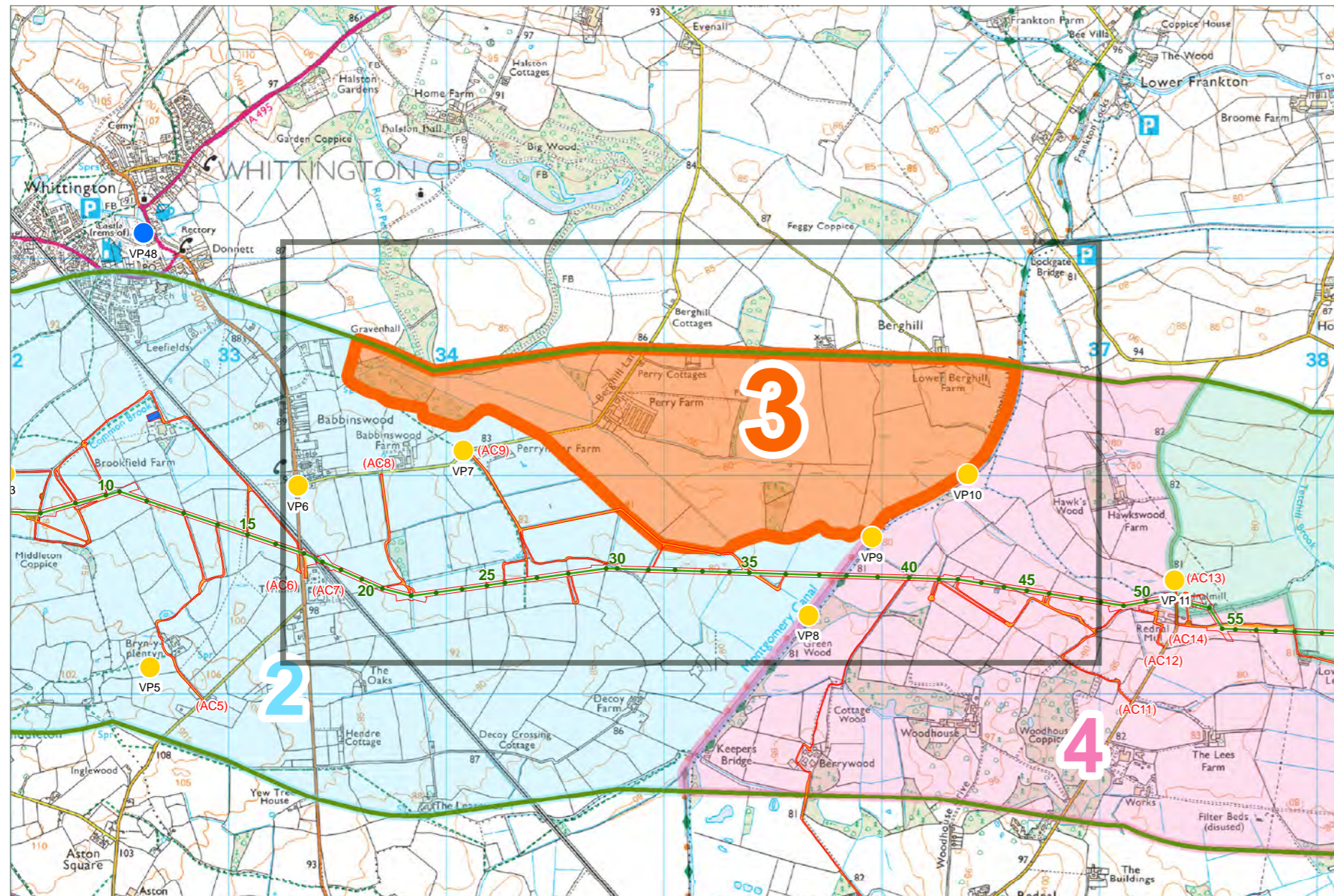
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Rolling lowland with occasional steep sided hills; Relic ancient woodland; Hedged fields with scattered hedgerow trees; Predominantly dispersed settlement pattern; Small to medium scale landscapes with filtered views.

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that the Principal Timbered Farmlands are '...predominantly rolling lowland landscapes ... characterised by a mosaic of agricultural land... dense stands of streamside trees, scattered hedgerow trees, and small to medium sized woodlands play an important role in structuring these landscapes, creating a small to medium scale and filtered views... settlement pattern typically comprises of a medium to high density dispersal of farms and wayside cottages, with occasional hamlets and small villages... agricultural land within this type was gradually enclosed... during the medieval and early modern periods... a network of winding lanes, scattered farmsteads, and small irregular fields... Enclosure of the remaining area of common land was completed in the 18th and 19th centuries, creating a regular pattern of fields and straight roads... the introduction of intensive arable farming in the later 20th century has resulted in field enlargement, creating more open conditions and a larger scale landscape.'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Scattered red brick farmsteads and agricultural buildings surrounded by very gently undulating, medium-scale low-lying arable fields; low hedges and wooden fences, with occasional hedgerow trees and some individual field trees that formed part of now relict hedgerow field boundaries; scattered regular-shaped blocks of woodland remain (including ancient woodland), and a visual and landscape connection with the farmed landscape to the north that surrounds Halston Hall estate. There is a sparse settlement pattern.

DESCRIPTION: Within this character area east of Oswestry, part of the Halston Hall Herony local wildlife site is located to the north-eastern edge, within a block of ancient woodland at Gravenhall. During the later 19th and 20th century, conifer plantations were established and there is evidence of linear planting within existing woodland in this area. Oak and ash represent the main hedgerow tree species, whilst alder and willow can occur along watercourses. The settlement pattern comprises scattered farmsteads linked by local lanes and private tracks, with some wayside cottages. There are no footpaths, which adds to the sense of remoteness in this well-maintained working rural landscape. Enclosure of areas of common land in the 18th and 19th centuries has created a field pattern which includes rectilinear fields and straight roads, such as those near Perry Farm. Arable farming in the later 20th century resulted in some field enlargement, creating a more open and larger scale landscape. There are filtered and open views in and out of this gently undulating landscape, depending on the presence and level of screening provided by intervening woodland, vegetated watercourse boundaries, and occasional hedgerow trees. Views are rural in context, and extend to the elevated ridge at Welsh Frankton in the north and to the more distant upland areas west of Oswestry. The western edge of the Montgomery Canal and the Woodhouse Estate, and the meandering and then more linear course of the River Perry mark the eastern and southern extents of this landscape area. The northern edge forms part of the landscape that connects into the Halston Hall estate farmland and woodland areas. A high voltage pylon overhead line is visible on the skyline to the north and east of the area. Lower voltage overhead lines are visible in the west and north-east, though their influence is contained by screening from intervening field hedgerows and trees.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

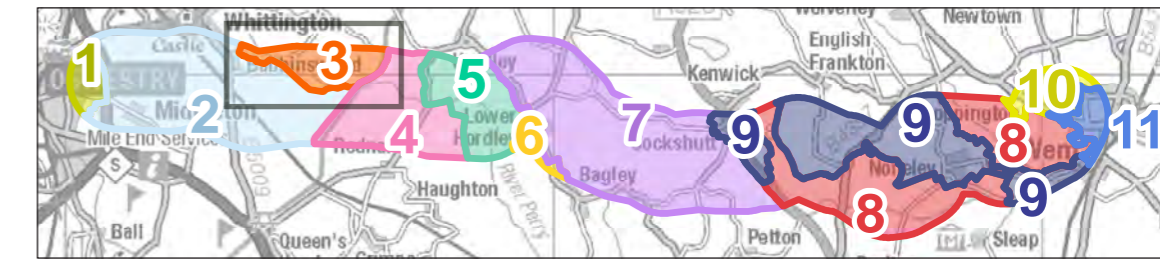


FIGURE 2: View over medium scale arable field west of the Montgomery Canal with pylons, woodland blocks, scattered hedgerow trees. Views towards Welsh Frankton to the right.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
- PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND TRANQUILITY

Long views to distant uplands with woodlands and pylons in the view.



FIGURE 3: Aerial Image of LCA 3 with Montgomery Canal to the eastern boundary

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
- NATURAL LANDSCAPE INTERESTS

Medium scale fields bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, areas of woodland.

LCA 3 PRINCIPAL TIMBERED FARMLANDS: HALSTON HALL - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY (SHROPSHIRE WAY) ALONG MONTGOMERY CANAL WITHIN ESTATE FARMLANDS LCA



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: To the south and west of this LCA the traditional field pattern has been eroded through 20th century field amalgamation. An area of ancient woodland lies in the west of the LCA, and forms part of a stretch of woodland associated with Halston Hall and the LWS. There are no PRoWs. Farms are generally well maintained with pre-20th century red brick farmhouses, with traditional and modern associated buildings and a small number of wayside cottages, such as Perry Cottages. There are no listed buildings within this area. Transport routes include a rural lane that runs between Babbinswood and the A495 in the north, and private farm tracks. The visibility generally extends across neighbouring fields due to the small number of hedgerow trees and the relatively level topography, resulting a largely rural views with a sense of remoteness, but with larger electricity pylons visible on the skyline to the north and west. Distant upland areas are visible on the skyline when viewed from the larger fields. Large agricultural sheds (e.g., at Perry Farm) and existing overhead electricity infrastructure reduce the scenic quality, and the perception of remoteness has been impacted. This is a settled working rural scene with existing overhead electricity infrastructure, medium scale arable fields and small numbers of hedgerow trees and dispersed woodland blocks. The overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: This relatively open and very gently undulating, largely unsettled, medium scale agricultural landscape, has the potential to accommodate an overhead line. The most prominent landscape features are the small dispersed blocks of woodland that are susceptible to tree loss to accommodate an OHL. The Proposed Development is of a similar scale to existing wood poles and mature trees, but is susceptible to sky-lining in the more open medium scale fields. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: The very gently undulating medium-scale arable landscape with few trees and small dispersed blocks of woodland landscape has the capacity to accommodate the Proposed Development with minimal losses to landscape features. This working farmland is well-maintained but largely inaccessible to the public with no recreational facilities. The Proposed Development would be similar in scale (height) to mature trees. The presence of existing wood lines, steel pylons and more modern farm buildings further reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from the Proposed Development. Given the above, the overall sensitivity is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

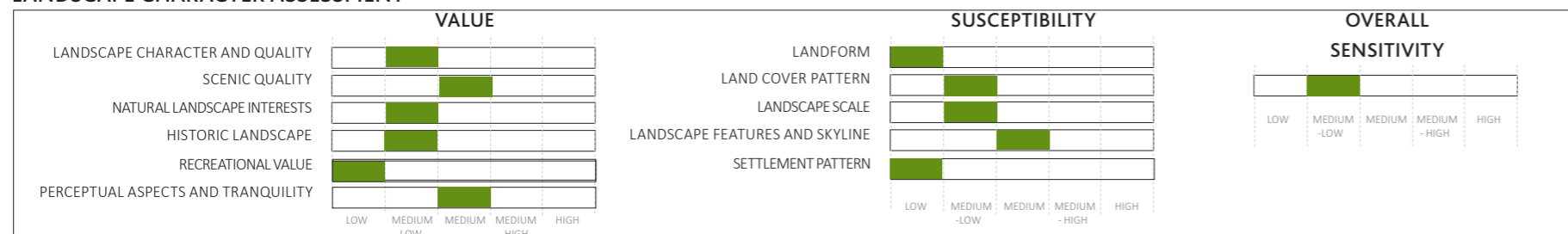
Construction: Most of the construction activity would occur in a neighbouring LCA, with one construction access track present on the boundary with this LCA. Works within the neighbouring LCA (it is approx. 85m from the edge of LCA3 to the nearest point on the overhead line alignment in LCA2) would include work at pole positions and stringing locations, and use of construction access tracks. No hedgerow or woodland losses are anticipated, and no trees would be subject to lopping or felling. No permanent losses of trees as a result of the construction accesses are anticipated in this LCA. No earthworks are required. Whilst there would be short-term disturbance to the edge of this rural scene, this is a working landscape with frequent farming activities and the magnitude of change would be medium-low and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development passes to the south of this LCA, and is in keeping with the scale (height) of the trees in this landscape, which already features existing wood poles and farming activities. The influence of the Proposed Development on the character of LCA3 would be localised along its southern edge due to its close proximity (approx. 85m from the edge of LCA3 to the nearest point on the overhead line alignment) and due to existing screening on field boundaries. There are no anticipated landscape losses resulting from the construction phase. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

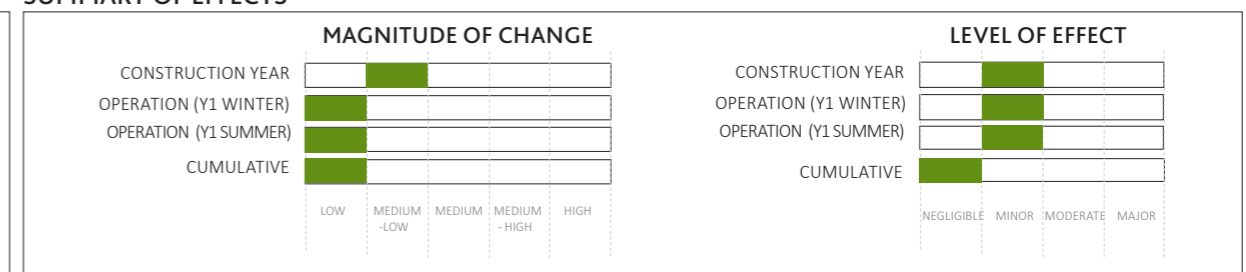
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to the screening effect of deciduous trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 4 ESTATE FARMLANDS: WOODHOUSE - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

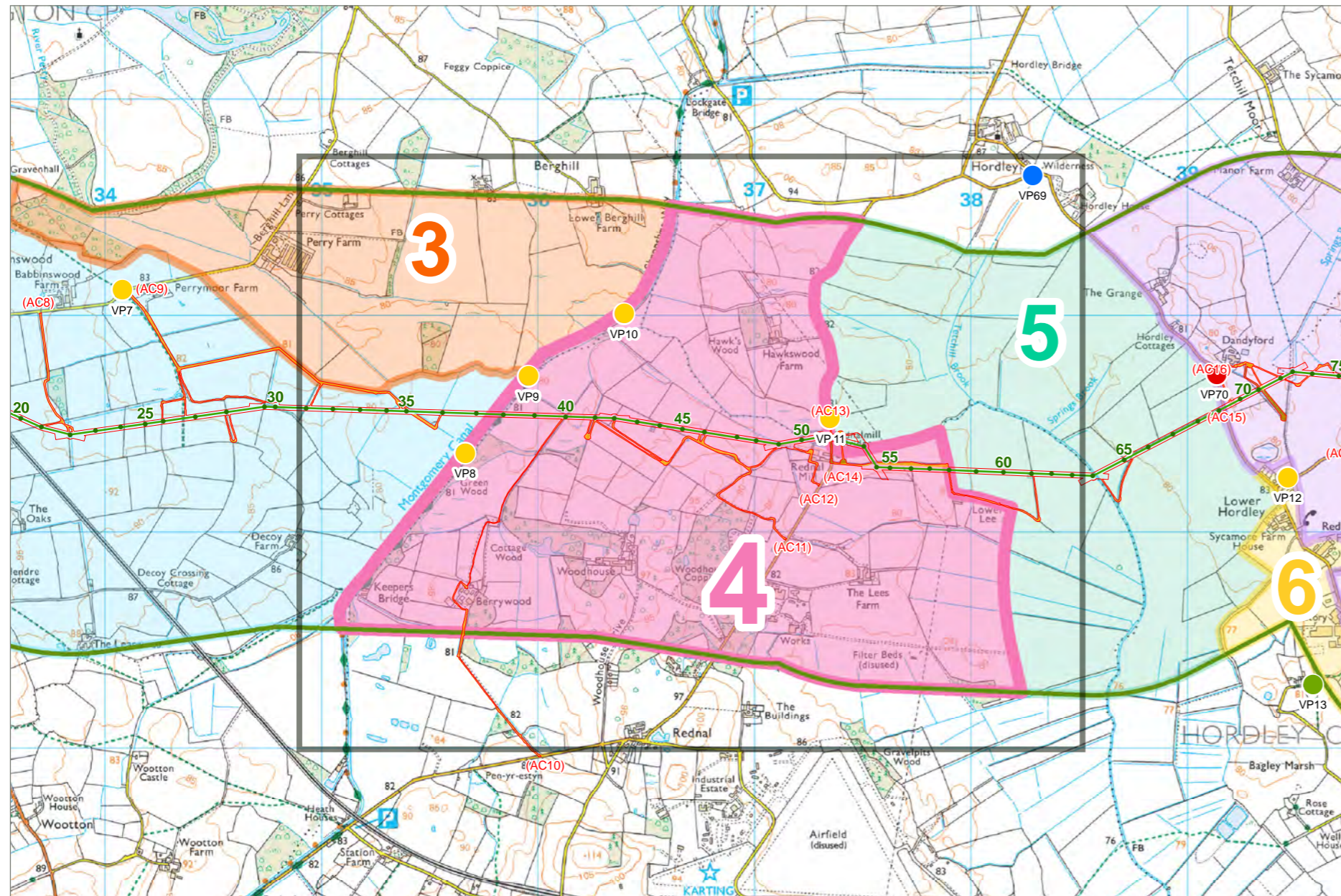
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Mixed farming land use; Clustered settlement pattern; Large country houses with associated parklands; Planned woodland character; Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.

DESCRIPTION: The Estate Farmlands described in the Shropshire Typologies are 'gently rolling lowland and valley floor landscapes that occur across large areas of Shropshire... these landscapes include some the best agricultural land in the county, which have traditionally been associated with mixed farming. Landscape character is largely determined by an ordered pattern of fields and woods. The majority of the woodlands have a planned appearance, although some plantations occupy the sites of older woods.'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Buildings associated with the Woodhouse Estate, including the Hall, ancillary buildings, farmsteads, agricultural buildings, cottages, lodges and Rednal Mill. Small industrial estates centred on the remnant war-time buildings from the airfield at Rednal. Very gently undulating, small to medium-scale low-lying arable fields, bound by low hedges and wooden fences, with occasional hedgerow trees and some individual field trees that formed part of now relict hedgerow field boundaries. Blocks of woodland and individual and specimen trees are concentrated around Woodhouse Hall and the formal grounds. Visual connections to the surrounding landscape are experienced from the edges of this mixed rural area.

DESCRIPTION: This localised character area has a small-medium scale pattern of fields bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees and areas of mixed and planned woodland. An area of private parkland lies just to the east of the house at Woodhouse, with some veteran and specimen trees and pockets of woodland, which create a private landscape with little visible connection to the rest of the character area. Fields are utilised for arable farming and with pockets of pasture near Woodhouse, Berrywood and Hawkswood Farm. The Grade II* listed house and its immediate parkland occupy the most elevated section of this character area. The well-treed linear course of the Montgomery Canal and Shropshire Way regional trail creates a well-defined physical and visual barrier to the west of the LCA. The small but well-treed course of the River Pery flows east-west across the LCA from Rednal Mill to the Canal, creating a further physical and visual barrier, but the LCA extends to Hawkswood Farm where a pocket of woodland remains and field patterns are in keeping with those within the estate. The transition to a larger scale field pattern occurs at the edge of this character area close to The Lees Farm and north of Hawkswood Farm. Here, field boundaries consist of hedgerows with some scattered hedgerow trees. The larger scale fields allow for longer views towards nearby elevated ridges such as Welsh Frankton to the north. The settlement pattern within this LCA is of scattered small scattered groupings associated with the estate including cottages, a mill, lodges and farms. Buildings associated with the airfield at Rednal currently function as Rednal industrial Estate (Site B). The influence of this small pocket of industry is felt along the north-south stretch of road (Woodhouse Lane) that bisects the centre of the character area, with large articulated vehicles servicing the site.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

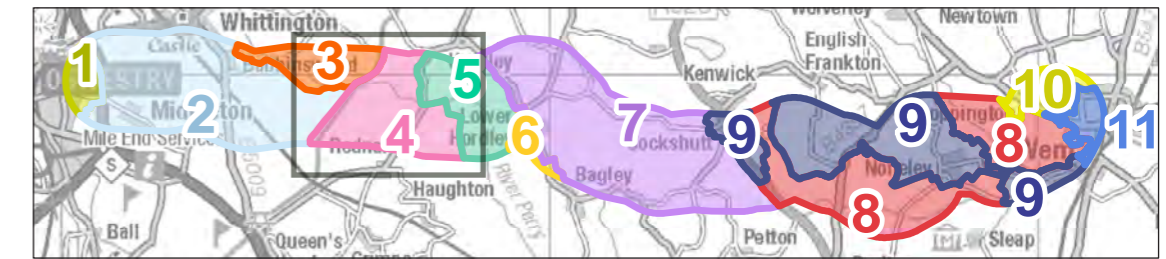


FIGURE 2: View towards Rednal Industrial Estate.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND QUALITY
- PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND TRANQUILITY

Mixed landscape character with industrial influence and reduced tranquility.



FIGURE 3: Aerial image of LCA.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
- NATURAL LANDSCAPE INTERESTS

Small-medium scale pattern of fields bound by hedgerows with hedgerow trees, areas of mixed and planned woodland, and scattered pockets of settlement.

LCA 4 ESTATE FARMLANDS: WOODHOUSE - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY (SHROPSHIRE WAY) ALONG THE MONTGOMERY CANAL, WITHIN ESTATE FARMLANDS LCA (VP10)



SUSCEPTIBILITY CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Landscape features and skylines: Fields are set aside to pasture and arable crops with some woodland belts and mature trees on hedgerows which are susceptible to loss from the Proposed Development. The well treed path of the Shropshire Way regional trail runs along the Montgomery Canal. Existing wood poles and more distant pylons can be seen on the skyline, though this is limited due to the small-medium scale of fields and the screening from hedgerows, trees and woodland blocks. The Proposed Development is likely to sky-line in views when viewed in close proximity, and where the Proposed Development passes over the localised higher ground just north of Woodhouse. Susceptibility to sky-lining is judged to be medium.

Land cover pattern: Small-medium scale fields predominate, with the medium scale fields having a higher susceptibility to the Proposed Development due to likely increased number and visibility of poles within the individual fields. Existing wood pole overhead lines cross the area and reduce the landscape's susceptibility to change to medium-low.

Landform: A generally level landscape with very slight undulations and an elevated area close to the main buildings at Woodhouse. The landform has a low susceptibility to change as a result of the Proposed Development since no changes to the landform are required to accommodate it or to accommodate the crossings over the Montgomery Canal and River Perry.

Settlement pattern: This is a rural LCA with a relatively sparse settlement pattern and the susceptibility to changes in settlement pattern to accommodate the Proposed Development is low.

Landscape scale: Increased number and visibility of poles is likely within the medium-scale fields, and the smaller fields are more susceptible to loss of trees and waterside vegetation. However, existing wood poles and mature trees are of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. Susceptibility to changes in scale is therefore judged to be medium-low.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: A small-medium scale field pattern prevails, much of which is unaffected by 20th century field amalgamation. Mixed woodland blocks (that form part of the National Forest Inventory) and mature tree specimens on hedgerows and in open fields are present, particularly in proximity to the private parkland areas within the Woodhouse estate. This landscape and the presence of the Montgomery Canal add to the scenic value in the west of the LCA. Fields are set aside to arable farming and pasture. The Shropshire Way regional trail follows the scenic course of the Montgomery Canal, forming the western boundary of the LCA. The Perry Aqueduct occurs where the River Perry passes under the Canal. Farms are well maintained, with pre-20th century red brick farmhouses plus traditional and modern associated buildings, in addition to barns and cottages, and the mill at Rednal. The main house at Woodhouse is Grade II* listed, along with three other associated structures. A north-south stretch of road (Woodhouse Lane) bisects the centre of the LCA and serves the small and incongruous industrial area to the east. Private tracks and lanes lead to individual farms and service the Woodhouse Estate. Visibility generally extends across just one or two of the neighbouring fields due to hedgerows, trees and woodland. There is a sense of remoteness in the west of the LCA, however, the overhead electricity infrastructure, industrial area and traffic movements along Woodhouse Lane reduce the scenic quality, and the perception of remoteness. The overall landscape value is judged to be medium.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: This very gently undulating and sparsely settled landscape has the potential to accommodate the Proposed Development, which is of a similar scale to existing wood pole OHLs and trees, which could provide a suitably scaled backcloth for the Proposed Development, particularly along the watercourses and within the Woodhouse estate. The small to medium scale estate farmland, bound with hedgerow, hedgerow trees and woodland blocks, and with waterside vegetation, is susceptible to loss of trees to accommodate the line, and poles could be sky-lined in views. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: Given the overall value of this LCA (medium) and susceptibility (medium-low) the overall sensitivity of the LCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be medium.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

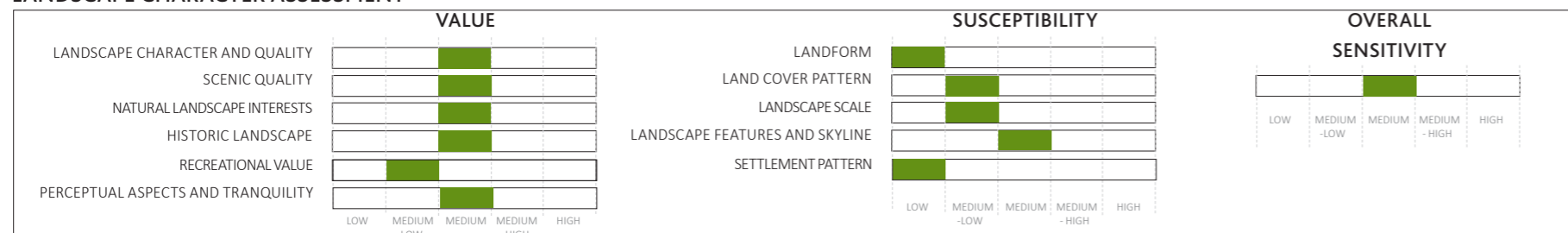
Construction: Approx. 2km of OHL (over 9% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. Construction activity includes work at pole positions, stringing locations, use of construction access tracks (ACs10-14 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) and undergrounding of the existing LV OHL at Rednal Mill Cottage and introduction of a new terminal pole. Direct landscape losses include tree lopping and/or removal necessary to accommodate the route. 1 individual tree would be felled (a veteran oak at pole 41) and there would be works, including felling, to 7No tree groups, including a short section at the Canal crossing, near a pond at pole 44, near pole 49, and the narrow pockets of riverside vegetation along the River Perry at two crossing points within the construction corridor near Rednal Mill. Subject to clearances, other trees would be subject to felling or reduction as low as reasonably practicable within the works corridor. There would be temporary loss of short sections of hedgerow to accommodate double poles (42, 49) set within the hedgerows. The losses would be within the construction corridor, and would not be felt within the wider LCA. Permanent losses of trees as a result of the construction access tracks through Berrywood and the Woodhouse Estate are not anticipated. No earthworks are required. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural and estate parkland scene, although this is a working landscape with farming, evidence of tree felling elsewhere within the estate, and pockets of light industry. Overall the magnitude of change would be low-medium, and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development is in keeping with other elements within this landscape, which features existing wood poles and pockets of farming, light industry and settlement. The likely impact of any landscape losses would be reduced due to the presence of existing trees and woodland blocks, and their screening effect. Over time, natural regeneration will soften the appearance and replace some of the lost features, which form small scale elements in the much wider landscape of Woodhouse Estate. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

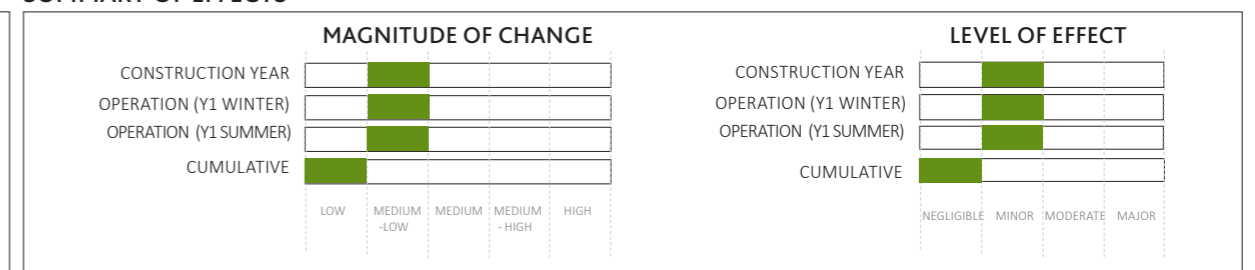
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to the screening effect of deciduous trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 5 LOWLAND MOORS: RIVER PERRY - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

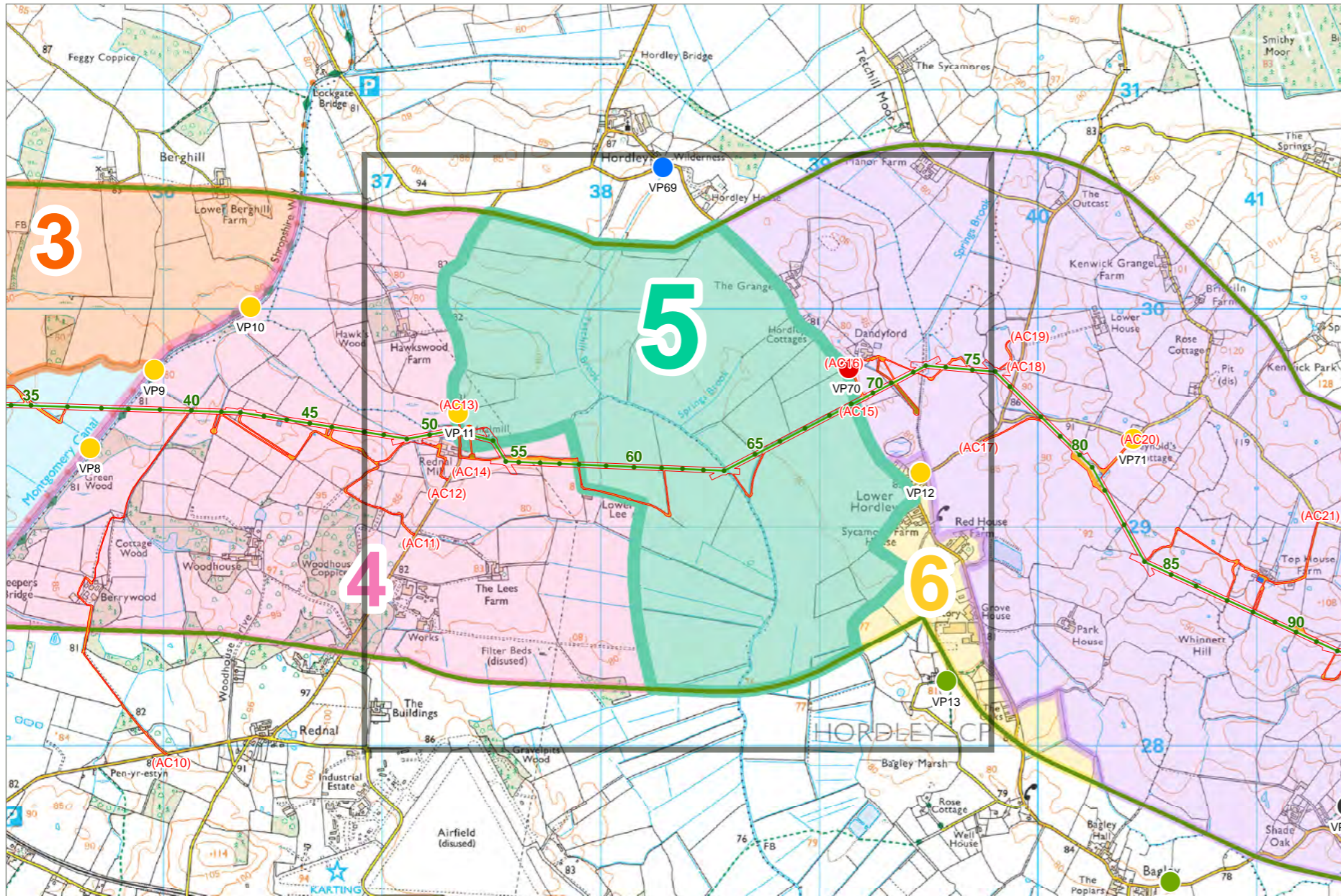
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Flat, low-lying topography; Peaty soils; Wet ditches and drains; Open, unsettled landscape.

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typology describes the Lowland Moors as 'flat, low-lying, wetland landscapes, which occupy shallow hollows in the glacial drifts deposits. Tree cover consists of scattered willows along the drains and other water channels, which also represent one of the defining characteristic of this landscape type... The historical wetness of the soils means that these landscapes remain largely devoid of settlements, whilst the few roads within them were created as part of the drainage schemes... By the later Middle Ages these landscapes provided extensive commons, which provided an important variety of resources, including peat (for fuel), fish, particularly eels, wildfowl and seasonal rough pasture. In some locations, small holders established cottages around the edges of these commons between the 16th and 18th centuries. Improvement of the Lowland Moors was undertaken by the larger landowners from 16th century onwards, culminating in the large, capital intensive drainage schemes of the late 18th and 19th centuries. The improved pastures that were established as a result enabled some of these wetlands, particularly the Weald Moors, to be used as fattening grounds for cattle and sheep... Ongoing drainage works in the later 20th century has permitted intensive arable cultivation in some locations, particularly on Baggy Moor...'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: This area lies north of Baggy Moor and is associated with River Perry. Small-medium scale slightly sloping agricultural fields, often rectilinear in shape, radiate out from the course of the gently meandering river. Field boundaries are generally low hedges with very few trees, with some drainage ditches that flow into the river for drainage purposes. There is no built form within this character area, which is marked by an absence of woodland and is prone to flooding. There are no roads, and no public rights of way, but there is a visual connection with the surrounding, more elevated landscapes, from this low-lying and sparsely vegetated rural area.

DESCRIPTION: This unsettled landscape to the north of Baggy Moor has no public connections through it, but is a working agricultural landscape completely set aside to arable crops and pasture, with no built form. A human influence is felt by the presence of irrigation systems and views of nearby individual wind turbines at Dandyford, Bagley Marsh and Top House Farm, and the 400kV pylon connection to the west. The LCA is bordered to the east by Lower Hordley, to the south by Bagley Marsh, and to the north by Hordley, with public roads forming the boundaries to the north-west, north and east. The absence of tall mature trees along fields boundaries and the shallow sloping, low-lying landform adds to a sense of openness and reduces the feeling of seclusion, with views to surrounding elevated areas to the north (Welsh Frankton) and east (Kenwick Park). The broadly curving and treed course of the River Perry passes from the north-west to the south of this LCA, with both Tetchill and Spring Brooks feeding the river from the north. The distinct rectilinear fields radiate from the river and are marked by drainage ditches. This field pattern continues further south, beyond the study area, past Bagley Marsh and towards Baggy Moor. Field boundaries generally consist of hedgerows or fencing, with a very small number of hedgerow trees. Trees feature on the banks of the River Perry and Tetchill Brook

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

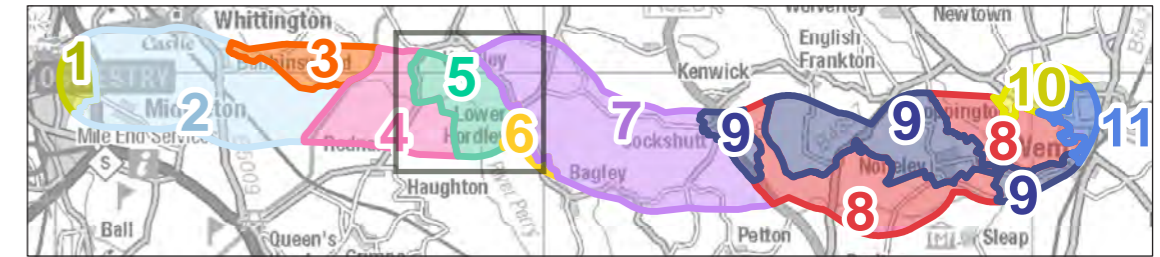


FIGURE 2: View looking southwest from Dandyford across the arable fields along the eastern edge of the LCA.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND QUALITY
- SCENIC QUALITY

Unsettled, agricultural landscape with long open views and pylons visible on the skyline.



FIGURE 3: Aerial view of field patterns along-side the River Perry, and drainage ditches.

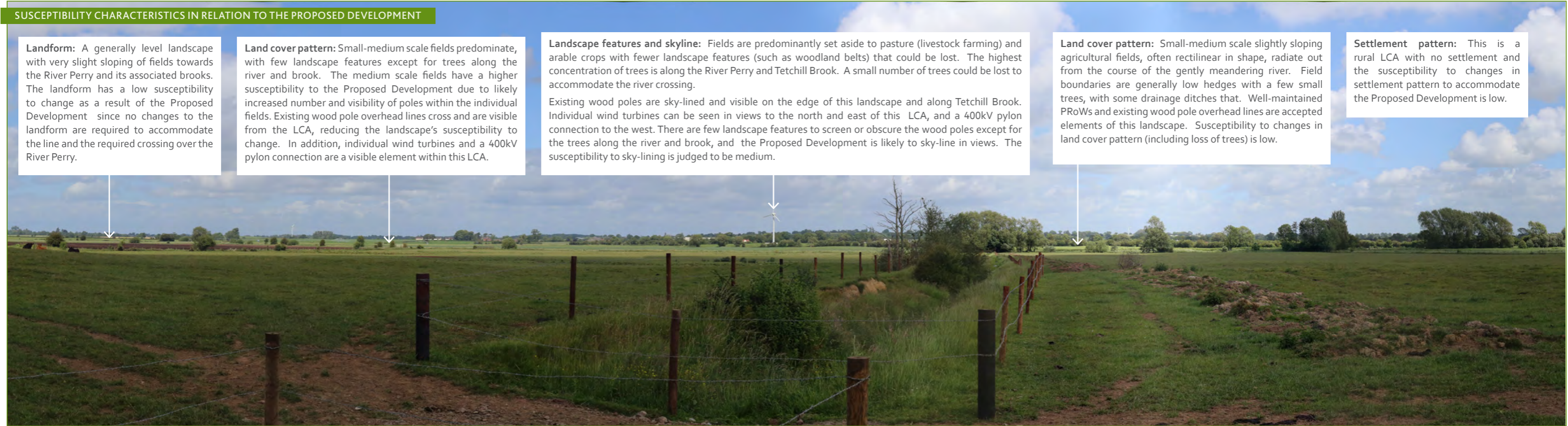
KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
- NATURAL LANDSCAPE INTERESTS

Broadly curving course of the River Perry with linear drainage ditches

LCA 5 LOWLAND MOORS: RIVER PERRY - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM THE WEST OF HAUGHTON, LOOKING NORTH-EAST - THE LCA IS IN FIELDS TOWARDS THE HORIZON (VP61)



SUSCEPTIBILITY CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Landform: A generally level landscape with very slight sloping of fields towards the River Perry and its associated brooks. The landform has a low susceptibility to change as a result of the Proposed Development since no changes to the landform are required to accommodate the line and the required crossing over the River Perry.

Land cover pattern: Small-medium scale fields predominate, with few landscape features except for trees along the river and brook. The medium scale fields have a higher susceptibility to the Proposed Development due to likely increased number and visibility of poles within the individual fields. Existing wood pole overhead lines cross and are visible from the LCA, reducing the landscape's susceptibility to change. In addition, individual wind turbines and a 400kV pylon connection are a visible element within this LCA.

Landscape features and skyline: Fields are predominantly set aside to pasture (livestock farming) and arable crops with fewer landscape features (such as woodland belts) that could be lost. The highest concentration of trees is along the River Perry and Tetchill Brook. A small number of trees could be lost to accommodate the river crossing. Existing wood poles are sky-lined and visible on the edge of this landscape and along Tetchill Brook. Individual wind turbines can be seen in views to the north and east of this LCA, and a 400kV pylon connection to the west. There are few landscape features to screen or obscure the wood poles except for the trees along the river and brook, and the Proposed Development is likely to sky-line in views. The susceptibility to sky-lining is judged to be medium.

Land cover pattern: Small-medium scale slightly sloping agricultural fields, often rectilinear in shape, radiate out from the course of the gently meandering river. Field boundaries are generally low hedges with a few small trees, with some drainage ditches that. Well-maintained PRowS and existing wood pole overhead lines are accepted elements of this landscape. Susceptibility to changes in land cover pattern (including loss of trees) is low.

Settlement pattern: This is a rural LCA with no settlement and the susceptibility to changes in settlement pattern to accommodate the Proposed Development is low.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: The field patterns associated with the 18/19th century improved pastures and drainage ditches are evident, with some erosion due to 20th century field amalgamation. Farmland is generally well maintained, with evidence of irrigation and management, but few landscape features such as mature trees. The course of the River Perry and radiating fields form a distinct landscape pattern associated with drainage ditches built to alleviate flooding of farmland in this area, and are part of a wider habitat for birds that use the River Perry and Baggy Moor. There are no roads and no PRowS within the LCA, no settlement and no built form, lending a sense of some seclusion. Roads have an influence on the edge of the LCA. The visibility of roads, existing overhead lines and individual wind turbines generally extends across field boundaries due to the lack of mature trees, and the relatively level topography, thus reducing the scenic quality, and the perception of remoteness and tranquility. This is an unsettled, agricultural landscape influenced by the visibility of electricity infrastructure, and the overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The small-medium scale LCA has the potential to accommodate change relating to the Proposed Development due to the level landform and lack of settlement. There are few landscape features, and therefore few likely losses; the main consideration being the crossing of the River Perry, which in this low-lying landscape is not considered to pose any technical issues. The openness of the landscape means that wood poles are susceptible to being visible on the skyline, although the Proposed Development is of a similar scale to existing wood poles. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: This working rural landscape has a sense of intermittent tranquility and seclusion due to its inaccessibility and unsettled nature, but this is interspersed with periods of disturbance caused by agricultural operations. The small-medium scale, level topography and limited screening on field boundaries could extend the influence of the Proposed Development over a wider area within the LCA. However, the presence of existing wood lines, edge of settlement, neighbouring roads, existing electricity infrastructure and wind turbines reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from the Proposed Development. Given the overall value of this LCA (medium-low) and susceptibility (medium-low) the overall sensitivity of the LCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

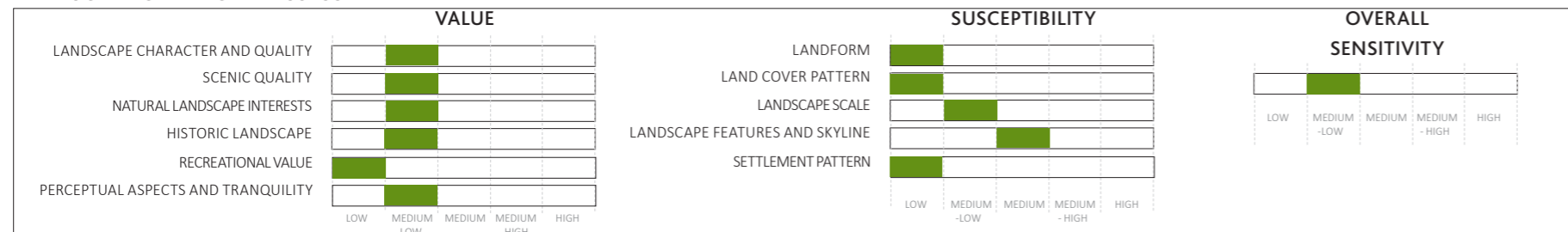
Construction: Approx. 1.5km of OHL (over 7% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. Construction activity would include work at pole positions, stringing locations and use of construction access tracks (ACs 13-14 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) near Lower Lees and the River Perry. Minimal direct landscape losses are anticipated within the construction corridor; no woodland losses, potential loss of short sections of hedgerow to accommodate double poles 53 and 64 which are set within hedgerows. Trees which would be subject to felling or reduction as low as reasonably practicable within the works corridor, include 2 No tree groups, i.e., a small number of trees on the field boundary east of Lower Lees, and a short section to accommodate the River Perry crossing to the east. Subject to safety clearances, there is potential for works to a field tree (oak) approx. 200m east of the River Perry. No losses as a result of the construction accesses are anticipated. No earthworks are required. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene, although this is a working agricultural landscape. Overall the magnitude of change would be medium-low and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The influence of the Proposed Development would be felt across neighbouring fields due to the lack of screening from mature trees, but other steel pylon and wood pole OHLs are visible from the LCA. Wood poles are an accepted element in and around this LCA and are of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. Anticipated landscape losses (to hedgerows and trees at and near the River Perry crossing) resulting from the construction stage are minimal and would improve over time with natural regeneration and potential mitigation. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

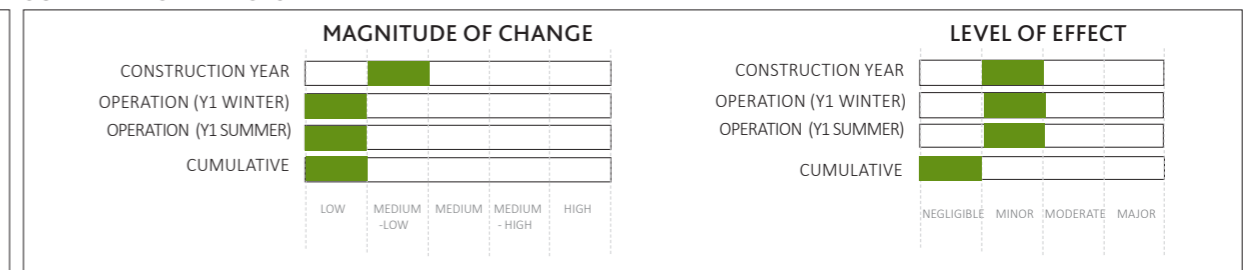
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to the screening effect of deciduous trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 6 ESTATE FARMLANDS (SEMI-INDUSTRIAL): LOWER HORDLEY AND BAGLEY - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

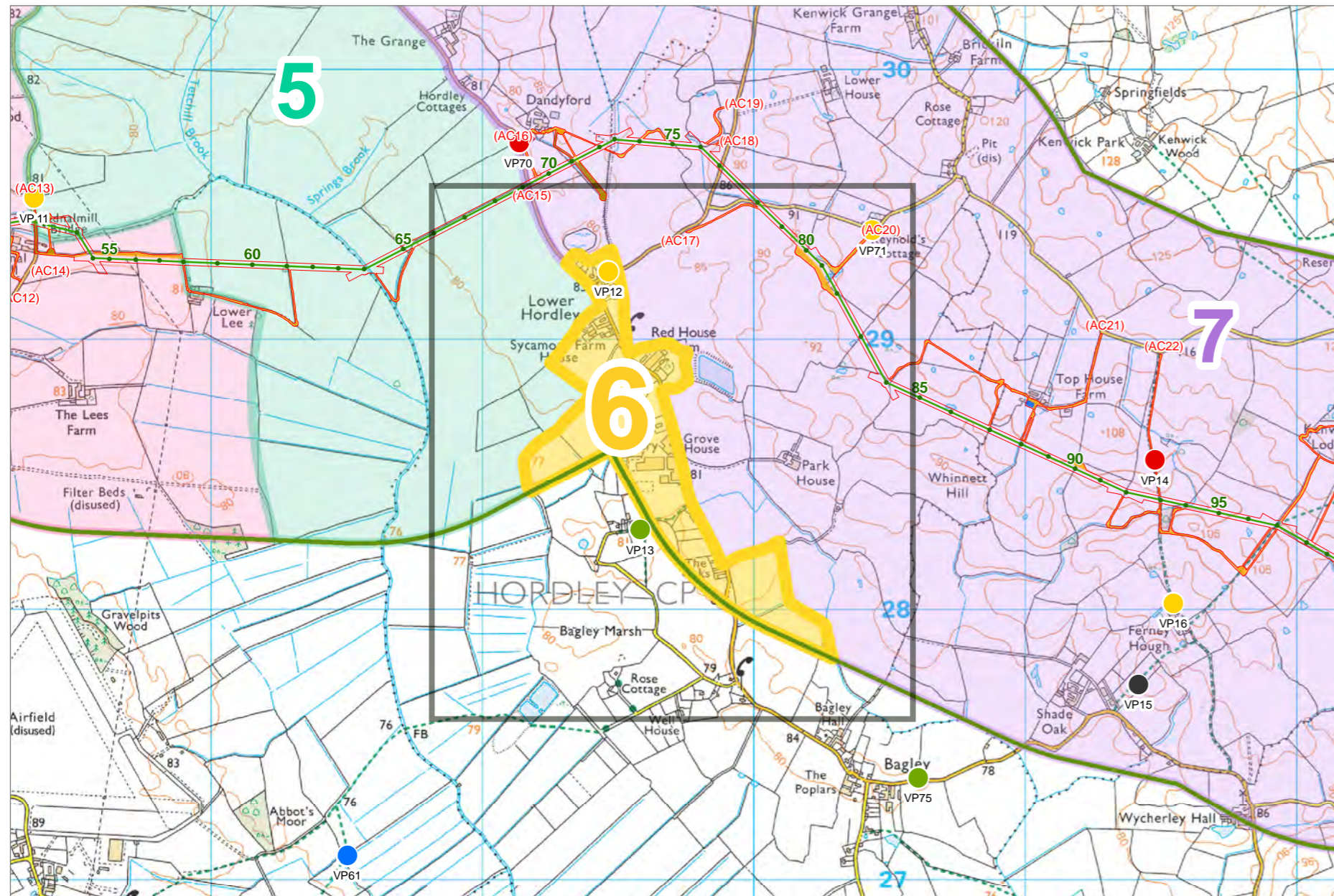
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Mixed farming landuse; Clustered settlement pattern; Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that 'Estate farmlands are gently rolling lowland and valley floor landscapes that occur across large areas of Shropshire... and these landscapes include some the best agricultural land in the county, which have traditionally been associated with mixed farming... The settlement pattern is predominantly one of villages and hamlets and large estate farmsteads... the 18th and 19th century saw significant rationalisation of pre-existing field patterns and the formal enclosure of the remaining areas of unenclosed rough grazing lands. This period also saw the construction of new estate farmsteads in the open countryside, as well as labourers cottages and schools within some of the villages.'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Pocket of industry adjacent to rural settlement and farming activities, concentrated along the road that services Lower Hordley and Bagley.

DESCRIPTION: This particular small and low-lying LCA is notable by the slightly discordant combination of settlement, industry and farming activities concentrated along the road that links Lower Hordley and Bagley. The road follows the route of a former canal (closed in 1917) but there is little remaining evidence of its presence. A cluster of red brick farms and cottages form the traditional centre of the hamlet at Lower Hordley, with small clusters of twentieth century housing to the north. There are no listed buildings. A modern industrial scale abattoir facility lies to the south of the hamlet with associated traffic movements reducing the sense of tranquility in this rural settlement. Small scale, low-lying arable fields are bound with hedgerows, occasional trees and drainage ditches on the edge of the LCA, and blocks of mature trees are present in the centre of the hamlet adding to a sense of some enclosure. One public right of way crosses the south of the LCA along a well treed path south of the abattoir, with little visible connection to the wider landscape. Individual wind turbines are visible to the north, south and east of Lower Hordley, near Dandyford Farm, Bagley Marsh, Shade Oak, Kenwick Lodge and Top House Farm. Telegraph poles, lower voltage overhead lines and a 400kV pylon overhead line are present in the landscape around Lower Hordley. Views typically include neighbouring fields, small clusters of housing, the Village Hall, the rural lane and associated traffic, hedgerows, small blocks of mature trees, and nearby farms. More distant views include hills and low ridges, areas of woodland such as that associated with the Woodhouse Estate and the 400kV overhead line that runs north-east of Rednal Airfield.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

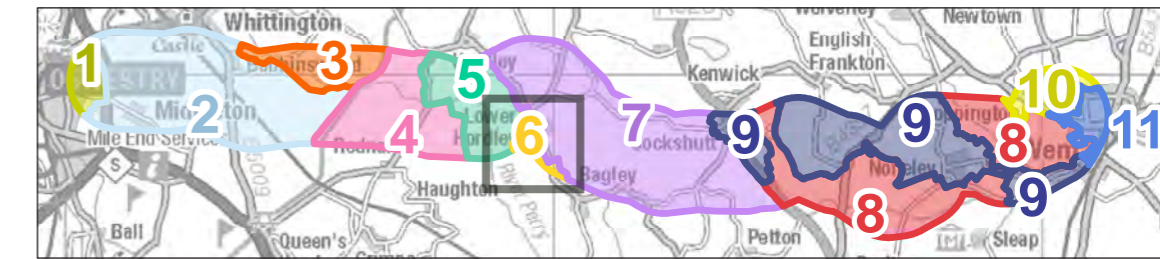


FIGURE 2: View along the rural road through Lower Hordley and along the abattoir facility.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND QUALITY
- PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND TRANQUILITY

Reduced tranquility due to road movements and modern infrastructure.



FIGURE 3: Hordley and Bagley Village Hall looking north towards Dandyford.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS AND TRANQUILITY
- SCENIC QUALITY

Existing infrastructure (to right of view) and modern buildings (village hall).

LCA 6 ESTATE FARMLANDS (SEMI-INDUSTRIAL): LOWER HORDLEY AND BAGLEY - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM THE SOUTH-WEST OF LOWER HORDLEY, LOOKING TOWARDS THE ABP ABATTOIR AND BAGLEY MARSH (VP12)



SUSCEPTIBILITY CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Land cover pattern: Small-scale fields predominate and are bound with hedges and hedgerow trees and largely set aside to arable crops, with occasional small strips and groupings of mature trees on boundaries. Boundaries are gappy in places. There is one PRoW, pockets of industry and present and existing wood pole overhead lines are accepted elements of this landscape. Susceptibility to changes in land cover pattern (including loss of trees) is medium-low.

Settlement pattern: This LCA has a scattered settlement pattern, with a traditional centre, modern housing to the north, and scattered properties to the south. Accommodating a wood pole is feasible but potential routes are limited. Susceptibility to changes in settlement pattern is medium.

Landform: A generally level landscape with a very slight rising of the land to the east. The landform has a low susceptibility to change as a result of the Proposed Development particularly where there is hedgerow screening, since wood poles would not be prominent and no changes to the landform are required to accommodate it.

Landscape Features and Skyline: Fields are predominantly set aside to arable crops with fewer landscape features (such as woodland belts) that could be lost. Existing wood poles and wind turbines are visible on the sky-line, though there is some screening and backclothing provided by mature trees and tall hedgerows. The Proposed Development is likely to sky-line in views, particularly when seen in views from the north of the LCA. Overall susceptibility to change as a result of the introduction of a wood pole OHL, is judged to be medium-low.

Landscape scale: Reduced visibility of poles is likely within the smaller-scale fields, however, they are more susceptible to loss of trees. Existing wood poles and mature trees are of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. Susceptibility to changes in scale is therefore judged to be medium-low.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Historic settlement and field patterns remain in proximity to Sycamore and Red House farms, with modern housing and industrial development to the north and south. A short section of one PRoW crosses the south of the LCA but has little visual connection with the LCA. Farms are well maintained, as is the large abattoir facility. Screening to field boundaries reduces the presence of this large but low-lying facility in the wider rural landscape. Its presence is felt along the rural road, with regular HGV traffic movements, metal fencing and buildings, and clearly defined access areas to the road edge. Building styles vary, with traditional buildings to the centre of the hamlet and more incongruous modern buildings to the north. There are no listed buildings. Rural roads intersect this LCA on its northern edge, and form a boundary along its eastern edge. Lower voltage wood OHLs and telegraph poles are visible. Scenic value is reduced by the presence of mixed development and views across neighbouring rural landscapes are in places screened by intervening trees and high hedges. The abattoir, associated traffic movements (including HGVs), electricity and communications infrastructure, have contributed to the erosion of the traditional rural character, and reduced the sense of tranquillity. This is a settled rural scene influenced by modern infrastructure, the abattoir and its associated traffic movements, and overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The generally level, small scale rural area of fields and mixed development is bound with hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Few changes to landform or loss of features would be required to accommodate the change relating to the Proposed Development. The most prominent landscape features are trees, with wood pole lines, mixed settlement and an industrial scale abattoir area also present. The Proposed Development is of a similar scale to existing wood poles and mature trees, though the scattered settlement pattern makes it more difficult to accommodate the Proposed Development, and there is potential for the poles to be visible on the skyline. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: The rural landscape is well-maintained and has a sense of enclosure due to the small scale pattern, level topography and screening from hedgerows with trees, but the mixed development reduces the scenic and recreational value. Other than mature trees and areas of relic historic field pattern, landscape features are not particularly susceptible to changes resulting from the Proposed Development. There is potential for poles to be visible on the skyline, but the presence of wood lines, mixed settlement and industrial abattoir reduces the susceptibility to change. Given the overall value of this LCA (medium-low) and susceptibility (medium-low) the overall sensitivity is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

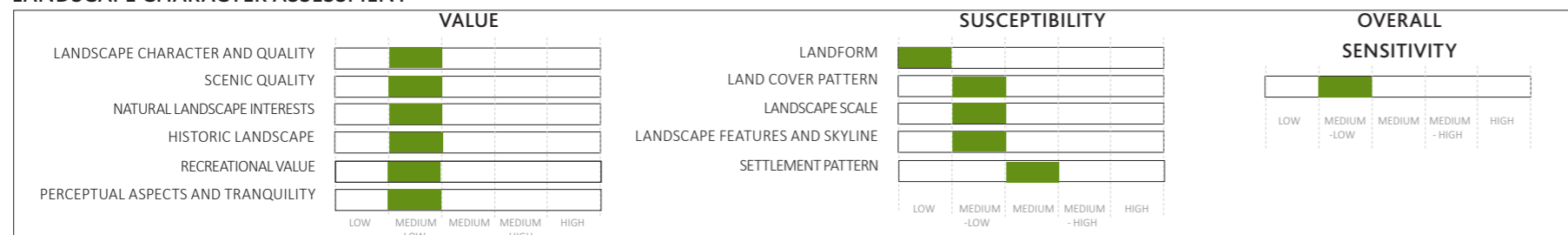
Construction: Construction activity would occur outside this LCA. No direct landscape losses are anticipated within this LCA; no woodland losses, and no loss of short sections of hedgerow. No permanent loss of trees as a result of the construction accesses and lay-down areas is anticipated. No earthworks are required. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene visible to the north of the LCA. Overall the magnitude of change would be medium-low and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development is in keeping with the scale of landscape features in this LCA, which features existing wood poles and pockets of farming, industry and settlement. The influence of the Proposed Development on the character of the area would be indirect due to its positioning in neighbouring LCAs (5 and 7) which lie over 300m from the closest point on the northern edge of LCA 6. Whilst the Proposed Development would be visible over a wide field of view (approximately 2.5km in total) as it routes to the west, north and east of Lower Hordley, the distance from the LCA, the layering effect of any intervening hedgerow and field trees, and the presence of existing wood poles reduces the magnitude of change. There are no anticipated direct landscape losses. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

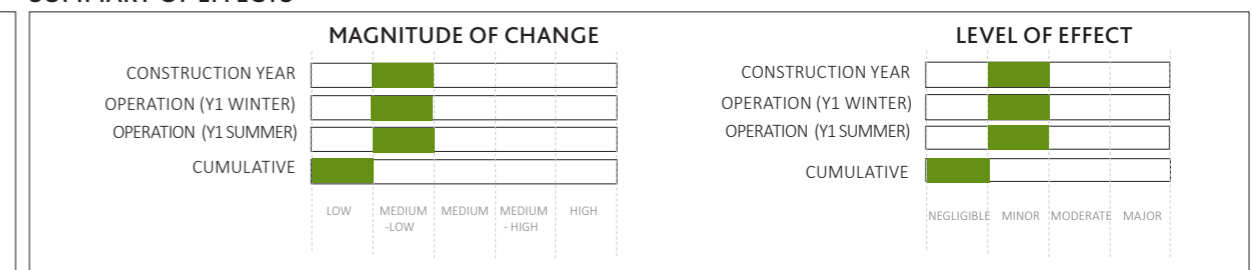
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to screening from deciduous trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 7 ESTATE FARMLANDS: STANWARDINE AND KENWICK ELEVATED RIDGE - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

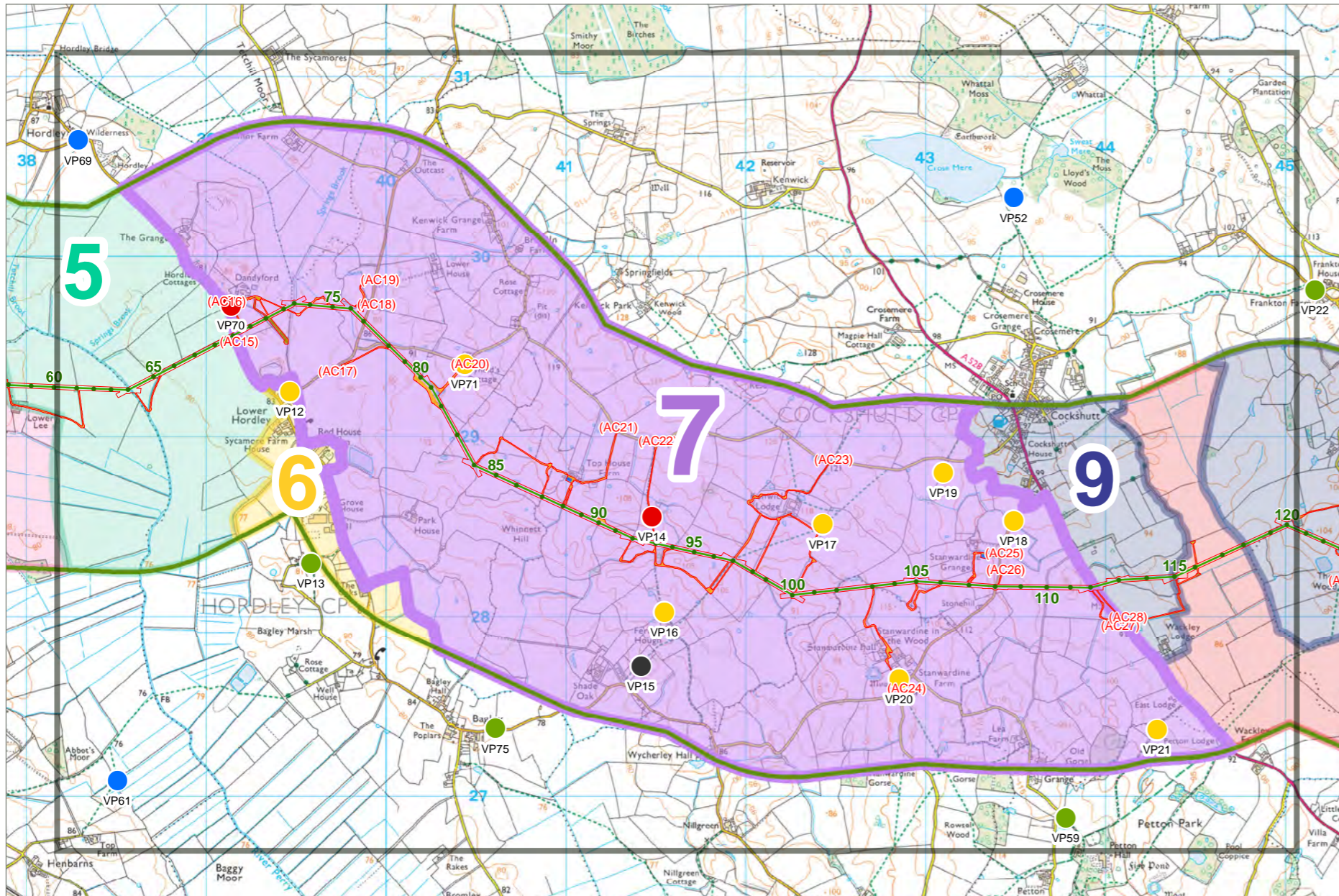
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Mixed farming landuse; Clustered settlement pattern; Large country houses with parklands; Planned woodland character; Medium to large scale landscapes with framed views.

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that the 'Estate farmlands are gently rolling lowland... landscapes that occur across large areas of Shropshire... some of the best agricultural land in the county... an ordered pattern of fields and woods... the prevailing pattern of medium to large sub-regular fields... They tend to create framed views... Parklands, with their veteran and specimen trees, are a particular feature of the type. The settlement pattern is predominantly one of villages and hamlets and large estate farmsteads... The gradual informal enclosure of the open fields was under way by the late medieval period and largely completed by the 17th century... some deer parks were created in the medieval period... the 18th and 19th century saw significant rationalisation of pre-existing field patterns...'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Undulating, well-maintained historic agricultural landscape rising some 50m to an elevated ridge with scattered farmsteads, small pockets of woodland, expansive views and listed farmhouses.

DESCRIPTION: This is one of the larger LCAs in the study area. The medium-scale lowland agricultural landscapes near Lower Hordley and Bagley in the west, rise some 50m to the low ridge that runs from Stanwardine in the south-east of the LCA, through to Kenwick Park and Kenwick grange Farm in the north-west of the LCA. This is a well-maintained and undulating agricultural landscape, with small-medium scale irregular fields set aside to both arable and pasture, with few small water courses, such as Spring Brook. The fields near Lower Hordley in the west tend to be larger in scale with fewer trees. Elsewhere, strong field boundaries are marked by mature hedgerows and trees, with individual mature field trees (including oaks) and ponds featuring strongly in this LCA. Much of the 19th century field patterns remain, particularly in the centre of the LCA close to Kenwick Lodge, Ferney Hough and Top House Farm. The 16th century park associated with the Grade II* listed building at Stanwardine Hall is now set aside to pasture, though there are small pockets of woodland and well treed field boundaries in the vicinity. The brick and sandstone former manor house is now a farmhouse, and remains relatively intact, along with its associated buildings and its medieval moat, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Nearby is the Grade II listed 17th century Shade Oak Farmhouse, which form part of a stud farm. Red brick farmsteads and a small number of cottages are scattered across this LCA. The largest hamlet is the small cluster of red brick buildings at Stanwardine in the Wood. The area is serviced by rural roads that run east west across the edge of the ridge past Kenwick Lodge, and along the lowland area through Bagley and Hordley, and by private farm tracks. The lanes generally following the lower valley edge near Wycherley Hall and Lower Hordley, and the upper edge of the ridge past Kenwick Lodge and Top House Farm and down towards Tetchill Moor in the east. The eastern part of the LCA, north and west of Stanwardine, is serviced by a network of PRoWs, however the area to the west has no PRoWs. Individual wind turbines are visible to the north, south and west of the LCA, including at Dandyford, Bagley Marsh, Shade Oak, Kenwick Lodge and Top House Farm, in addition to telegraph poles and lower voltage overhead lines. Views are generally expansive, with long views to the Welsh mountains in the west and the Shropshire Hills in the south. Some views are framed by the small pockets of woodland or by well-treed hedgerows, and the gentle undulations (particularly to the centre of the LCA) can foreshorten views and add a sense of enclosure.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

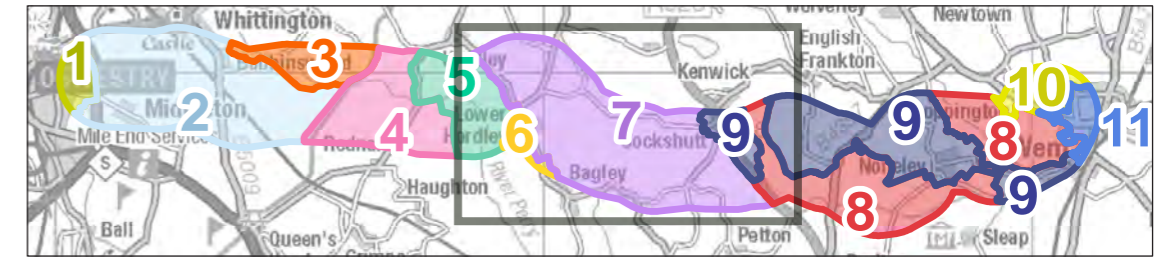


FIGURE 2: View over larger medium scale arable fields northeast of Lower Hordley, looking south across LCA 7 towards Lower Hordley

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
 - SCENIC QUALITY
- An open agricultural landscape with long views over medium scale fields.



FIGURE 3: View of Grade II* listed 17th century Stanwardine Hall, a former manor house and currently a farmhouse. View is looking north-west across LCA 7

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE
- Grade II* listed 17th century Stanwardine Hall,

LCA 7 ESTATE FARMLANDS: STANWARDINE AND KENWICK ELEVATED RIDGE - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM PROW NEAR KENWICK OAK AND FERNEY HOUGH (VP14)



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Parts of this LCA retain the 19th century field pattern (particularly to the centre of the LCA near Kenwick Lodge and Shade Oak Stud Farm) with land set aside for pasture and arable. To the west, the traditional field pattern has been eroded in places through 20th century field amalgamation. PROWs cross fields and follow field boundaries in the eastern half of the LCA, though access to some PROW is restricted by hedge growth and lack of boundary crossings. Farms are well-maintained and the agricultural land is well-tended. The majority of buildings are traditionally styled red brick two-story dwellings. There are two listed buildings, including the Grade II* Stanwardine Hall, and its Scheduled Ancient Monument, which is of national value. Rural lanes service this LCA. Visibility varies according to elevation and screening on field boundaries, with expansive and scenic views from the larger scale elevated fields near Kenwick Oak and Lodge. Individual wind turbines and wood poles are visible and occasionally sky-lined in this LCA. This is a well-tended rural landscape, with good numbers of mature trees (including oaks), ponds and small woodland blocks, with historic and scenic interest. The LCA is influenced by modern infrastructure including wind turbines, wood pole overhead lines and agricultural sheds slightly reducing the sense of remoteness and tranquility. The overall landscape value is judged to be medium.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: This sparsely settled LCA has the capacity to accommodate a new overhead line without changes to landcover pattern and settlement pattern, and is similar in scale to the most prominent landscape features (mature trees and woodland blocks) and to existing wood poles lines. Individual turbines and agricultural sheds are also present. The Proposed Development could sky-line in some closer views, and be backclothed in others, subject to viewing position and landscape features, and there is potential for loss of trees and sections of woodland. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: Whilst this landscape is judged to have medium value, the Proposed Development is similar in scale and format to existing wood pole overhead lines that are an accepted element of this landscape. Sky-lining is possible, but landscape features, rising landform and undulating fields provide some screening. The presence of wood lines, individual turbines and modern farm buildings further reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to change. Given the overall value of this LCA (medium) and susceptibility (medium-low) the overall sensitivity is judged to be medium.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

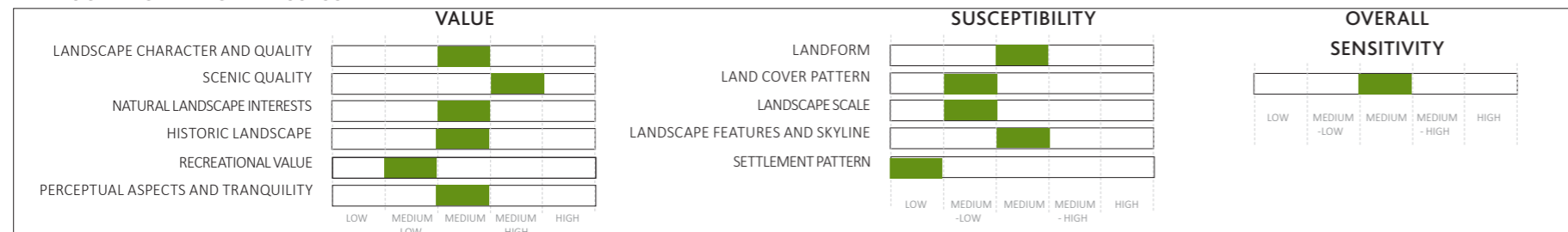
Construction: Approx. 5.4km of OHL (over 25% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. Construction activity in this large LCA would include work at pole positions, stringing locations, undergrounding of the existing OHL at Dandyford & introduction of a new terminal pole, use of construction accesses (ACs 15-27 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) from Dandyford through to Reynold's Cottage, Top House Farm, north of Ferney Hough, around Stanwardine & at the A528, & temporary lay down areas near Dandyford, Top House Farm & Stanwardine Grange. Direct landscape losses are anticipated within the construction corridor, including temporary loss of short sections of the hedgerow at double poles 76, 82 (species rich hedgerow), 84, 92, 100, 108 & 112. At least 6No tree groups will be subject to felling, and 18No trees will be felled, at locations close to Dandyford, Reynold's Cottage, Top House Farm, Kenwick Lodge, around Stanwardine & west of the A528. Subject to safety clearances, other trees would be subject to felling or reduction as low as reasonably practicable within the works corridor, including 2 veteran trees near poles 77 and 80. Permanent losses resulting from construction accesses are not anticipated. No earthworks are required. Direct landscape losses are localised along the construction corridor & their loss is unlikely to affect the character of this large & relatively well treed LCA. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene within this working agricultural landscape. Overall, magnitude of change in this large LCA would be medium-low & likely effects minor (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development is in keeping with the scale of this well treed landscape, which features wood poles, individual wind turbines and agricultural sheds. The influence of the OHL, and tree losses resulting from it, would be localised along the construction corridor, and often screened or backclothed by vegetation. Viewing position could lead to poles being sky-lined in closer views to the south and west, and as a short section of the line crosses over the low ridge southwest of Stanwardine Grange. A greater number of poles could be visible in larger, and more open, fields to the west. Losses to trees would be permanent but are isolated and unlikely to be felt across the wider LCA. Natural regeneration should assist in softening the appearance of any gaps over time. Overall, magnitude of change is judged to be medium-low and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

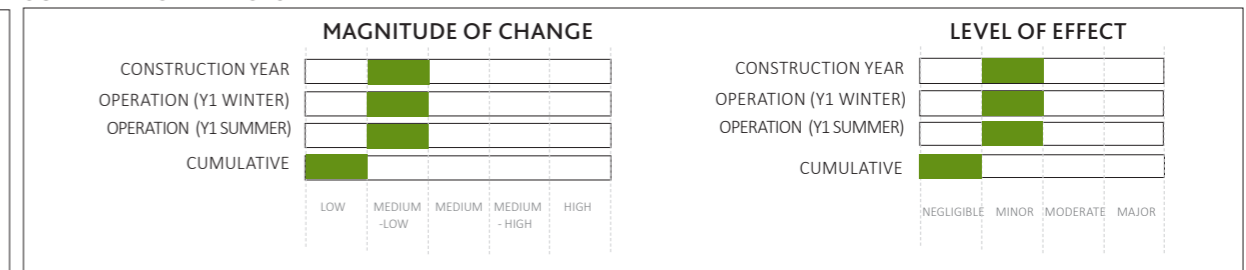
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to the screening effect of deciduous trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 8 LOWLAND MOORS: WACKLEY BROOK AND RIVER RODEN - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

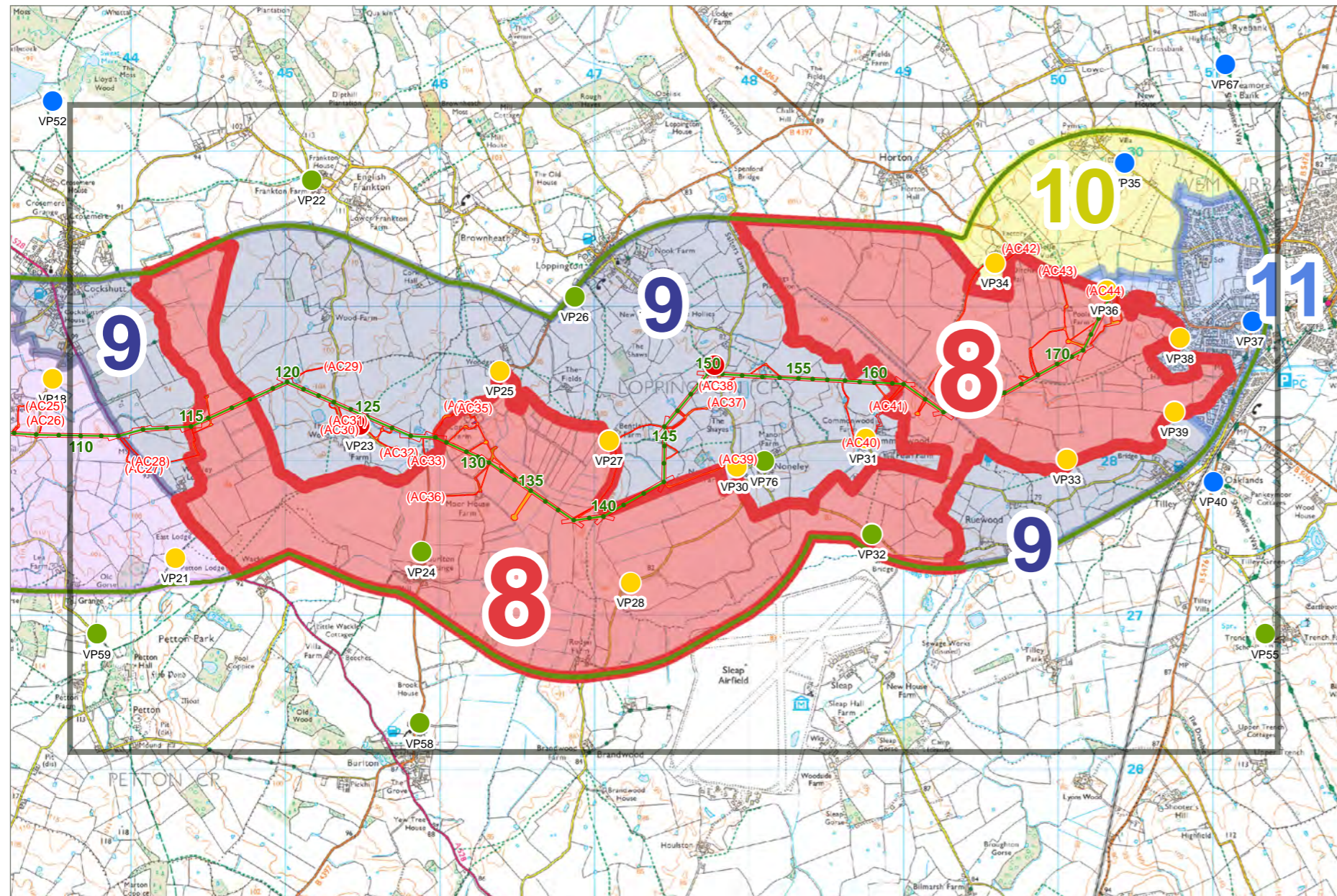
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Flat, low-lying topography; Peaty soils; Wet ditches and drains; Open, unsettled landscape

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that the 'Lowland Moors occur throughout northern and north-eastern Shropshire... They are flat, low-lying, wetland landscapes, which occupy shallow hollows in the glacial drifts deposits. Tree cover consists of scattered willows along the drains and other water channels, which also represent one of the defining characteristic of this landscape type... The historical wetness of the soils means that these landscapes remain largely devoid of settlements, whilst the few roads within them were created as part of the drainage schemes. Together with the medium-large scale and open views, this lends these landscapes a secluded quality... Improvement was undertaken by the larger landowners from 16th century onwards, culminating in the large, capital intensive drainage schemes of the late 18th and 19th centuries... Ongoing drainage works in the later 20th century has permitted intensive arable cultivation in some locations.'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Absence of settlement with scattered farmsteads; small through to large scale field patterns; few landscape features

DESCRIPTION: This particular LCA is a well-managed predominantly medium scale agricultural landscape (resulting from twentieth century field amalgamation) which covers two interconnected pockets within the study area, one near Sleep and Wackley, and one near the River Roden. The LCA is in good condition, and is marked by its low elevation, regular field patterns, meandering brooks (Wackley and Sleep), drainage ditches, the man-made linear course of the River Roden, and is susceptible to flooding. Generally, there are few trees on hedgerow boundaries which lends an open quality to this landscape, but the watercourses are tree-lined and small scattered pockets of woodland occur to the east of Burlton Grange. The Moorfields LWS features a distinct pattern of small-scale rectilinear fields bound with mature hedgerows, which are more historic in character than other existing field boundaries in this LCA. Larger scale fields occur at Burlton Grange, north of Sleep Airfield and near the River Roden. Small-scale and more historic fields occur in immediate proximity to the farmhouses in this LCA and the local wildlife site at Moorfields. This LCA is sparsely populated with scattered farmsteads and a sense of remoteness. The A528 forms the western boundary of this LCA, and links this landscape to Cockshutt in the north, and Harmer Hill in the south. The B5063 forms the eastern boundary of the LCA 8 just west of Wem. A network of wood pole OHLs crosses the LCA, and rural lanes connecting the LCA to the neighbouring hamlets and villages of Noneley, Loppington, Commonwood, Ruewood and Burlton. There are three Grade II listed buildings/structures at Burlton Grange. A small network of public footpaths services the area. Sleep Airfield lies to the south of the LCA, and is screened to an extent by intervening trees on Sleep Brook. Airfield operations and helicopter training flights, reduce the sense of tranquillity and remoteness to the north of Sleep Brook.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

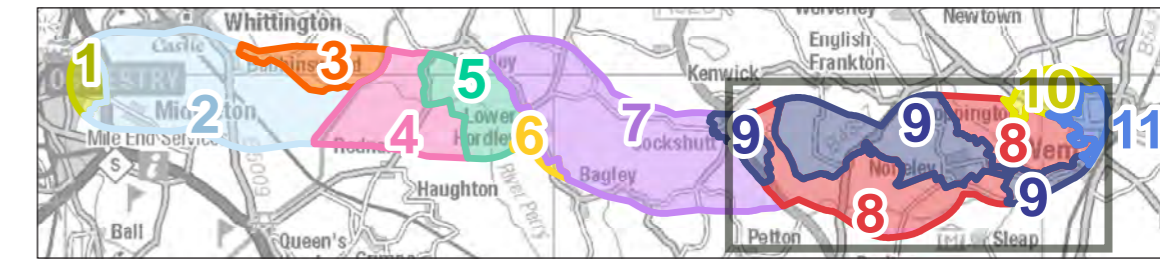


FIGURE 2: View over medium scale arable field west of Burlton in the direction of Sleep Airfield and Moorfields LWS.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- LANDSCAPE CHARACTER
- NATURAL LANDSCAPE INTERESTS

An open agricultural landscape with long views over medium scale fields, and few landscape features.



FIGURE 3: View towards the River Roden and surrounding agricultural landscape, taken from The Ditches Hall and looking south over the low-lying landscape and existing Lower voltage OHLs.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- TRANQUILITY
- SCENIC QUALITY

Sparsely populated landscape with long views to distant uplands.

LCA 8 LOWLAND MOORS: WACKLEY BROOK AND RIVER RODEN - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM PROW IN ARABLE FIELDS NORTH OF SLEAP AIRFIELD, WITH NONELEY HALL VISIBLE TO THE RIGHT OF VIEW (VP32)



SUSCEPTIBILITY CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Landscape features and skyline: Fields are predominantly set aside to pasture (livestock farming) and arable crops with fewer landscape features (such as woodland belts) that could be lost. Where there are areas of sparse vegetation and medium-large scale fields, the tops of existing wood poles (including 33kV wood pole OHLs) are occasionally sky-lined in views and visible in this landscape. Higher hedgerows, trees and woodland blocks, along with vegetation on the edge of the LCA, can provide a backcloth and screening. The tops of the Proposed Development are likely to sky-line in views, but only when viewed in close proximity, or in larger scale and more open fields. Susceptibility to sky-lining is judged to be medium.

Land cover pattern: Medium scale fields predominate, and have a higher susceptibility to the Proposed Development due to likely increased number and visibility of poles within the individual fields. However, because of the greater scale, there are fewer landscape features which would be lost as a result of the Proposed Development and susceptibility is therefore reduced. Existing wood pole overhead lines cross the area and reduce the landscape's susceptibility to change to medium-low.

Landform: A level landscape, with no changes (cut or fill) to the landform required to accommodate the Proposed Development. The lack of screening from trees does mean that poles would be more prominent in this landscape. The landform has a medium-low susceptibility to change.

Landscape scale: Increased number and visibility of poles is likely within the medium-scale fields. However, existing wood poles and mature trees are of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. Susceptibility to changes in scale is therefore judged to be medium-low.

Settlement pattern: This is a sparsely settled, rural LCA with a small number of scattered farmsteads, and occasional dwellings. Susceptibility to changes in settlement pattern to accommodate the Proposed Development is low.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Much of the 19th century field patterns recorded by the OS have been lost to twentieth century field amalgamation and the introduction of more intensive agricultural practices, though small pockets remain in proximity to farmhouses and at Moorfields LWS. Small blocks of woodland are evident, mature trees line the watercourses and some drainage ditches, and high hedges line the roads. The River Roden follows the course of an artificial channel to the west of Commonwood. A small network of PROWs service the area, though access is restricted in places. Farms are generally well-maintained. Traditional red brick farm houses and associated buildings predominate with some modern agricultural sheds. Three of the buildings and structures at Burlton Grange are Grade II listed. The A528 and B5063 are visible on the edges of the LCA and their influence reduces the sense of remoteness on the edges, as does the influence of airfield activities and manoeuvres on the area north of Sleaf. Visibility is variable, with long views to distant uplands experienced from some locations, and fore-shortened views across one or two field boundaries where hedgerows are high and the ground level. Lower voltage overhead lines (including two wood pole 33kV OHLs) are visible within the LCA, with the exception of the landscape to the north of Sleaf Airfield. The scenic quality, and the perception of remoteness and tranquility in this LCA have been reduced. The landscape is such that long lengths of a linear development such as an OHL would be visible in this LCA. This is a sparsely settled agricultural scene, with pockets of tranquility and a sense of openness, and with long-reaching views to distant uplands. The LCA is influenced by modern infrastructure and airfield activities and manoeuvres, and the overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The level, open and medium scale agricultural landscape bound with hedgerows and hedgerow trees has the potential to accommodate the Proposed Development, without changes to landform or settlement pattern, and with few losses of trees and woodland. Wood pole lines and agricultural sheds are present, and of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. Poles are susceptible to being visible on the skyline in this level open landscape. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: The landscape has changed due to the influence of modern farming practices, the larger roads, modern agricultural buildings and the airfield. In spite of this, the sparse settlement pattern contributes to a sense of remoteness which has been retained away from these features, with some scenic quality due to the openness of this rural landscape. There is potential for localised sky-lining in closer views, but the open nature of this landscape means that landscape features are unlikely to be lost. Given the overall value of this LCA (medium-low) and susceptibility (medium-low) the overall sensitivity is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

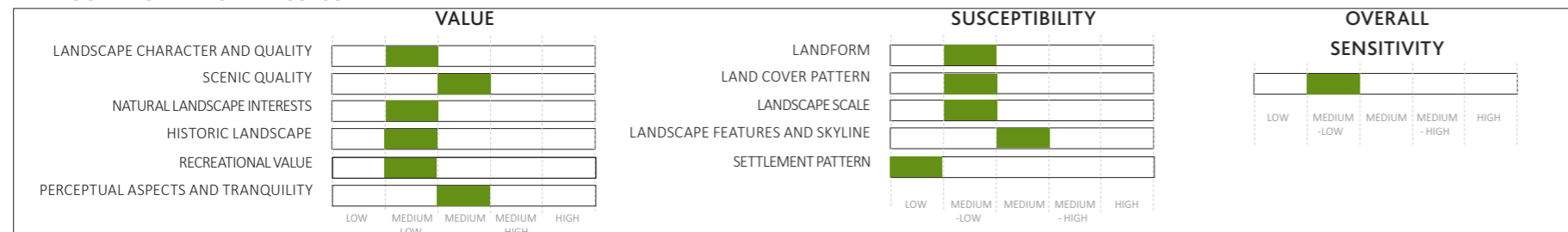
Construction: Approx. 3.2km of OHL (over 15% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. Construction activity includes work at pole positions, stringing locations, undergrounding of existing OHLs near Cockshutt, Coppice Farm and Wem and introduction of new associated terminal poles, use of construction access tracks (ACs 28,35,36,39,42-44 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) near Wackley Lodge, Coppice Farm, Moorfields LWS, Noneley, the River Roden crossing and near Wem. There are temporary lay down areas next to Coppice Farm and the B5063 Ellesmere Road (including welfare unit and security cabin). The Proposed Development is larger in scale than, but similar in appearance to, two existing 33kV OHLs that currently enter Wem Substation from the south, passing across the B5063. One of these is to be undergrounded and a trench would be required through fields and the road. Works to Wem Substation include introducing a new double wood H-pole and approx. 10m high 132kV cable steel gantry in addition to transformers, connectors and busbars. Whilst there would be short-term disruption, minimal landscape losses are anticipated within the construction corridor; no woodland loss and potential temporary loss of short sections of hedgerow where double poles are located. 7No trees (ash, alder and willow) and 4No tree groups would be subject to felling. Subject to safety clearance, a small number of other trees would be subject to reduction as low as reasonably practicable within the works corridor near Moor House Farm, near the River Roden and near Wem. There would be temporary loss of short sections of hedgerow at double poles 140, 162 and 172. No permanent losses to trees and hedgerows as a result of the construction accesses are anticipated. No earthworks are required. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene in this large LCA, with small numbers of direct landscape losses along short sections of the alignment. This is a working landscape largely set aside to farming activities which features existing wood pole OHLs. Overall, magnitude of change resulting from the construction and introduction of the Proposed Development would be medium-low and likely effects minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development is in keeping with the scale of existing landscape features which include hedgerows with trees and occasional linear strips of trees. A greater numbers of poles would be visible in the sparsely populated, larger scale fields near the River Roden, with potential for localised sky-lining when viewed in close proximity to the line. Existing wood poles, airfield manoeuvres and farming activities are accepted elements in this LCA, and the proposed wood poles would not be entirely discordant features. No changes to landform or settlement pattern are required. The influence of the Proposed Development would be localised due to the layering effect of hedgerow trees on field boundaries. The impact of any landscape losses from the construction phase would continue to improve over time. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

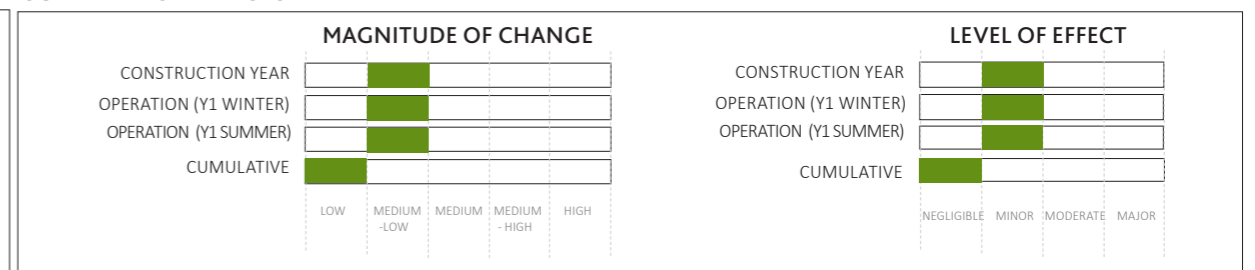
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the OHL would be less visible due to the screening effect of deciduous trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 9 PRINCIPAL SETTLED FARMLANDS: COCKSHUTT TO RUEWOOD - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

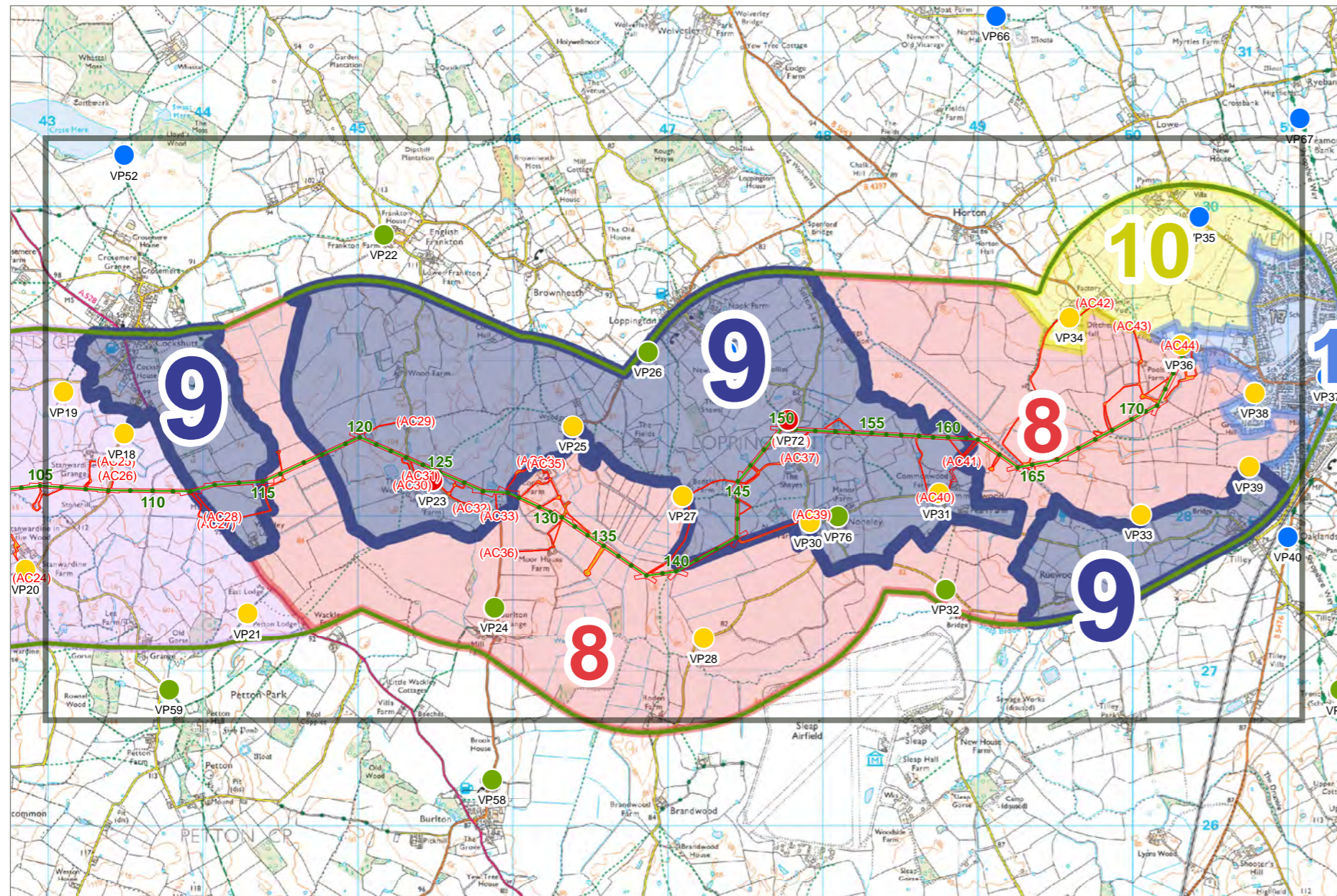
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Mixed farming land use; Varied pattern of sub-regular, hedged fields.

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that the 'Principal Settled Farmlands are prevalent throughout northern Shropshire, mainly in association with... sandstones... These are settled lowland landscapes of small villages and hamlets, scattered farms... that are predominantly utilised for mixed farming... this landscape type lacks significant woodlands, although small pieces of ancient woodland and plantation occur in some areas... tree cover comprises scattered hedgerow and field trees... are also defined by a clustered settlement pattern of hamlets and smaller villages and a medium to high density dispersal of farmsteads and wayside cottages. Together with the relatively small, sub-regular fields, these elements combine to create medium scale landscapes with predominantly filtered views. The Principal Settled Farmlands also have a varied history of development. During the Middle Ages many of the villages and hamlets were surrounded by open fields, the enclosure of which occurred on an informal basis during the later medieval and early modern period. Beyond these areas the field patterns often become more irregular and appear to have been enclosed directly from woodland or rough pasture.'

ADDITIONAL KEY CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Lightly undulating settled rural landscape with scattered hamlets, and small villages occupying slightly elevated land; clusters of listed buildings; small-medium scale field pattern with hedgerows, good numbers of hedgerow trees, ponds and small woodland blocks.

DESCRIPTION: This LCA is slightly elevated, lightly undulating, settled farmland, in good condition and featuring a small-medium scale irregular field pattern. Mature trees feature on hedgerow boundaries and in fields, in small woodland blocks and around field ponds. Field size tends to decrease in closer proximity to settlement, with the largest fields present in the west and east. Hamlets include Noneley and Commonwood in the east, Ruewood and Tilley in the south-east. The edge of the LCA clips the village of Loppington in the north, and Cockshutt on the A528 in the north-west of the LCA. Cockshutt appears as a satellite area, a continuation of this LCA, which lies north of the more open, regular and less vegetated Lowland Moors. Other scattered properties and farmsteads lie adjacent to the network of rural lanes and the B4397 that services the area. Listed buildings are present across the LCA, with clusters at Ruewood, Noneley, Tilley, Woodgate, Loppington and Cockshutt, and one at Malt Kiln Farm, and including Grade II* Tilley Hall on the very edge of the LCA. Loppington contains a conservation area, numerous listed buildings, including the Grade I listed St Michael parish church, and a community hall. Settlement is mixed and includes pockets of historic red brick and black/white farms and cottages, and both 20th and 21st century development on the edge of Loppington and Cockshutt. Lower voltage OHLs are present in this LCA. PRoWs cross the LCA connecting the hamlets and villages. Views vary according to the scale of fields and the visual containment provided by the layering effect of trees and field boundaries. Small-scale well-treed fields add a sense of tranquillity and seclusion, and larger fields a sense of openness.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

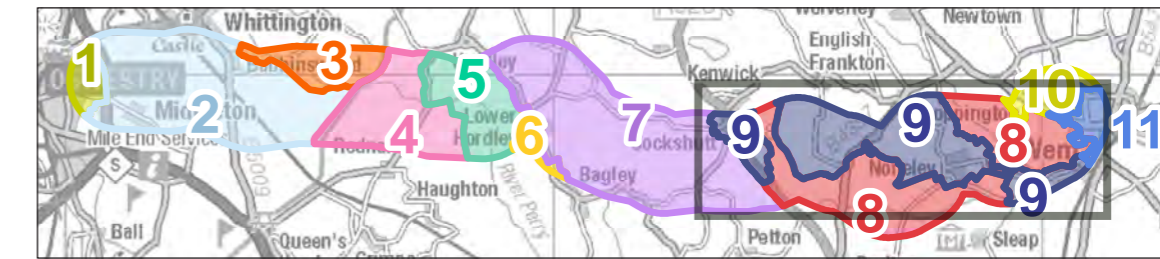


FIGURE 2: View over medium scale pasture north of The Shayes, with Loppington parish church visible on the skyline just to the right of the existing 33kV wood pole line.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- NATURAL LANDSCAPE INTERESTS
- Individual field trees, ponds and the layering effects of trees on field boundaries.



FIGURE 3: View looking north-north-west towards the hamlet at Noneley.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE
- Listed farms and farm buildings are present in this LCA, including Grafton Farm (right of view) and Noneley Hall Farm (left of view).

LCA 9 PRINCIPAL SETTLED FARMLANDS: COCKSHUTT TO RUEWOOD - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM PUBLIC FOOTPATH NORTH OF THE SHAYES (VP72)



SUSCEPTIBILITY CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Prominent landscape features and skylines: The skyline is largely formed by trees. Wood poles and the tops of local buildings or more distant elevated areas (such as Clive village's church spire), are also occasionally seen on the skyline. Wood poles are generally only seen within close proximity due to the small scale of fields and the screening from field boundaries, with exceptions to the east and west of the LCA where medium scale fields predominate. The Proposed Development is likely to be seen on the sky-line, but only when viewed in close proximity. Susceptibility to sky-lining is therefore judged to be medium-low.

Settlement pattern: Though rural in character, this LCA is settled, with scattered small hamlets in the east at Noneley, Commonwood, Ruewood and Tilley. The LCA clips the southern edge of both Loppington and Cockshutt villages, and there are residential properties and farmsteads scattered across the LCA. Susceptibility to changes in settlement pattern is however reduced to medium due to intervening small-scale fields with well treed boundaries that can accommodate the Proposed Development.

Landscape scale: Increased number and visibility of poles is likely within the medium-scale fields, and the smaller fields are more susceptible to loss of trees and pond-side vegetation. However, existing wood poles and mature trees are of a similar scale to the Proposed Development. Susceptibility to changes in scale is therefore judged to be medium-low.

Land cover pattern: There is evidence of remnant enclosure pattern in the small fields near villages, bound with hedgerows and trees, and containing individual field trees. Ponds with pond-side vegetation are also present. Ruewood Pastures SSSI (valued for wet grassland) is found to the south-east of the LCA. Well-maintained PRowS and existing wood pole overhead lines are accepted elements of this landscape. Susceptibility to changes in land cover pattern (including loss of trees and pond-side vegetation) is medium.

Landform: The mostly flat or gently undulating landform has a low susceptibility to change arising from the Proposed Development particularly where there is hedgerow and tree screening, since wood poles would not be prominent and no changes to the landform are required to accommodate it.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Historic features, such as field patterns, listed buildings and a conservation area, along with mature trees and pockets of rural tranquillity, add to the value of this settled rural LCA. Some of the fields close to the hamlets and villages still display small scale remnant enclosure pattern, though the traditional field pattern has been eroded through 20th century field amalgamation in the far east and west. Scattered farmsteads are generally well-maintained, fields and hedgerows are tended/maintained. Modern and historic buildings are present, with a large concentration of listed buildings in the centre of Loppington (a conservation area) and others at Noneley, Ruewood, Tilley, Woodgate, Malt Kiln Farm and Cockshutt. Some farm buildings have been converted into residential dwellings. Parish churches and primary schools are present in Loppington and Cockshutt. The area is serviced by a small network of rural lanes, roads and public footpaths, and there is a visible network of existing overhead lines on wood poles. Visual containment is provided by tree cover, particularly the layering effect provided by trees on field boundaries and the level topography. Longer views are generally experienced towards the edge of the LCA where fields are more open. The overall landscape value is judged to be medium.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The generally level, small-medium scale settled rural landscape has the potential to accommodate the Proposed Development without harming its key characteristics. The most prominent landscape features are mature trees located in fields, hedgerows and next to ponds. These are susceptible to potential removal to accommodate an overhead line as it crosses the LCA. Existing wood pole lines, settlement and some commercial activity (in Cockshutt and Loppington) are already present. The Proposed Development is of a similar scale to existing wood poles and mature trees, and would not appear incongruous. Settlement is scattered throughout the LCA and careful routing is required. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape to the Proposed Development is medium.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: This is a settled rural LCA with historic buildings and field patterns evident. The landscape generally has a sense of enclosure due to the small-medium scale, level topography and screening from hedgerows with trees. Infrastructure, such as roads and wood lines, areas of settlement and small pockets of commercial activity reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from the Proposed Development. Given the overall value (medium) and susceptibility (medium) the overall sensitivity of the LCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be medium.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

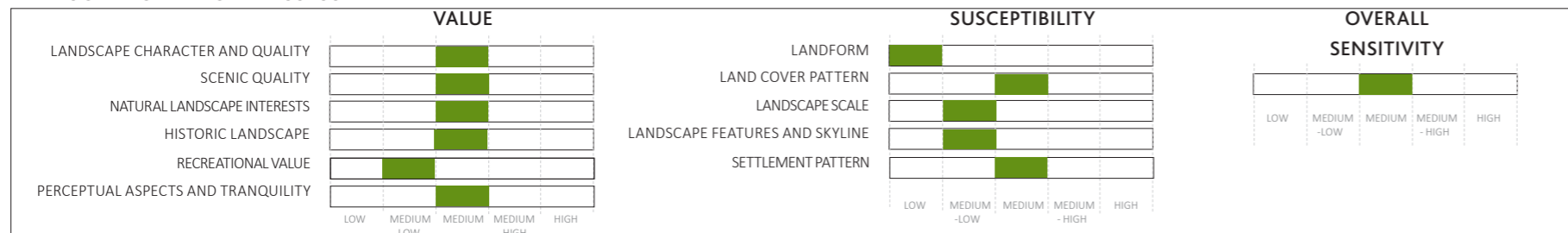
Construction: Approx. 4.1km of OHL (over 19% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. Construction activity would include work at pole positions, stringing locations, use of construction accesses (ACs 28-34,37-40 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) near Wackley Lodge, Runners Rest, Malt Kiln Farm, Coppice Farm, Bentley Farm, The Shayes, Commonwood Farm, and a temporary lay down area just beyond the LCA at Coppice Farm. In the region of 10No trees would be felled, including a veteran tree near pole 125 at Malt Kiln Farm, plus 6No other groups of trees. Subject to safety clearances, a number of other trees have been identified as subject to felling or lopping as low as reasonably practicable within the works corridor. These are located adjacent to the three ponds near Runner's Rest, mature hedgerows and pond-side trees and vegetation near Malt Kiln Farm, hedgerow trees south and east of Bentley Farm, mature hedgerow trees near the PRowS east of Bentley Farm and north of The Shayes, a small block of mature trees adjacent to the reservoir north of The Shayes, and trees west of the River Roden. There would be temporary loss of short sections of hedgerow at double poles 113, 127, 146 and 150. No permanent losses of trees or hedgerows as a result of the construction accesses are anticipated. No earthworks are required. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene, although this is a working landscape with pockets of commercial and farming activities. The magnitude of change would be medium-low, since any landscape losses are within the construction corridor and their influence would be temporary and not felt within the wider area of this large and well treed LCA. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development is in keeping with the scale of this well treed landscape, which features existing wood poles and pockets of farming, commercial activity and settlement. The influence of the Proposed Development on the character of the area would be localised due to the layering effects of existing screening on field boundaries, and anticipated landscape losses resulting from the construction phase would not be felt across the wider LCA and would improve over time. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

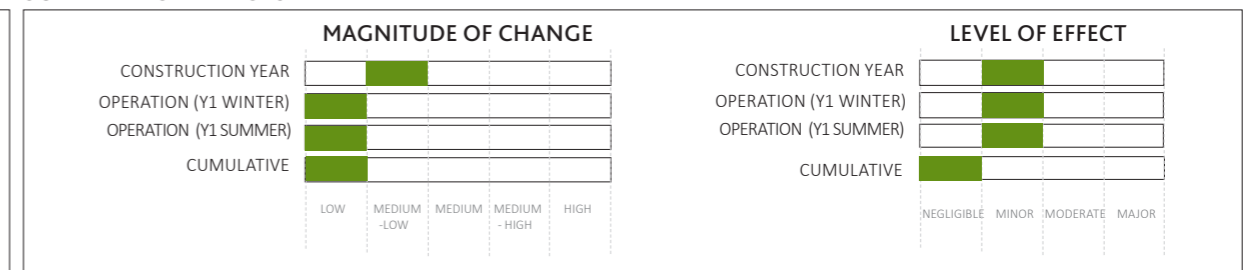
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to screening from trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 10 SETTLED PASTORAL FARMLANDS: WEM FRINGE - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

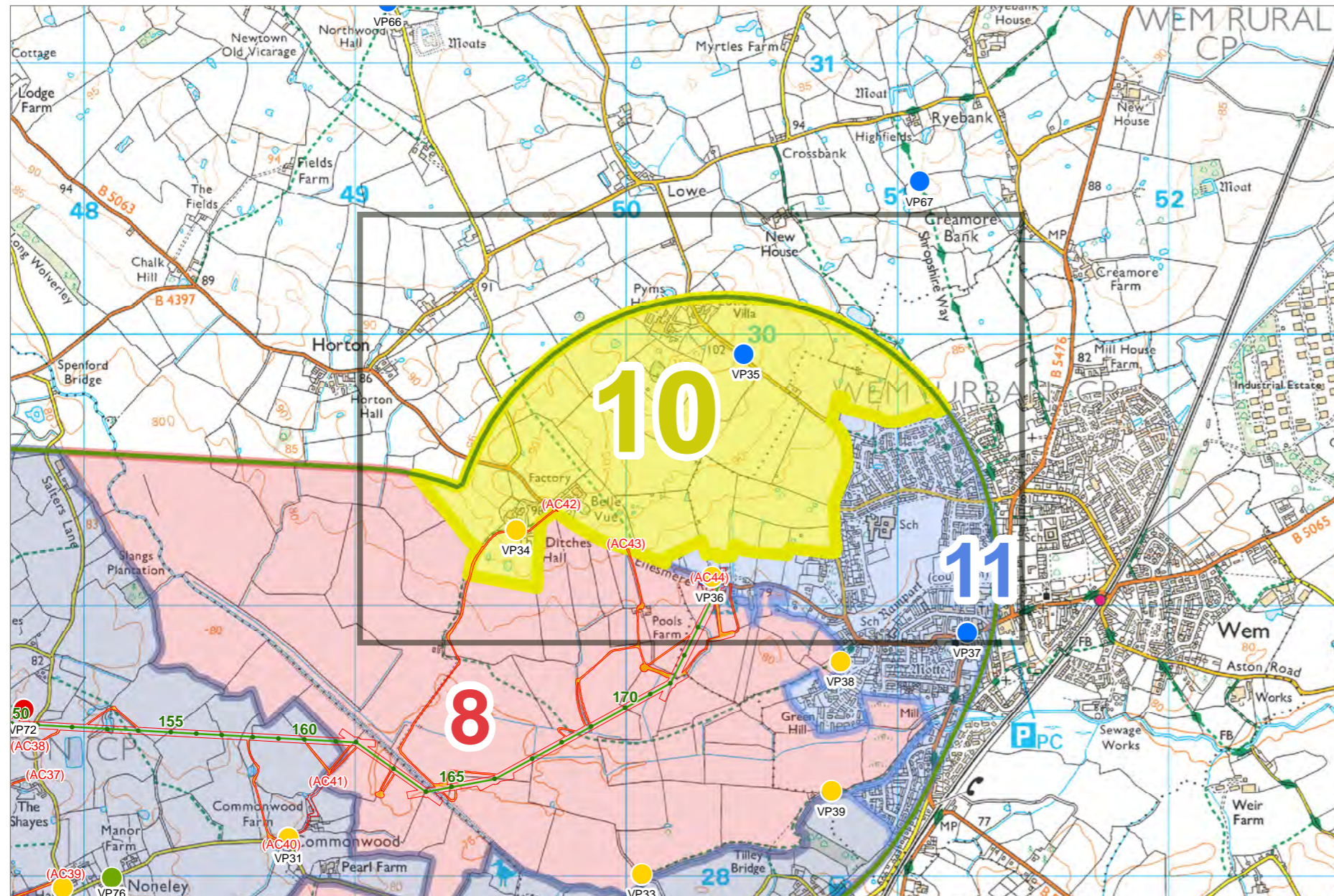
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: Heavy poorly drained soils; Pastoral land use; Scattered hedgerow trees; Irregular field pattern; Small to medium scale landscapes

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report notes that the Settled Pastoral Farmlands are '... lowland agricultural landscapes. Heavy, often poorly drained soils... traditionally associated with livestock farming... the historic pattern of small to medium, sub-regular, hedged fields has been retained in most places... tree cover is largely provided by scattered hedgerow oaks and ash trees... a small to medium scale landscape with predominantly filtered views. A medium to high density dispersal of farmsteads and wayside cottages, linked by a sinuous network of lanes, represents the prevailing settlement pattern... the historic field patterns remain largely unchanged.'

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Rising pastoral landscape bordering the northwestern edge of Wem settlement, with very small pockets of clustered settlement comprising private houses, farmsteads and listed buildings, which occupy higher ground; mostly regular and small-medium scale field pattern bound by fences (including wrought iron fencing) and hedgerows, with occasional hedgerow trees, field trees, ponds and small groupings of trees; long views over Wem and towards more elevated local areas such as Clive, Newton on the Hill, Petton and Stanwardine.

DESCRIPTION: This LCA occupies rising land to the northwest of Wem. This settled farmland, in good condition and featuring a small-medium scale mostly regular field pattern, is typically bound by wooden fences, post and wire fences, hedgerow, or remnant metal railing fencing (typical of that used on the boundaries of estate parklands and farmlands) and walled garden areas (near Pym's House) that contributes to the sense of a well-ordered landscape. There is a parkland feel to this area, with ornamental trees present in proximity to elevated larger properties. These properties, including Lowe Hill Villa, Pym's House, Belle Vue (the lodge is Grade II listed) and The Ditches Hall (Grade II* listed) experience long views over the surrounding landscape. Scattered mature trees are present on hedgerow boundaries and in fields, in small copses and around field ponds. The LCA is serviced by one road and a small network of rural lanes that link Wem to Horton and Lowe, including the B5063 Ellesmere Road. Settlement mostly includes historic red brick buildings and a black/white building (Ditches Hall), and Lowe Hill Villa, a visible and distinctive historic rendered property on higher ground that overlooks Wem. There are two farms, a hall, and other domestic houses and cottages, and small pockets of commercial farming activity. Lower voltage OHLs are present in this LCA, including 2 No. 33kV wood pole OHLs and a network of 11kV OHLs. 2 No. PRoWs are present in the west of the LCA providing local connections to Horton and Wem. Views are generally long (due to the elevated nature of the landscape) and focussed to the south, east and west, in the direction of Wem and more elevated local areas such as Clive, Newton on the Hill, Petton and Stanwardine. The edge of the LCA borders the small market town of Wem and there is a strong visual connection with the residential edge of settlement. Any visual containment is generally provided by trees within garden boundaries. This is a settled rural and elevated landscape, with private pockets of tranquillity away from public roads and lanes, with ornamental trees present and a historic feel, with a sense of openness and long views over the surrounding landscape.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

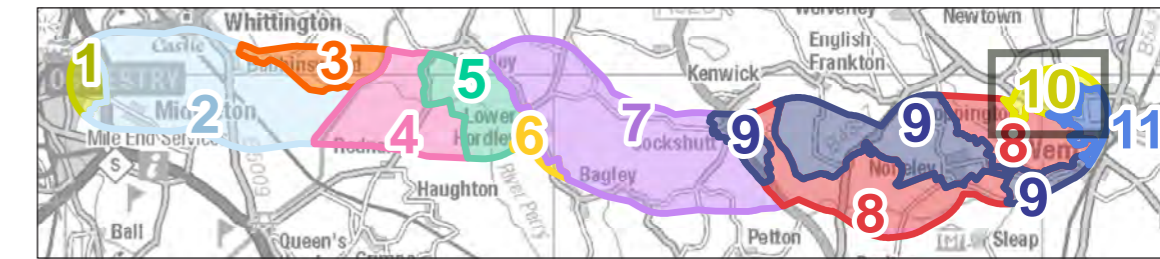


FIGURE 2: View east over The Ditches Hall and ornamental trees.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE
- Listed buildings are present in this LCA, including Grade II* The Ditches Hall, with its black and white facade. Such dwellings can date from the 16th century and feature as part of the vernacular in Shropshire.



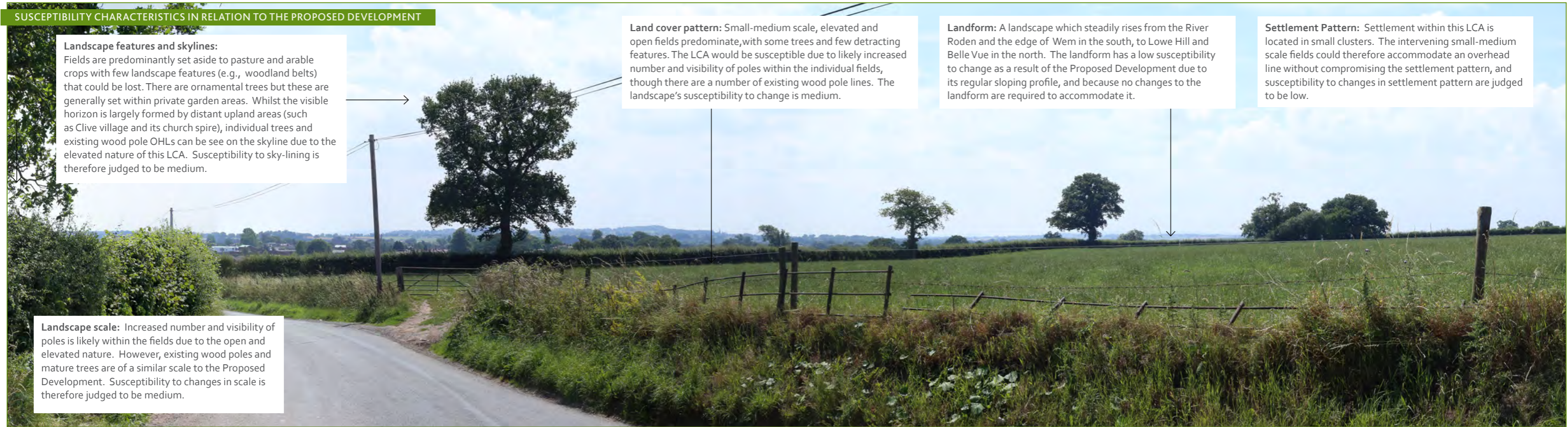
FIGURE 3: View looking north over farmland towards Lowe Hill Villa.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE AND
 - SCENIC QUALITY
- Lowe Hill Villa forms a distinct and elevated landmark above Wem and experiences long views over neighbouring farmland towards Wem and more distant upland areas to the south, east and west.

LCA 10 SETTLED PASTORAL FARMLANDS: WEM FRINGE - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM THE RURAL LANE SOUTH OF LOWE HILL VILLA (VP35)



LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Historic features, including listed buildings and small clusters of well-maintained and attractive traditional buildings, along with long views over the neighbouring landscapes, add value to this LCA. Whilst generally in good condition and well tended, hedgerows are gappy in places, and fences are in varying condition, and there are relatively small numbers of hedgerow trees with a small number of copses and ponds in this LCA. Ornamental trees feature in some of the larger private gardens. Farms are well maintained. There are 2 listed buildings, including the Grade II* Ditches Hall, a black and white building typical of those found in Shropshire. PRowS provide local connections, across fields and along field boundaries. The B5063 reduces the tranquillity of the LCA along its southwestern edge, as does the influence of the edge of Wem settlement along the southeastern edge of the LCA, and proximity to Wem Substation and existing wood pole OHLs. Visibility generally extends across two or more field boundaries due to the rising and elevated topography, with long views experienced from much of the LCA. This is a settled rural scene in keeping with the local vernacular, influenced by existing electricity infrastructure, farming operations and transport routes, and the overall landscape value is judged to be medium-low.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The rising, small-medium scale agricultural landscape, located on the edge of settlement, bound with fences, hedgerows and scattered hedgerow trees, and featuring existing wood pole OHLs, has the potential to accommodate some of the changes related to the introduction of a wood pole overhead line. However, the skyline and landcover and landscape scale of this rising and elevated landscape are susceptible to change, since a wood pole OHL would be clearly visible on the skyline and within fields, and would interrupt some of the longer views experienced from this LCA. Overall, the susceptibility of the landscape is medium-low.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: This is a settled rural LCA with historic features, including listed buildings. The influence of the edge of settlement, existing wood pole lines, farming activities and the B5063 reduces the sensitivity of the landscape to change arising from the Proposed Development. The landscape has a sense of openness due to the rising and elevated topography and small numbers of intervening hedgerow trees. Long views are experienced from much of the LCA. Given the overall value (medium-low) and susceptibility (medium-low) the overall sensitivity of the LCA to the Proposed Development is judged to be medium-low.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

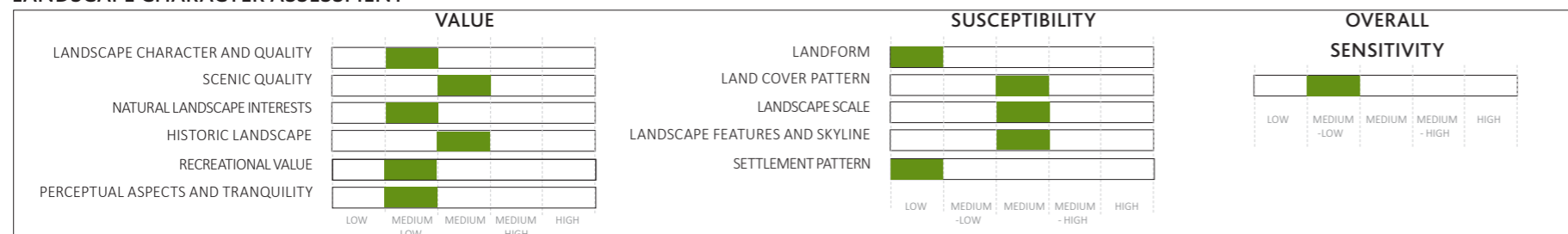
Construction: Although this LCA is within the study area, the alignment of the proposed overhead wood pole line does not pass directly through the LCA, and at its closest point (approx. 40m from the southern edge of LCA10), the Proposed Development would be visible from the south of the LCA as it enters the substation at Wem. Works at Wem Substation include introducing a new double wood H-pole and approx. 10m high 132kV cable steel gantry in addition to transformers, connectors and busbars. The northern half of the Ditches Hall Lane lies within the LCA and this lane would be utilised as a construction access (AC42 - refer to Annex D of the DCO Document 6.1.1 for locations) during the construction phase. There would be short-term disturbance to the rural scene along the lane, although this is a working landscape with pockets of farming activities. The magnitude of change would be low, since there are no anticipated losses to trees or woodland, and any construction disturbance would be temporary and not felt within the wider LCA. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The Proposed Development does not pass through this LCA, and at its closest point lies over 40m to the south of the LCA within Wem Substation. The Proposed Development is larger in scale than, but similar in appearance to existing electrical infrastructure in the substation, and the two existing 33kV OHLs that currently enter Wem Substation from the south, passing across the B5063. One of these is to be undergrounded. The magnitude of any change would therefore be low. Likely effects are minor adverse to the south of the LCA (not significant).

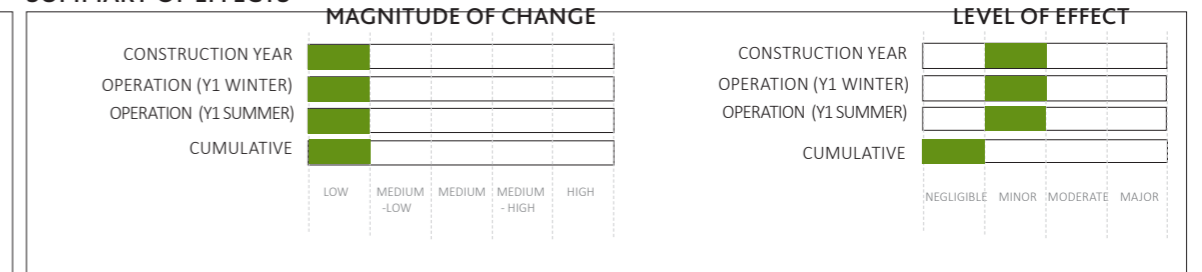
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to screening from trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse to the south of the LCA (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



LCA 11 URBAN: WEM - SHEET A

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER BASELINE DESCRIPTION

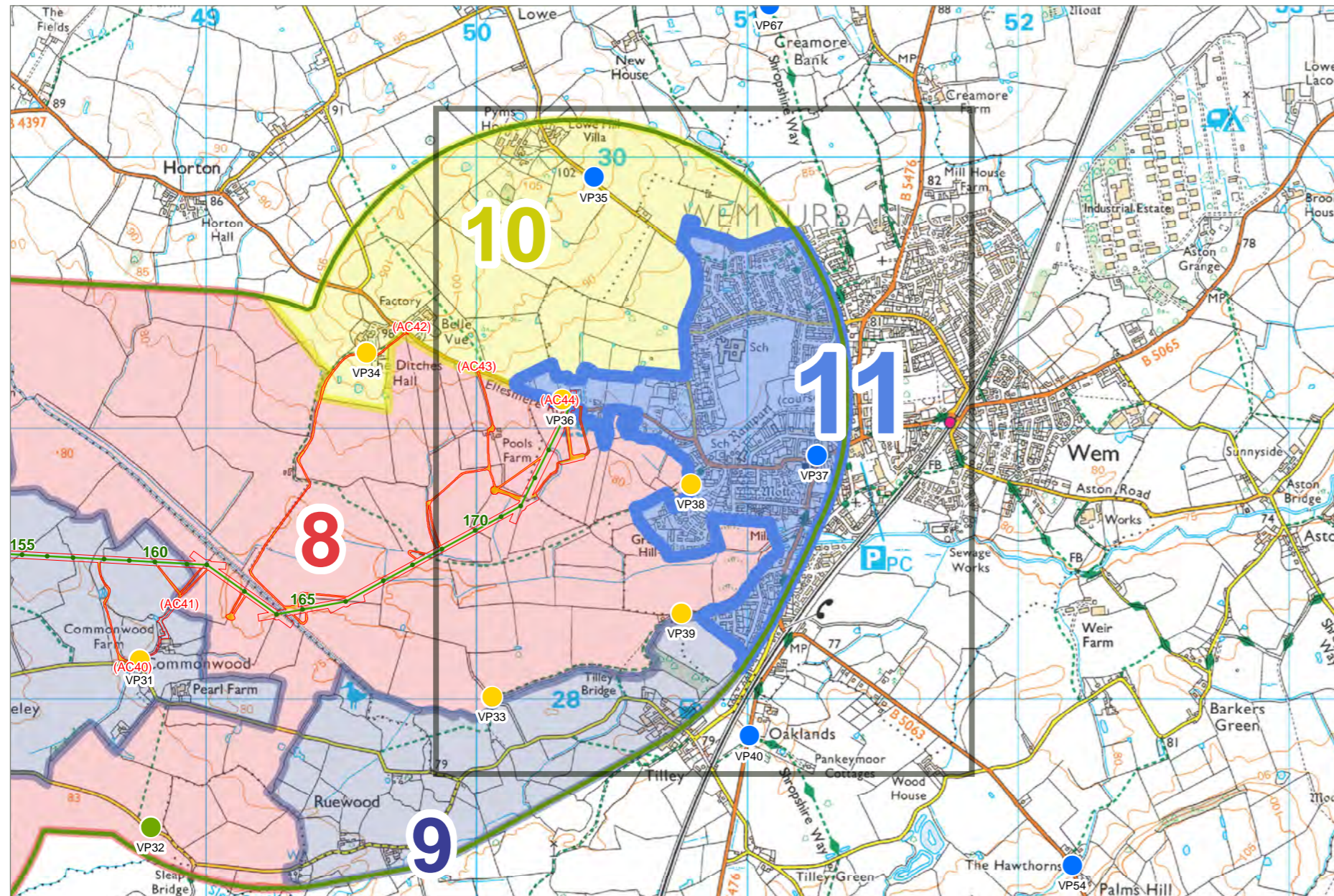
KEY CHARACTERISTICS TAKEN FROM THE SHROPSHIRE LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES: An area identified as 'Urban.'

DESCRIPTION: The Shropshire Landscape Typologies report identifies this area as 'Urban.' No other detail is provided.

CHARACTERISTICS NOTED IN THIS LOCALITY: Small market town located on level ground, with a mixture of both historic buildings (predominantly in the centre of the town) and modern residential development (at the edges of the town); development is largely small in scale and comprises housing, retail facilities, schools, a church, and a small number of commercial industrial premises and farms; landscape features include street trees, private gardens, recreational grounds, trees and gardens associated with public buildings such as the St Peter and St Paul Parish Church, and riverside vegetation along the banks of the River Roden; the town is serviced by the B5063 Ellesmere Road, the B5476 and the B5065, with a network of small lanes and roads connecting to nearby villages, and cul-de-sac based suburban road layouts serving modern residential estates; views are generally contained by development, with more open views at the very edge of settlement.

DESCRIPTION: This urban LCA occupies level land in the small historic market town of Wem, well-known as the home of the modern cultivated sweet pea, and located in the north of Shropshire. The town is generally in good condition and features mostly small scale development comprising of housing, retail facilities, schools, churches, and a small number of commercial industrial premises and farms. A high concentration of historic and listed buildings are found in the centre of the town, within Wem Conservation Area, including the Grade II* Church of St. Peter and St. Paul on High Street and a castle mound (Wem Castle: a motte and Scheduled Ancient Monument) within the church grounds. Historic buildings reflect the local vernacular, featuring red brick buildings and a small number of black and white façades. They are generally small in scale, often two or three storeys in height, and densely positioned directly onto the footpaths adjacent to the narrow and sometimes winding streets. Other listed buildings are scattered outside of the historic centre, such as The Rectory, which lies close to the edge of settlement. More recent developments (twentieth and twenty first century) are located at the periphery of the settlement, and generally feature single or two-story dwellings set within gardens on planned estates. Landscape features include street trees, private gardens, recreational grounds, trees and gardens associated with public buildings such as the St Peter and St Paul Parish Church. Riverside vegetation is present along the banks of the River Roden, which provides a public pocket of tranquillity south of the town centre. The town is serviced by the B5063, B5476 and B5065, with a network of small roads connecting nearby villages, a cul-de-sac based suburban road layouts serving modern residential estates towards the edge of the settlement, and the Shropshire Way regional trail passing north-south through the town. Electrical infrastructure is present, including an existing substation on the B5063 and a visible network of wood pole OHLs, particularly in fields along the edge of settlement. Views are generally contained by adjacent buildings and trees, sometimes extending along more open streets to rooves and trees on the skyline, but rarely extend beyond the town. Open views are experienced at the edge of settlement, occasionally extending to nearby elevated areas such as Lowe Hill, Clive, Newton on the Hill and beyond to more distant uplands. This is a settled market town, small in scale, with an historic centre and private pockets of tranquillity away from public roads and lanes. There is a strong sense of containment to the centre of the town, and openness at the edge of settlement.

FIGURE 1: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA IN CONTEXT



LOCATION MAP

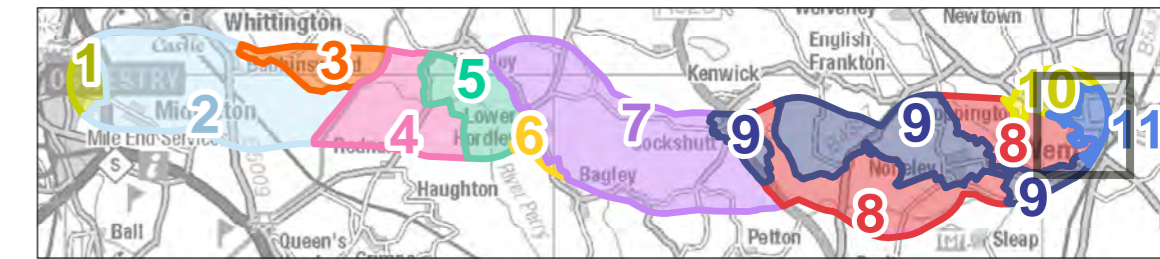


FIGURE 2: View east along Wem High Street and the Conservation Area.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- HISTORIC LANDSCAPE
- SCENIC QUALITY

A concentration of listed two and three storey buildings fronted directly onto the winding High Street, adding to the scenic character of the town, but with views contained by adjacent buildings and trees.



FIGURE 3: View looking west towards the edge of settlement on the B5063 near Wem Substation.

KEY VALUE CHARACTERISTICS:

- TRANQUILITY
- SCENIC QUALITY

The B5063 reduces the tranquility within this LCA, and scenic quality on the edge of settlement is compromised by existing wood pole OHLs and the Wem Substation.

LCA 11 URBAN: WEM - SHEET B

FIGURE 4: TYPICAL VIEW OF LCA TYPE - IMAGE TAKEN FROM HIGH STREET IN WEM, ON THE CORNER OF THE B5063 AND B5476, OPPOSITE THE ST PETER AND ST PAUL CHURCH (VP37)



SUSCEPTIBILITY CHARACTERISTICS IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Landscape features and skylines:

The skyline in the centre of this LCA is generally formed by the rooves and chimneys of nearby buildings and tree tops, with trees and existing wood pole OHLs visible on the skyline on the edge of settlement. The Proposed Development is likely to be seen on the sky-line, but only when viewed from the edge of the LCA. Susceptibility to sky-lining is therefore judged to be medium-low.

Landform:

The landform has a low susceptibility to change as a result of the introduction of an overhead line, due to its level profile, and because no changes to the landform would be required to accommodate it.

Settlement Pattern:

Settlement within this LCA is generally dense. It would be difficult to accommodate an overhead line without compromising the settlement pattern, and susceptibility to changes in settlement pattern are judged to be high.

Land cover pattern:

A small scale network of streets and lanes with single to three storey buildings predominates, with some street trees, gardens and riverside vegetation. Whilst the edge of settlement is more open and features some Wem Substation, the centre of the LCA would be susceptible due to the likely changes needed to accommodate an OHL, the likely visibility of poles in close proximity and their incongruous nature within the centre a historic market town. Overall, the LCA's susceptibility to change in land cover pattern is medium.

Landscape scale:

A new overhead line, located within the fields just beyond the edge of this LCA, would not be out of scale with the existing wood poles and mature trees visible on the edge of the LCA. However, their scale and presence would seem more incongruous within the densely settled narrow streets at the centre of the LCA. Susceptibility to changes in scale is therefore judged to be medium.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Description of overall landscape value: Historic features, including listed buildings, a SAM and a designated conservation area, add to the historic and scenic value of the centre of this LCA. Whilst generally in good condition, some buildings are in varying condition. Street trees, garden and riverside vegetation are generally well tended, and ornamental trees feature in some of the larger private gardens. PRoWs provide local connections, through the town, and the Shropshire Way regional trail passes between the north and south of Wem. The B5063 reduces the tranquillity of the LCA, as does the influence of the substation and existing wood pole OHLs on the western edge of Wem settlement. This is a settled urban scene in keeping with the local vernacular, influenced by existing electricity infrastructure, farming operations and transport routes, and the overall landscape value is judged to be medium.

Description of overall landscape susceptibility: The level, small scale and densely settled historic centre of the LCA would struggle to accommodate the Proposed Development. However, the more open edge of the LCA is less susceptible to change from the introduction of a wood pole OHL, since OHLs are an existing and accepted feature on the edge of Wem, along with the Wem Substation, the B5063 and small pockets of commercial and farming activity. The Proposed Development is of a similar scale and height to existing features at the edge of the LCA, with skylines that already include wood pole OHLs and a substation on the edge of the LCA. The level landform that would require no changes, however, the land cover pattern and the settlement pattern are relatively dense, and it would be difficult to accommodate the Proposed Development within much of the LCA. Overall, the susceptibility is medium.

Description of overall landscape sensitivity: Whilst the centre of the LCA has scenic and historic value, it would be difficult to accommodate an OHL within the dense settlement and landcover pattern. The edge of settlement is less densely developed, and its character is influenced by the presence of existing wood pole OHLs, the B5063, small pockets of commercial and farming activity, and the Wem Substation. This reduces the overall sensitivity of the LCA to change arising from the Proposed Development, and sensitivity is judged to be medium.

MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE AND LEVEL OF EFFECTS

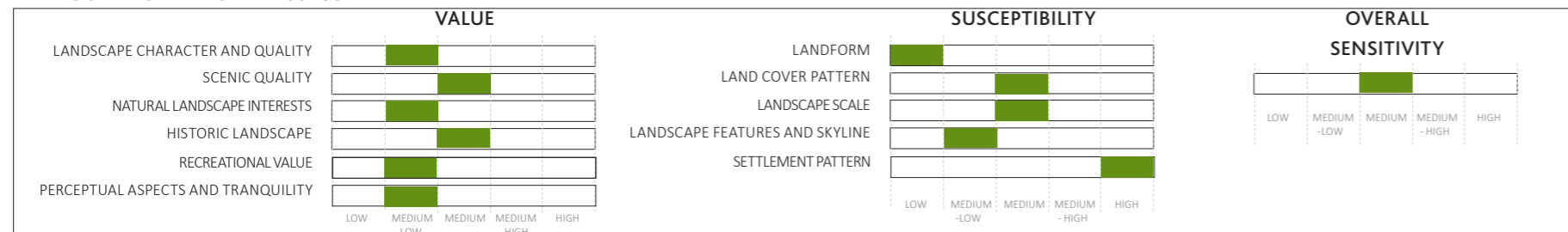
Construction: Approx. 0.03km of OHL (less than 0.15% of the OHL length) crosses this LCA. The alignment of the proposed overhead wood pole line passes over a very short section of the LCA, as it crosses over the B5063 on the western edge of the LCA, before entering Wem Substation. The Proposed Development would be visible from the western edge of the LCA as it enters the substation at Wem. The Proposed Development is larger in scale than, but similar in appearance to, two existing 33kV OHLs that currently enter Wem Substation from the south, crossing the B5063. One of these is to be undergrounded and a temporary trench (approx. 30m in length) will run along the B5063 in the LCA, and then into the substation, to accommodate the 33kV cable. Works to Wem Substation include introducing a new double wood H-pole and approx. 10m high 132kV cable steel gantry in addition to transformers, connectors and busbars. There would be short-term disturbance to the edge of settlement along the B5063 where the temporary laydown area (including welfare unit and security cabin) is located just outside the boundary of this LCA, although this is a transport route with existing substation and nearby farming activities. Magnitude of change would be low, since there are no anticipated losses to trees and no losses to woodland, and any disturbance from construction would be temporary and not be felt within the wider LCA. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Operation - Year 1 Winter: The alignment of the proposed overhead wood pole line passes over only a very short section of the LCA, as it crosses over the B5063 on the western edge of the LCA, before entering Wem Substation. The Proposed Development is larger in scale, but of a similar appearance to existing infrastructure at Wem Substation and the magnitude of any change would be low. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

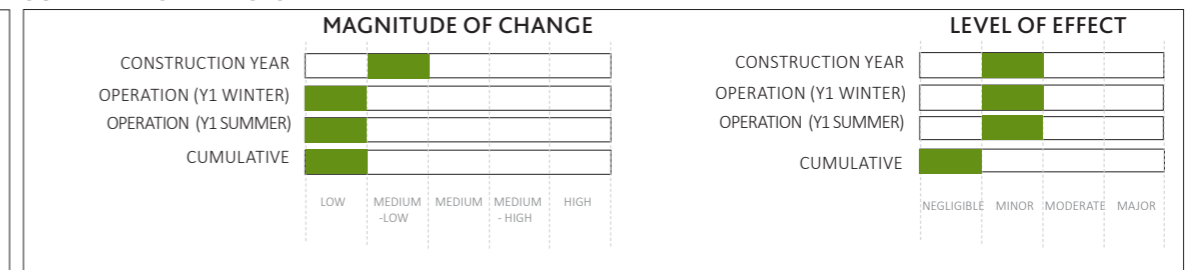
Operation - Year 1 Summer: As Winter, though the Proposed Development would be less visible due to screening from trees and hedgerows in leaf. Likely effects are minor adverse (not significant).

Cumulative: There are no other proposed developments which would give rise to any cumulative landscape effects due to their interaction with the Proposed Development, therefore no likely significant cumulative landscape effects.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



SUMMARY OF EFFECTS



1.5 LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

1.5.1 An assessment of the likely effects on all identified landscape receptors within the 1km study area, excluding the landscape of the Order Limits and individual LCAs, is provided below in Table A6.2.2. The magnitude of change and level of effects, during operation, are provided for the summer and winter of Year 1, which would be the worst case scenario with respect to the landscape impact of the Proposed Development.

Table A6.2.2 – Likely landscape effects on receptors within 1km study area				
Receptor Location / Direction & Distance	Sensitivity to Development	Summary of Impacts	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effects
Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain NCA 61 Site is located within the NCA	Low	Due to the large geographical area covered by the NCA and the scale of the Proposed Development and its individual features/elements, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not noticeably affect the landscape or character of the NCA and the likely landscape effects on the NCA as a whole would be minimal. Poles used to support the overhead electrical circuit are generally similar in height to mature trees (pole heights are some 10-17m above ground, plus the steelwork on top of the pole which is some 2m tall), with pole diameters of approximately 300-450mm depending on the height of the pole. Poles are spaced on average 122m apart, with spans ranging from approximately 51m to 200m. The magnitude of effect on the individual key characteristics listed above would never be greater than low and the overall effect on each of the individual key characteristics would be negligible.	Construction: Low Operation Winter: Low Operation Summer: Low	Construction: Negligible Operation Winter: Negligible Operation Summer: Negligible
Gravenhall Ancient Woodland, east of Babbinswood Approximately 750m north of the Proposed Development at its closest point	Low	The southern section of this woodland lies within the 1km study area, approximately 760m north of wood pole no. 26. Due to the sites distance from the Proposed Development and lack of connection with the Order Limits there will be no direct, e.g. loss of woodland, or indirect effects on the landscape of the woodland.	Construction: None Operation Winter: None Operation Summer: None	Construction: None Operation Winter: None Operation Summer: None
Montgomery Canal, Aston Locks – Keepers Bridge SSSI: west of Rednal	See Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity'	There would be no direct effects, e.g. loss of landscape or its special features, as a result of the Proposed Development. Potential environmental ecological effects on SSSIs have been assessed	See Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7)	See Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7)

Table A6.2.2 – Likely landscape effects on receptors within 1km study area				
Receptor Location / Direction & Distance	Sensitivity to Development	Summary of Impacts	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effects
Northern end of the SSSI is approximately 840m south of the Proposed Development (or approximately 1km along the path of the canal)	(DCO Document 6.7)	within in Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7) and its associated appendices.		
Ruewood Pastures Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): east of Commonwood 250m south of the Proposed Development at its closest point	See Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7)	There would be no direct effects, e.g. loss of landscape or its special features, as a result of the Proposed Development. Potential environmental ecological effects on SSSIs have been assessed within in Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7) and its associated appendices.	See Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7)	See Chapter 7 'Ecology and Biodiversity' (DCO Document 6.7)
Whittington Conservation Area The southern boundary of the area is approximately 960m from the Proposed Development. Almost the entire conservation area is outside the study area.	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)	Due to the distance from, and lack of perceptibility of, the Proposed Development there will be no direct or indirect landscape effects on the conservation area. Potential effects on the visual amenity of conversation areas within the study area are detailed in Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3).	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)
Loppington Conservation Area The southern third of the area lies within the north of the study area and its southern boundary is approximately 940m north-west of the Proposed Development.	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)	Due to the distance from, and lack of perceptibility of, the Proposed Development there will be no direct or indirect landscape effects on the conservation area. Potential effects on the visual amenity of conversation areas within the study area are detailed in Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3).	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)
Wem Conservation Area	See Appendix	Due to the distance from, and lack of perceptibility of, the Proposed	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO	See Appendix 6.3 (DCO

Table A6.2.2 – Likely landscape effects on receptors within 1km study area				
Receptor Location / Direction & Distance	Sensitivity to Development	Summary of Impacts	Magnitude of Change	Level of Effects
Approximately the western half of the area is within the study area and its western boundary is approximately 650m east of the Proposed Development.	6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3)	Development there will be no direct or indirect landscape effects on the conservation area. Potential effects on the visual amenity of conversation areas within the study area are detailed in Appendix 6.3 (DCO Document 6.6.3).	Document 6.6.3)	Document 6.6.3)

Direct Landscape Losses

- 1.5.2 Direct losses to landscape features such as woodland, trees and hedgerows has been considered as part of the assessment of direct landscape effects and is discussed in detail within the Landscape Character Area assessment sheets included above in Section 1.4 ‘Landscape Character Assessment Sheets and Assessment’. Losses can result during the construction phase as a result of clearance activities to ensure adequate safety and clearance distances between the overhead line and vegetation, or to accommodate poles. The assessment of these likely losses is based on the Proposed Development as presented in this ES, along with information shown on Figure 6.9 ‘Location of Anticipated Tree Works’ (DCO Document 6.14) from the ADAS Tree Survey carried out in April 2018, which establishes the vegetation clearances required to ensure adequate safety clearances between the Proposed Development and existing vegetation within the Order Limits. Information is also taken from Chapter 7 ‘Ecology and Biodiversity’ (DCO Document 6.7) and Chapter 8 ‘Historic Environment’ (DCO Document 6.8).
- 1.5.3 Changes to the Proposed Development within the Order Limits during construction, in particular, the micro-siting of poles subject to ground conditions, may result in slight variations in pole positions and thus alter the extent of any resultant landscape losses. Poles can move a maximum of 5m laterally along the alignment and increase vertically in height by a maximum of 2m. It is anticipated that these variations would be minimal and localised, and would not materially alter the findings of this assessment.
- 1.5.4 Based on the Proposed Development presented in this ES, some 42 trees would require felling along the 21.3km length of the overhead line alignment. 2No. of these trees have been identified as veteran oak trees in Chapter 7 ‘Ecology and Biodiversity’ (DCO Document 6.7). One lies within LCA4 Estate Farmlands: Woodhouse, and the other in LCA9 Principal Settled Farmlands: Cockshutt to Ruewood, near Malt Kiln Farm. In addition, 7 trees have been identified for ‘felling as low as reasonable practicable’, and 2No. of these are veteran oaks located within LCA7 Estate Farmlands: Stanwardine and Kenwick Elevated Ridge. LCA7 covers over 25% of the length of the overhead line alignment (over 5.4km) and the landscape losses would be felt at a local scale rather than across the wider character area. In addition, 3 trees are identified for crown or branch reduction, and 19 other trees would require some work subject to necessary safety clearances to accommodate the line. As noted above, slight variations in pole positions can alter the extent of any resultant landscape losses, and as such, these figures represent the best judgement of likely tree works at this stage in the project.
- 1.5.5 Short sections of hedgerow at 22 locations along the alignment would need to be lifted and replaced to accommodate double wood poles in hedgerows, one of which is identified as species rich in Chapter 7 ‘Ecology and Biodiversity’ (DCO Document 6.7), at pole 82. Species rich hedgerows are those that support a greater diversity of species but which do not meet the ecological criteria for ‘importance’ as defined in The Hedgerows Regulations 1997. All 22 hedgerows are classed as important in terms of the historic environment, i.e., boundaries which meet the

archaeological criteria of The Hedgerow Regulations 1997, as identified in Chapter 8 'Historic Environment' (DCO Document 6.8).

- 1.5.6 As noted above, the locations at which landscape features can be lost as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development are restricted to within the Order Limits. The width of the Order Limits (excluding the substations) is on average 25m wide for the overhead line section and 20m wide for the underground cable section. Since much of the landscape within the Order Limits comprises arable fields or pasture, direct loss of landscape features to accommodate the Proposed Development is only likely to occur at field boundaries, on the edges of field ponds or water bodies, or in small areas of woodland within the Order Limits. Such localised losses are unlikely to result in a significant effect on the character of the Landscape Character Areas identified within the study area, since the features that contribute to their individual character cover a much larger area of land.

1.6 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Effects during Construction

- 1.6.1 There are no landscape character areas or receptors that would be likely to experience significant effects during construction due to the short term and temporary nature of the construction.

Effects during Operation

- 1.6.2 As detailed in the individual LCA assessment sheets and Table A6.2.2 above, there are no local, regional, national or internationally designated landscape receptors that are likely to experience significant effects during operation.