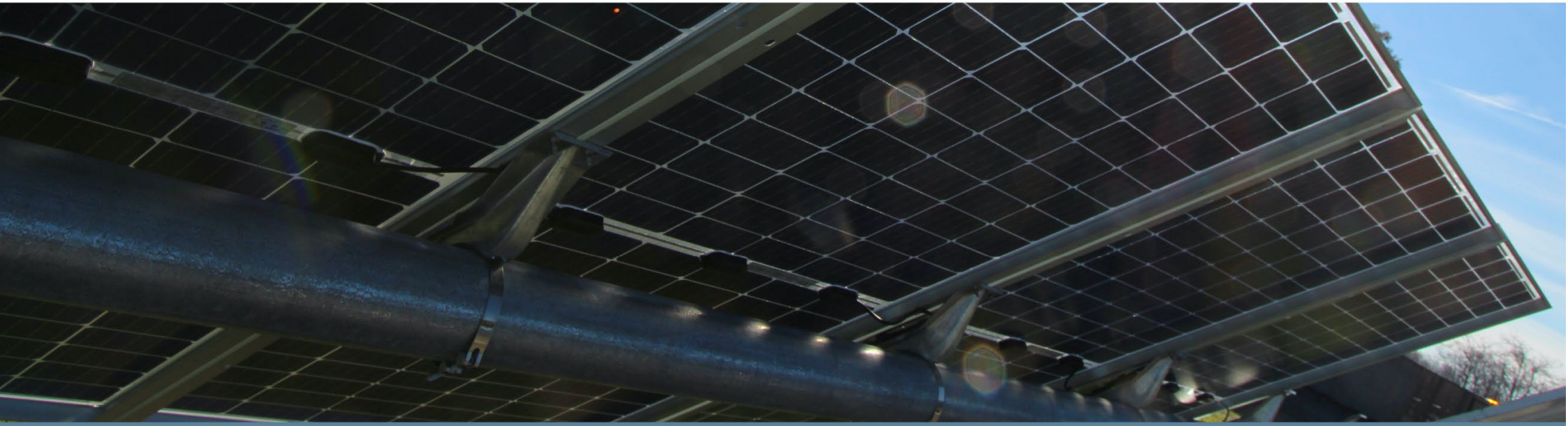
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SOUTHLANDS SOLAR FARM AND BATTERY STORAGE
LAND SOUTH OF RUNWELL ROAD (A132),RUNWELL, WICKFORD
P19-LVIA OCTOBER 2022



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) has been prepared on behalf of Enso Green Holdings J Limited by Pegasus Group. It relates to a number of agricultural fields south of Runwell Road (A132) and west of A130, close to the villages of Runwell and Battlesbridge and to the east of Wickford, as shown on Figure 1. This LVA considers the site and its surrounding context in both landscape and visual terms, to assess the potential effects of the proposed solar installation upon:

- Landscape features;
- Landscape character; and
- Visual amenity.

1.2 This assessment has been guided by the assessment criteria set out in Appendix 1. It should be noted that all of the landscape and visual effects stated within assessments such as this are considered adverse unless stated otherwise. It should also be noted that all effects are considered direct, long-term but non-permanent unless otherwise stated.

1.3 The assessment has been prepared through a desk study analysis of the site and its policy context to gain an appreciation of the landscape and visual context of the site.

1.4 Detailed landscape proposals are illustrated by Figure 5 and conveys the landscape strategy for the site.

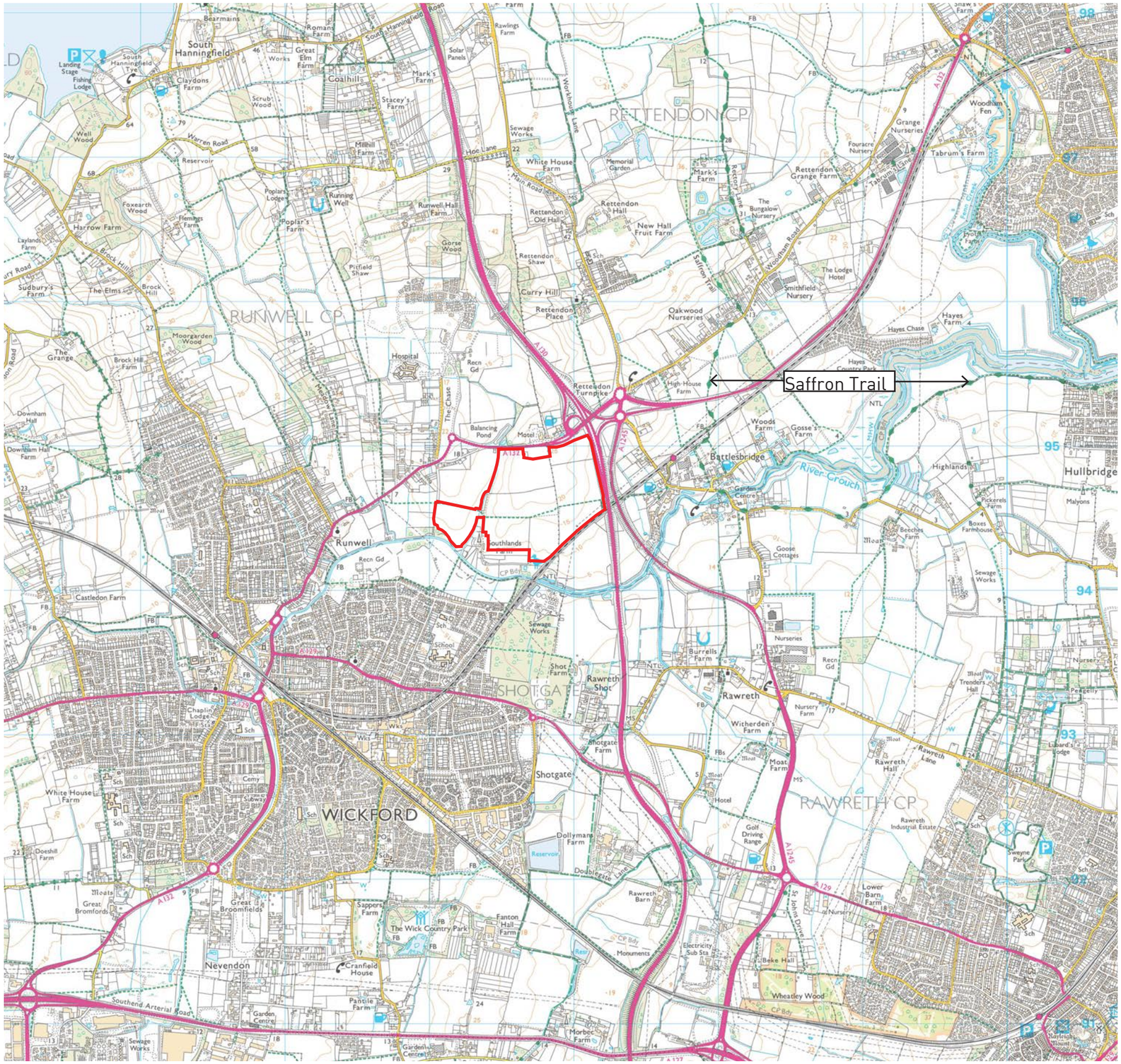

Figure 1: Site Location and Surroundings

2. METHODOLOGY

Published LVA Guidance

2.1 The LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the principles of best practice, as outlined in published guidance documents listed in the reference section of this report, notably the third edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3), (Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013).

2.2 The methodology and assessment criteria for the assessment have been developed in accordance with the principles established in this best practice document. It should be acknowledged that GLVIA3 establishes guidelines, not a specific methodology. The preface to GLVIA3 states:

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

2.3 The approach set out below and in detail in Appendix 1 has therefore been developed specifically for this assessment to ensure that the methodology is fit for purpose.

Distinction between Landscape and Visual Effects

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

- Landscape effects relate to the effects of the indicative proposals on the physical and perceptual characteristics of the landscape and its resulting character and quality; and
- Visual effects relate to the effects on specific views experienced by visual receptors and on visual amenity more generally.

Types of Landscape and Visual Impacts Considered and Duration

2.5 The LVA assesses both the permanent effects of the development and the temporary effects associated with its construction. Consideration has been given to seasonal variations in the visibility of the development and these are described where necessary.

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

2.7 As part of the proposed development, new tree, hedgerow and woodland planting would be introduced. Newly planted vegetation takes a number of years to mature and average growth rates have been taken into consideration in this assessment. The effectiveness of vegetation would improve over time (both in terms of integrating the development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening) and this needs to be considered appropriately.

2.8 Therefore, permanent landscape and visual impacts of the project are assessed both in the winter of year 1 (the year in which the development is completed) and also in the summer of year 5 (5 years after completion of the development). In this second scenario it is assumed that vegetation planted as part of the development will have established and exhibit a degree of maturity.

Assumptions and Limitations of the Assessment

Assessed Proposal

2.9 The project proposals have been developed iteratively in conjunction with the production of the LVA with the intention of incorporating mitigation into the project from the outset. The effects identified and described as part of this LVA are based on the detailed landscape proposals as shown in Figure 5.

Baseline Information

2.10 The baseline landscape resource and visual receptors were identified in part through a desk based study of Ordnance Survey mapping, published landscape character studies, relevant planning policies, interrogation of aerial photography and a site visit undertaken in August 2022.

3. SITE CONTEXT

3.1 The site is located on agricultural land situated on land to the south of Runwell Road (A132) and to the west of the A130. It is situated in proximity to the village of Runwell to the west, with the village of Battlesbridge to the east and Wickford to the south-west, as well at Rettendon to the north-east.

3.2 The site abuts Runwell Road (A132) on its northern edge, with the A130 dual carriageway on its eastern edge. Numerous residential properties and a hotel are located adjacent to Runwell Road, including a cluster of houses close to the north-western edge of the site on both sides of the road. The railway line between Wickford and Battlesbridge defines the south-eastern edge of the site which forms part of the Crouch Valley Line and is well vegetated on both sides. The River Crouch lies to the south of the site, which is well vegetated on both banks and with Wickford Memorial Park and north-eastern parts of Wickford lying beyond the water course. Southlands Farm with its complex of agricultural buildings lies close to the southern boundary.

3.3 Field boundaries within the site are generally well vegetated, with some limited gaps evident and incorporate some mature trees in places. The site is dissected by a track leading to Runwell Road from Southland Farm to the south of the site with a watercourse following a similar route to the track, which is well vegetated. Large scale electricity pylons cross the south-eastern edge of the site. A public right of way crosses the centre of the site in an east-west direction, with all others parts of the site not being publicly accessible.

3.4 The site and surroundings are set within an agricultural landscape interspersed by areas of woodland and crossed by a number of A-roads, with a network of towns and small villages and scattered properties including those following Runwell Road and farmsteads.

3.5 A photographic record of views toward the site and its local context is provided in Appendix 2, with the photographic locations illustrated in Figure 11.

4. DESIGNATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section provides an overview of the policies and designations of particular relevance to landscape and visual issues. Figures 2 to 4 illustrate relevant designations within the locality of the site. The site is located within the administrative boundaries of Chelmsford District Council, however, is adjacent to the Basildon District Council boundary to the south.

Landscape Designations

4.2 The site is not covered by any national, regional or local landscape designations, however sits within Green Belt.

4.3 There are no listed buildings on the site, however, a number are located close to the site and are illustrated by Figure 2, as well as being summarised below:

- Listed buildings within Runwell village, including Church of St Mary (Grade I listed), as well as Grade II listed Bear Hall and The Old Rectory, to the west of the site;
- Listed buildings within Battlesbridge, including Grade II listed Hay Barn Antique Centre, Great Coopers Farmhouse, Dovecote at Muggeridge's Farm, The Barge Inn, Battlesbridge, Old Tide Mill and Dam Wall attached to north, and Granary and Drying Kiln now a house, to west of Old Tide Mill, to the east of the site;
- Grade II listed High House to the north east of the site;
- Listed buildings within Rettendon including Church of All Saints (Grade I listed), and Grade II listed Granary immediately south west of Rettendon Place, and Barn at Rettendon Place to the north of the site; and
- Chapel at Runwell Hospital to the north of the site.

4.4 There are no scheduled monuments or registered parks and gardens within or close to the site.

4.5 A public right of way crosses the site from east to west which is made up of 229_23 to the east and 231_8 centrally and to the west. This route provides a link between Battlesbridge to the east via an underpass and Runwell Road to the west. A public right of way follows the edge of the River Crouch (231_17) to south of the site. There are a number of other public rights of way surrounding the site with their locations shown on Figure 3. The Saffron Trail is located approximately 0.8km to the east of the site at its closest point and is shown on Figure 1.

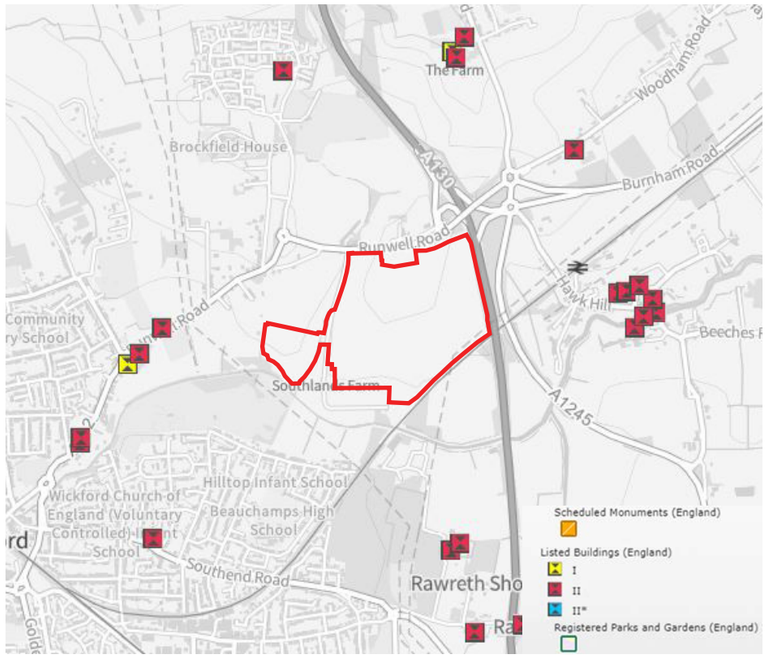

Figure 2: Extract from Magic Map showing listed buildings in proximity to site (site boundary as red line)

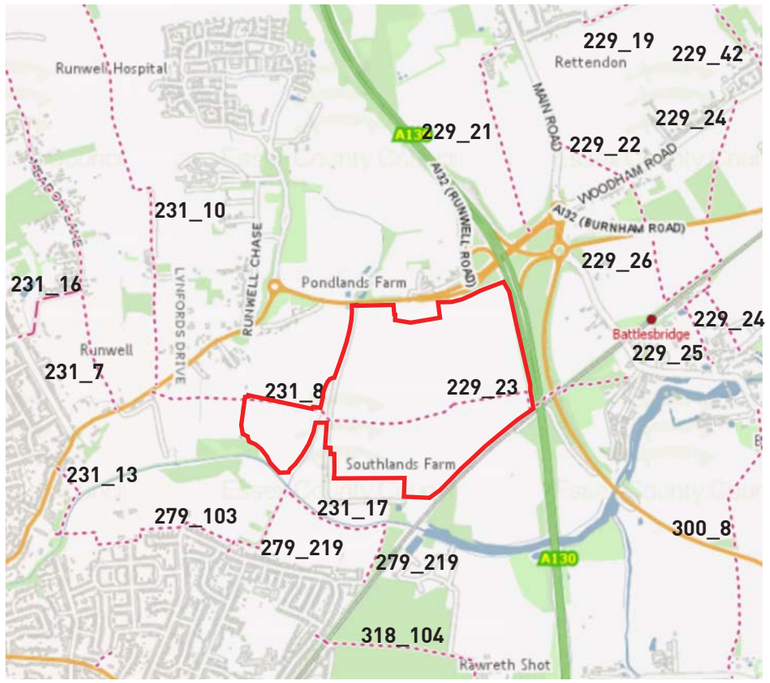

Figure 3: Extract from Chelmsford District Councils interactive mapping (site boundary as red line)

Relevant Landscape Planning Policy

National Planning Guidance

4.6 Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in July 2021. This document sets out a general presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) and guides the Local Planning Authorities in the production of Local Plans and in decision making.

4.7 In Section 14, the NPPF sets out its support for renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure, with subsequent paragraphs setting out how this can be achieved.

4.8 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF in relation to valued landscapes, states:

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland...'.

Local Planning Policy

4.9 The site is located within the administrative boundaries of Chelmsford District Council. Chelmsford District Council's adopted planning policy is set out in the Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036, which was adopted on 27 May 2020.

Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036 (adopted May 2020)

4.10 Strategic policy S9 of the local plan in relation to infrastructure requirements, states:

'Priorities for infrastructure provision or improvements are also contained within relevant Strategic Policies and Site Allocation policies.

New development must be supported by the provision of infrastructure, services and facilities that are identified as necessary to serve its needs...

...Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment Infrastructure necessary to support new development must provide or contribute

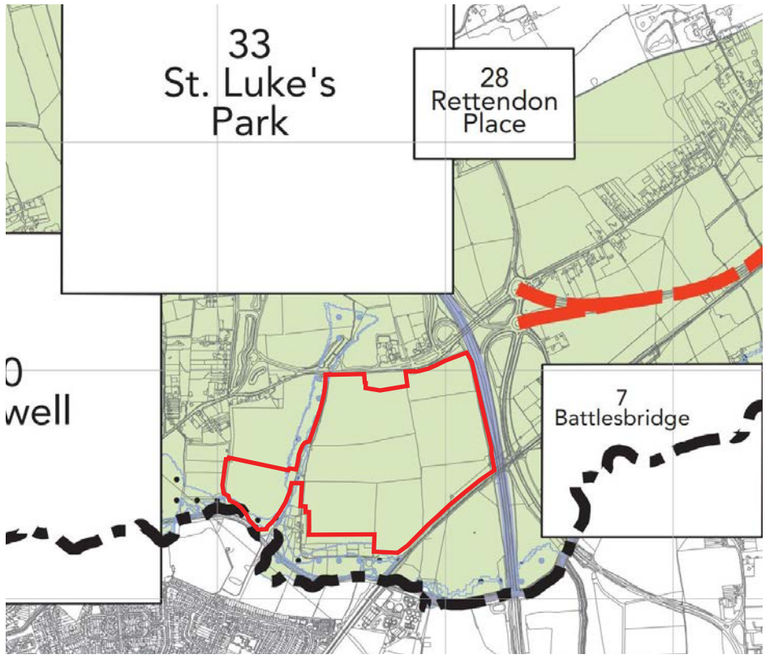

Figure 4: Extract from Chelmsford District Council website showing planning policies relating to the Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036

towards ensuring a range of green and natural infrastructure, net gain in biodiversity and public realm improvements…'

4.11 Strategic Policy S11 of the local plan in relation to the role of the countryside, states:

'When determining planning applications, the Council will carefully balance the requirement for new development within the countryside to meet identified development needs in accordance with the Spatial Strategy, and to support thriving rural communities whilst ensuring that development does not have an adverse impact on the different roles and character of the countryside. All new development within the countryside will be considered within this context and against the specific planning objectives for each of the following areas:

A) Green Belt

The openness and permanence of the Green Belt will be protected and opportunities for its beneficial use will be supported where consistent with the purposes of the Green Belt. Inappropriate development will not be approved except in very special circumstances…

4.12 Policy DM10 of the local plan in relation to change of use (land and buildings) and engineering operations, states:

'A) Green Belt…

…Engineering operations will be permitted within the Green Belt where they preserve openness, do not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and do not harm the character and appearance of the area…'

4.13 Policy DM17 of the local plan in relation to trees, woodland and landscape features, states:

'…B) Other Landscape Features

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that do not result in unacceptable harm to natural landscape features that are important to the character and appearance of the area. Harm or loss of these features will not be permitted unless a landscape strategy, which would compensate for the loss or harm, is secured or where there are overriding public benefits arising from the development.'

4.14 Policy DM19 of the local plan in relation to renewable and low carbon energy, states:

'Planning permission will be granted for renewable or low carbon energy developments provided that they:

i. do not cause demonstrable harm to residential living environment; and

ii. avoid or minimise impacts on the historic environment; and

iii. can demonstrate no adverse effect on the natural environment including designated sites; and

iv. do not have an unacceptable visual impact which would be harmful to the character of the area; and

v. will not have a detrimental impact on highway safety.

Where located within the Green Belt, renewable or low carbon energy developments will also need to demonstrate very special circumstances in order to be approved..'

5. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Development

5.1 The proposed development comprises a ground mounted solar farm and battery storage facility together with associated equipment and infrastructure. The proposed development would consist of the following:

- Photovoltaic (PV) arrays based on a simple metal framework, pile driven into the ground, up to a maximum height of 3m and utilising a tracker system;
- Inverter/transformer stations within containers finished in green no higher than 3m;
- 24no. battery storage containers finished in green with associated equipment, surrounded by welded steel wire mesh fencing and no higher than 3m;
- An on-site substation and switchgear compound, surrounded by welded steel wire mesh fencing up to a height of 4m;
- Boundary fencing (e.g. deer fencing) around the edge of the site, with access gates into the site;
- Access tracks via Runwell Road (A132) to the north-east to connect transformer and switchgear substations and provide access to battery storage containers, as well as internal track connections within the site utilising the access track to Southlands Farm; and
- A pole mounted CCTV system located at strategic points around the site.

5.2 The solar panel rows would be set back from the existing and the proposed planting along the boundaries in order to minimise over shadowing of the solar panels, provide opportunities for biodiversity enhancements along the site boundaries and ensure conflicts with tree root protection areas are avoided.

Mitigation Proposals

5.3 In order to mitigate against landscape and visual impacts, the detailed landscape proposals as illustrated at Figure 5, take account of the identified areas of sensitivity by providing additional planting where required and any relevant maintenance notes for existing planting.

5.4 Care has been taken to retain existing trees and hedgerows where possible, to retain the character of the local area, to maintain existing visual buffers and to maintain biodiversity value. The proposals would not result in the loss of any trees or hedgerows along field boundaries, utilising existing breaks in vegetation or field gates.

5.5 The landscape mitigation proposals include the following:

- retention, protection and enhancement of the existing network of trees and hedgerows along field boundaries, including aligning Runwell Road, the A130 and the railway line;
- provision of new native infill planting where gaps are present in the existing field boundary hedgerows, to define site boundaries and provide additional visual enclosure;
- provision of a new native tree lined hedgerow along the north-western site boundary to provide visual enclosure, especially to nearby residential properties along Runwell Road;
- provision of new native hedgerows adjacent to the east-west public right of way through the centre of the site, to be located to the north of the route so as to avoid canalising the route and allowing better orientation by users of the route;
- provision of new native tree planting adjacent to existing field boundaries to improve visual enclosure;
- provision of native woodland to screen views towards the proposed substation and battery storage areas from nearby roads and residential properties;
- all existing and proposed native hedgerows managed to a height of 3m or over to enhance visual enclosure;
- enhancement of site boundary margins and areas underneath solar panels, through proposed species rich grassland in line with ecological requirements; and
- ongoing landscape management of planting during the lifetime of the solar farm.

Figure 5: Detailed Landscape Proposals

6. LANDSCAPE BASELINE AND EFFECTS

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

6.2 Effects are considered in relation to both landscape features and landscape character during construction, at Year 1 and at Year 5 and beyond. The sensitivity of landscape features is a function of both their susceptibility and value, as discussed further in the Assessment Criteria at Appendix 1. A summary of landscape effects are included in Table 1.

Landscape Features

Landform and Topography

6.3 The landform of the site is gently sloping throughout forming part of the River Crouch valley. The highest areas of the site lie in proximity to Runwell Road (A132) to the north-east at approximately 22m AOD and the lowest to the south-west where closest to the River Crouch at approximately 3m AOD. Land also slopes gently towards the central water course within and adjacent to the site.

6.4 The surrounding landscape is generally similar in landform, with lower areas of the valley following the River Crouch and with land gently rising up towards Wickford to the south, Rettendon to the north-east and towards a series of gently undulating hills to the north-west, dissected by a number of smaller water courses. Locally man-made levels are evident associated with the A130 and its junctions and slip roads to the east, as well as the railway line to the south-east and the A132 to the north.

6.5 The landform is not unusual in the locality, being typical of the local area and influenced by man-made levels along its periphery, therefore is deemed to have a medium to low value. The landform would be subject to some minor changes in level to accommodate access tracks, hard surfaced areas, gates and fencing, therefore, is deemed to have a medium susceptibility to change. Overall, the sensitivity is judged to be no greater than medium.

6.6 There would be limited changes to the landform of the site to accommodate foundations of the battery storage and substation and other structures, including fencing and CCTV, however, the solar panels would not require any foundations. The magnitude of change is considered to be no greater than low, which would result in Minor adverse levels of effects during all periods, which would be non-permanent.

Figure 6: Aerial Photograph of site and surroundings

Water Features and Drainage

6.7 There is a water course within the site which follows the route of the north-south oriented access track linking Runwell Road with Southlands Farm. The water course has generally steep sided banks and is well vegetated along its route, with tow culverts to accommodate access tracks. The site lies in proximity to the River Crouch to the south-west with open space further to the south incorporating a network of open ditches and lower lying land encouraging wetland features.

6.8 The water course has some localised value, typical of those features joining the River Crouch, however is overgrown and is not overly noticeable because of this, therefore, deemed to have a no greater than medium value. Due to the existing crossings over the water course and distance from the proposed development, the susceptibility to change of this feature is deemed to be low. Overall, it is considered to have a medium sensitivity to the type of development proposed.

6.9 The water course within the site and its associated vegetation would be retained and respected as part of the proposed development, with access tracks utilising existing culverts across the water course. The proposed development would have no direct or indirect effects upon the River Crouch. Therefore, no direct effects are predicted during construction or at Year 1.

6.10 The water course would be managed to maximise its wildlife value, offering some benefits, however these would not equate to anything over a Minor level of effect in landscape terms.

Land Use, Buildings and Infrastructure

6.11 The site is comprised of a series of medium scale arable fields which are mostly irregular in shape, with some to the east defined by adjacent road and rail infrastructure. There is no built form on the site, apart from two large scale electricity pylons with associated overhead cables to the south-east. The site is crossed by a metalled access track linking Runwell Road to the north with Southlands Farm to the south. The field gate entrance to the site from Runwell Road to the north-east is surfaced, with a concrete platform extending into the site.

6.12 The site is influenced to some degree by the network of roads to the north and east, as well as by the adjacent crouch valley railway line to the south-east. However, these routes are mostly visually separated by the dense vegetation along the boundaries of these routes. A number of properties align Runwell Road to the north, including a hotel to the north-east and Runwell village to the north-west. Southlands Farm with its complex of agricultural buildings lies close to the southern boundary. A large scale sewage works is located to the south-east of the site beyond the railway line and the River Crouch. A number of large scale powerlines cross the landscape in proximity to the site including within Wickford Memorial Park to the south and following the railway line to the east. Further to the north, a new garden village is under construction, namely St Luke's Park.

6.13 Although the site is greenfield, being typical of the nearby agricultural landscape, it is influenced by the nearby A-roads, the railway line and development, as well as by the network of pylons and associated overhead powerlines and is deemed to have a medium to low value. However, the extents of the proposed development do cover most of the site leading to a change in land use, albeit with some agricultural practices able to continue and on balance, its susceptibility to change is deemed to be medium to high. On balance, it is deemed to have a no greater than medium sensitivity to the proposed development.

6.14 The proposals would represent a change to the current land use from predominantly agricultural fields to an operational solar farm with additional infrastructure, albeit in context of surrounding development. As such, the magnitude of change is assessed as medium to high upon the site itself, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect during all periods.

Vegetation

6.15 The site benefits from well established native field boundaries with a number of mature trees, particularly some mature oak to the north-east, as well as a line of mature trees following the access track and water course corridor across the site in an east-west direction. Mature trees and hedgerows align Runwell Road where adjacent to the site boundary. Some central and southern field boundaries have been lost or are gappy in places, with no vegetation the southern most boundary in proximity to Southlands Farm. Areas of woodland and scrub align the adjacent railway line, the A130 dual carriageway and Runwell Road (A132) to the north-east of the site which overhang the site. The site abuts the River Crouch to the south, where the route is heavily vegetated on both sides, including scrub and mature trees.

6.16 The site is located within a landscape made up of agricultural land interspersed with areas of woodland and infrastructure with its associated planting. Surrounding field boundaries are similar to that of the site, defined mostly by native field boundary hedgerows, with some being tree lined. The nearby Wickford Memorial Park features a number of mature tree lines which separate sports pitches and recreational areas, with open space to the east of the park being recently planted with woodland.

6.17 The vegetation pattern within the site is similar to the surrounding agricultural landscape, however, is in contrast to the patterns found to the parkland to the south on the urban edge of Wickford and the linear nature of vegetation surrounding various roads and rail routes to the east. Although the site features some valuable trees and hedgerows, some of the field patterns have deteriorated or are no longer present, therefore, are considered to have a medium value. As the proposed development respects the location of existing development with the ability to be managed and enhanced, a low susceptibility of change is assigned to vegetation. On balance, it is deemed to have a medium sensitivity to the proposed development.

6.18 During construction, trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the site would be protected. There would be no loss of existing trees and hedgerows, with the design of the proposed development, particularly the proposed access tracks utilising existing tracks and access points between fields. The proposed development is therefore predicted to have no adverse effect upon vegetation during construction.

6.19 At Year 1, all proposed mitigation planting would be in place, albeit that it would have yet to mature. As a result, a very low beneficial magnitude of change would occur at Year 1, resulting in a Minor level of effect.

6.20 With the benefit of maturing planting, the proposed vegetation would integrate the development with its surroundings, resulting in further localised benefits within the site. At Year 5, a low beneficial magnitude of change is predicted, resulting a long-term Moderate to Minor level of effect.

Landscape Character

6.21 This section provides an overview of the landscape character of the site and its locality. It provides an indication of the sensitivity of the landscape character to the proposed development and the resulting effects which would arise from the development proposals.

National Level Landscape Character

6.22 The site is located within National Character Area (NCA) 111, Northern Thames Basin, with the site location identified in Figure 7. The key characteristics of NCA 111, of relevance to the site, are set out below:

- *'The landform is varied with a wide plateau divided by river valleys. The prominent hills and ridges of the 'Bagshot Hills' are notable to the northwest and extensive tracts of flat land are found in the south.*
- *Characteristic of the area is a layer of thick clay producing heavy, acidic soils, resulting in retention of considerable areas of ancient woodland.*
- *A diverse landscape with a series of broad valleys containing the major rivers Ver, Colne and Lea, and slightly steeper valleys of the rivers Stour, Colne and Roman. Numerous springs rise at the base of the Bagshot Beds and several reservoirs are dotted throughout the area.*
- *The pattern of woodlands is varied across the area and includes considerable ancient semi-natural woodland. Hertfordshire is heavily wooded in some areas as are parts of Essex, while other areas within Essex are more open in character. Significant areas of wood pasture and pollarded veteran trees are also present*
- *The field pattern is very varied across the basin reflecting historical activity. Informal patterns of 18th-century or earlier enclosure reflect medieval colonisation of the heaths. Regular planned enclosures dating from the Romano-British period are a subtle but nationally important feature on the flat land to the south-east of the area. In the Essex heathlands 18th- and 19th-century enclosure of heathlands and commons followed by extensive 20th-century field enlargement is dominant.*
- *Mixed farming, with arable land predominating in the Hertfordshire plateaux, parts of the London Clay lowlands and Essex heathlands. Grasslands are characteristic of the river valleys throughout. Horticulture and market gardening are found on the light, sandy soils of former heaths in Essex, particularly around Colchester, along with orchards, meadow pasture and leys following numerous narrow rivers and streams.*

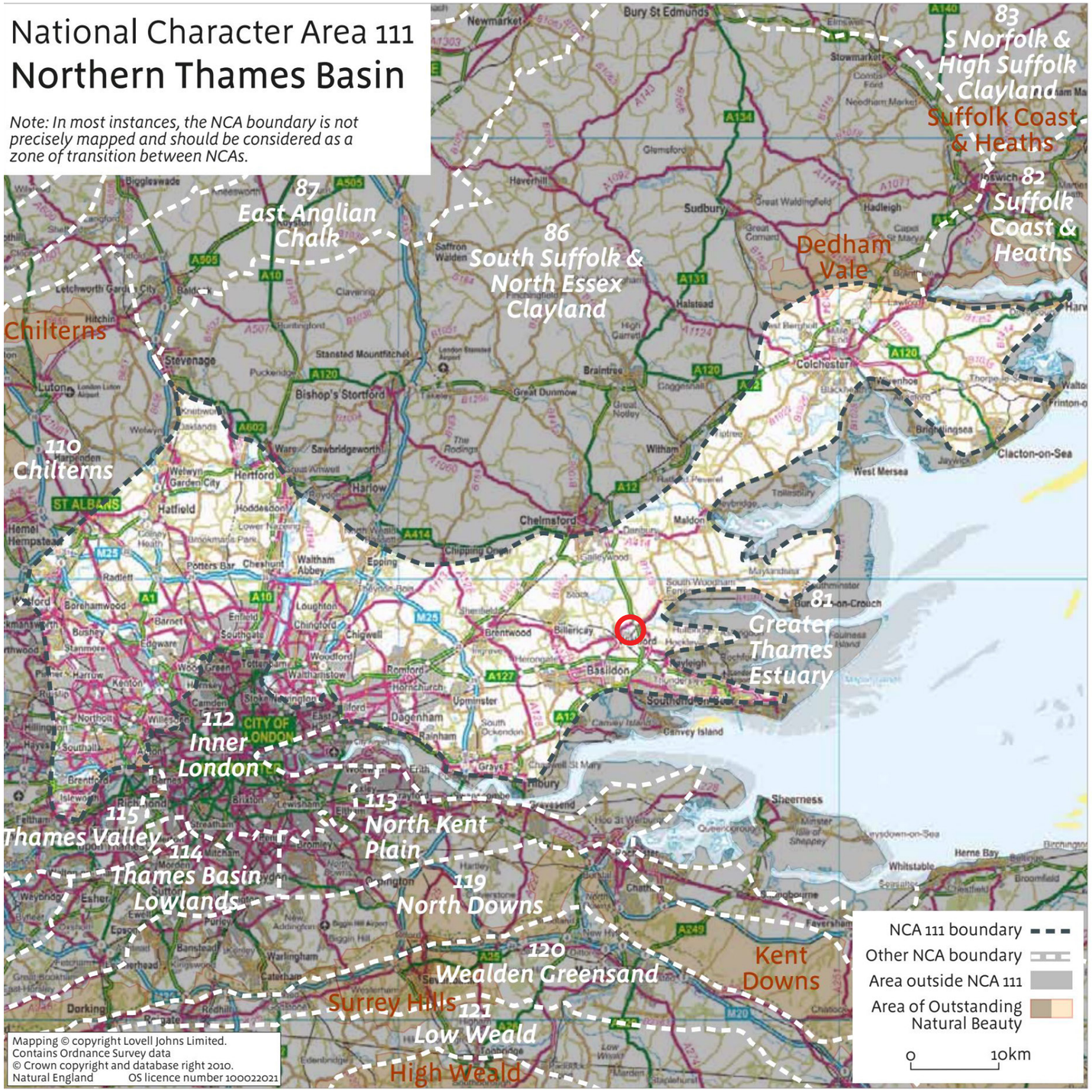

Figure 7: Extract of Natural England NCA 111 with approximate site location circled.

- *The diverse range of semi-natural habitats include ancient woodland, lowland heath and floodplain grazing marsh and provide important habitats for a wide range of species including great crested newt, water vole, dormouse and otter.*

- *Rich archaeology including sites related to Roman occupation, with the Roman capital at Colchester and City of St Albans (Verulamium) and links to London. Landscape parklands surrounding 16th- and 17th-century rural estates and country houses built for London merchants are a particular feature in Hertfordshire.*

- *The medieval pattern of small villages and dispersed farming settlement remains central to the character of parts of Hertfordshire and Essex. Market towns have expanded over time as have the London suburbs and commuter settlements, with the creation of new settlements such as the pioneering garden city at Welwyn and the planned town at Basildon.*

- *Brick-built dwellings are characteristic from the late 17th century onwards. Prior to this dwellings and farm buildings tended to be timber built with weatherboarding, now mainly painted white but traditionally black or tarred, and whitewashed plaster walls.*

6.23 The national level assessment gives a broad brush impression of a region and provides a useful contextual overview of the character of the wider landscape. However, the proposed development is not considered to have the potential to result in any perceptible effects on landscape character at this national scale and to remain proportionate to the small scale of the site in relation to the NCA, focus is placed upon the local landscape character.

County Landscape Character

6.24 The Essex Landscape Character Assessment was produced in 2003 by Chris Blandford Associates. The site is located within 'E1 South Essex Farmlands' Landscape Character Area and its key characteristics are:

- *'Gently undulating landform, locally strongly rolling.*
- *Rectilinear field pattern with tall thick hedgerow boundaries.*
- *Occasional small woods and copses.*
- *Sense of enclosure*
- *Striking large open water expanse of Hanningfield Reservoir surrounded by dense tree belts is a distinctive feature in the west.*
- *Pylons are a frequent presence.'*

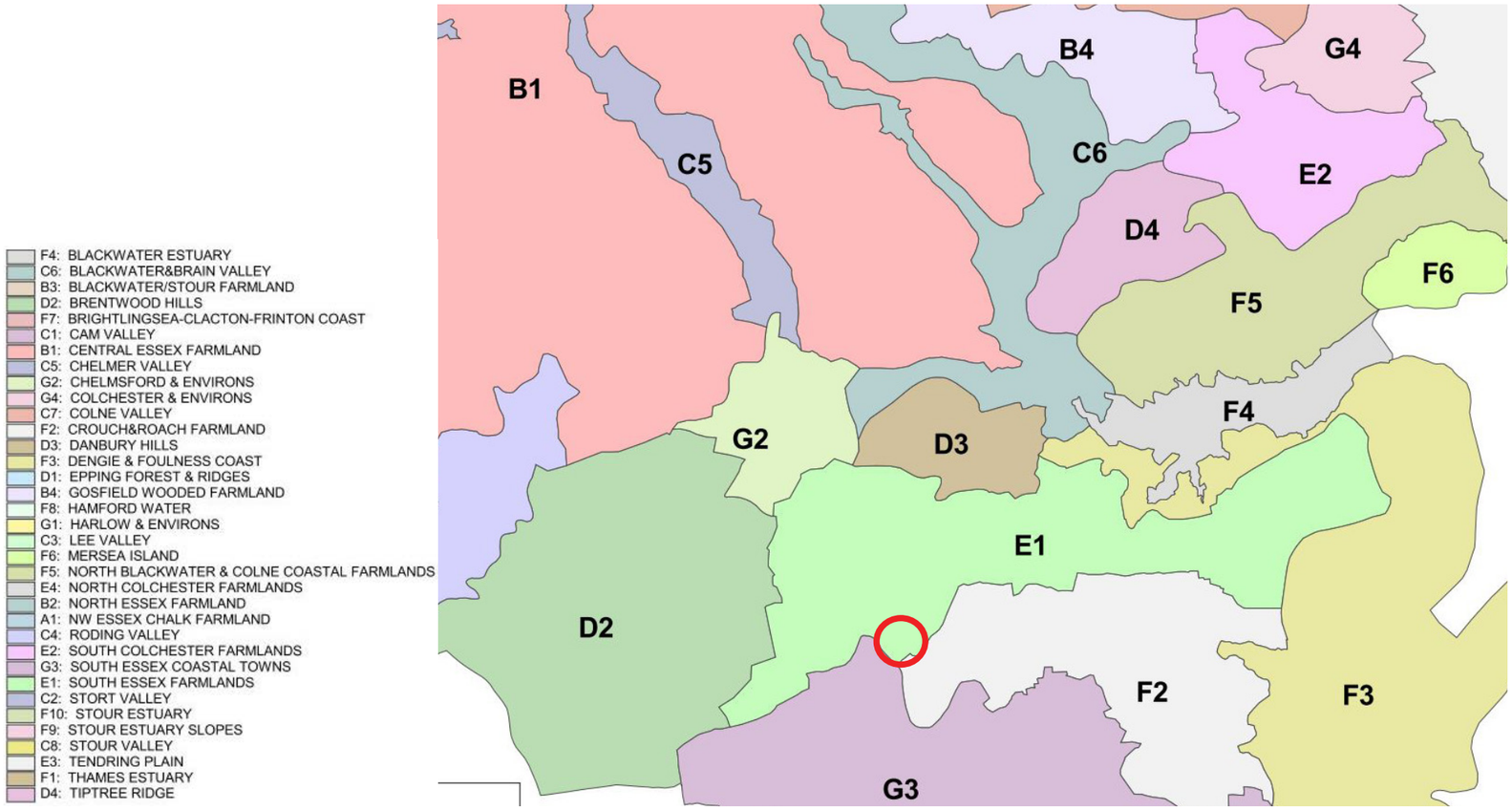

Figure 8: Extract from Landscape Character Areas map in Essex Landscape Character Assessment (approximate site location circled)

6.25 This area is also within the Landscape Character Type 'London Clay Landscapes (E),' which has the following key characteristics:

- *'Mainly gently undulating or flat landform.*
- *Heavy clay soils and lighter sandy/loamy soils where sand and gravel deposits overly clay.*
- *Regular and straight hedged field boundaries the result of both ancient planned*
- *landscapes, and late enclosure of former heathlands.*
- *Pasture and arable farmland.*
- *Mostly enclosed nature of the landscape.'*

6.26 The site lies close to the Essex County Landscape Character Area 'G3 South Essex Coastal Towns' to the south western boundary of the site. It's key characteristics are:

- *'Large areas of dense urban development.*
- *Strongly rolling hills with steep south and west facing escarpments covered by open grassland or a mix of small woods, pastures and commons.*
- *Extensive flat coastal grazing marshes in the south adjacent to the Thames Estuary.*
- *Large blocks of woodland in the centre of the area.*
- *Narrow bands and broader areas of gently undulating arable farmland, with a remnant hedgerow pattern, separating some of the towns.*
- *Particularly complex network of major transportation routes.*
- *Pylon routes visually dominate farmland in the A130 corridor.'*

6.27 The site also lies close to the Essex County Landscape Character Area 'F2 Crouch and Roach Farmland,' which has the following key characteristics:

- *'Long narrow Crouch and Roach river estuaries with bands of flat low lying marshlands.*

- *Rolling or gently undulating arable farmland between the estuaries. Regular fields of variable size and thick or intermittent hedgerow boundaries.*
- *Frequent long views across the farmland to the estuaries from higher ground.*
- *Strongly right angled pattern of lanes.*
- *Small villages, a scattering of hamlets, farmsteads, and newer suburban properties are concentrated along the lanes on higher ground.'*

6.28 Although more detailed than the NCA, the areas defined within the County assessment are of such a scale that the proposed development is not considered to have the potential to result in any noteworthy effects to landscape character at this scale, therefore, focus is placed upon the published local landscape character.

Regional Landscape Character

Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments

6.29 Chelmsford Borough Council, Braintree DC, Brentwood BC, Maldon DC and Uttlesford DC produced 'Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments' in 2006, which acts as the current landscape character guidance within Chelmsford District Council.

6.30 The site is located within 'F11 South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland' Regional Character Area.', as shown on Figure 9. The characteristic features of this Character Area are set out as follows:

- *Undulating mature wooded farmland.*
- *Vast expanse of Hanningfield reservoir.*
- *Mixed woodland and a patchwork of diverse habitats surrounding the reservoir.*
- *Small-scale linear settlement pattern.*
- *Medium to large-scale arable fields with hedged and treed field boundaries.*
- *Views to wooded horizons both within the character area and within adjacent character areas.*
- *Network of quiet, narrow rural lanes traverse the area.*

6.31 The proposed landscape strategy objectives for F11 South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland Regional Character Area are to:

*'**Conserve** - seek to protect and enhance positive features that are essential in contributing to local distinctiveness and sense of place through effective planning and positive land management measures.*

***Enhance** - seek to improve the integrity of the landscape, and reinforce its character, by introducing new and/or enhanced elements where distinctive features or characteristics are absent.'*

6.32 The suggested landscape planning guidelines of relevance to the site, include:

- *Conserve and enhance the landscape settings of small settlements within the character area and also Wickford and Billericay.*
- *Ensure that any appropriate new development responds to historic settlement pattern and uses materials, which are appropriate to local landscape character. Such development should be well integrated with the surrounding landscape.*
- *Conserve the mostly rural character of the area.*
- *Conserve existing views across the area and to adjacent Landscape Character Areas.*
- *Seek to screen visual detractors (such as A127 road corridor, for example with planted shelter belts)...'*

The Landscape Capacity Study for Basildon District Council

6.33 The Landscape Capacity Study for Basildon District Council (2014) incorporates the land beyond the southern boundary of the site, which is Landscape Character Area '5. Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe' as shown on Figure 10, which is within the Urban Fringelands Character Type.

6.34 The overall character and qualities of the Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe Landscape Character Area are set out as *'a variety of land-uses typical of urban fringe areas including public open space, playing fields, scrub land, agricultural land, plotlands, pylons and transport corridors including a railway line, the A130 and the A129.'*

6.35 The characteristic features of the Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe Landscape Character Area are as follows:

- *'Gently sloping landform dropping towards the River Crouch at the north boundary*
- *Mixture of urban fringe land-uses including: recreational land, arable farmland, plotlands and sewage treatment works*

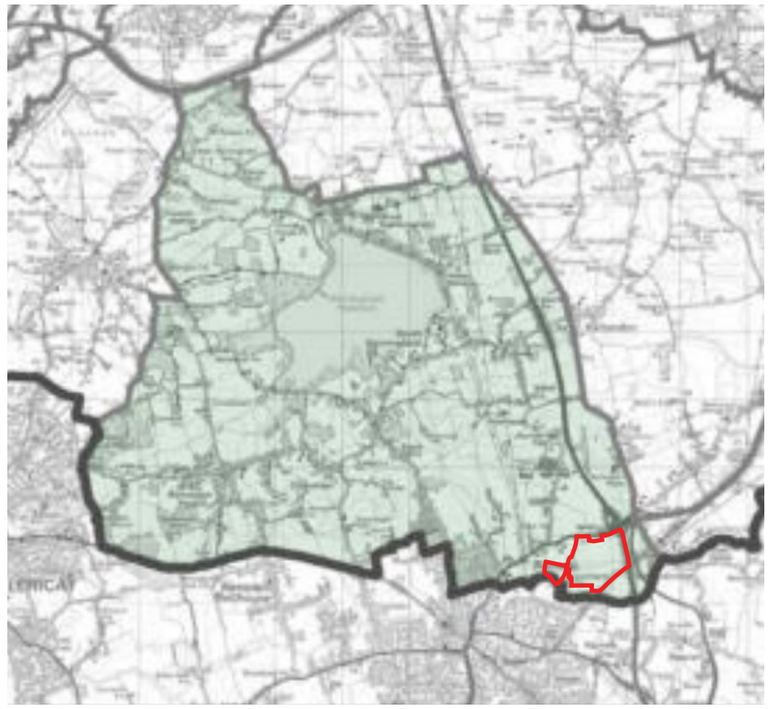

Figure 9: Extract from Landscape Character Areas map in Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments (site boundary as red line)

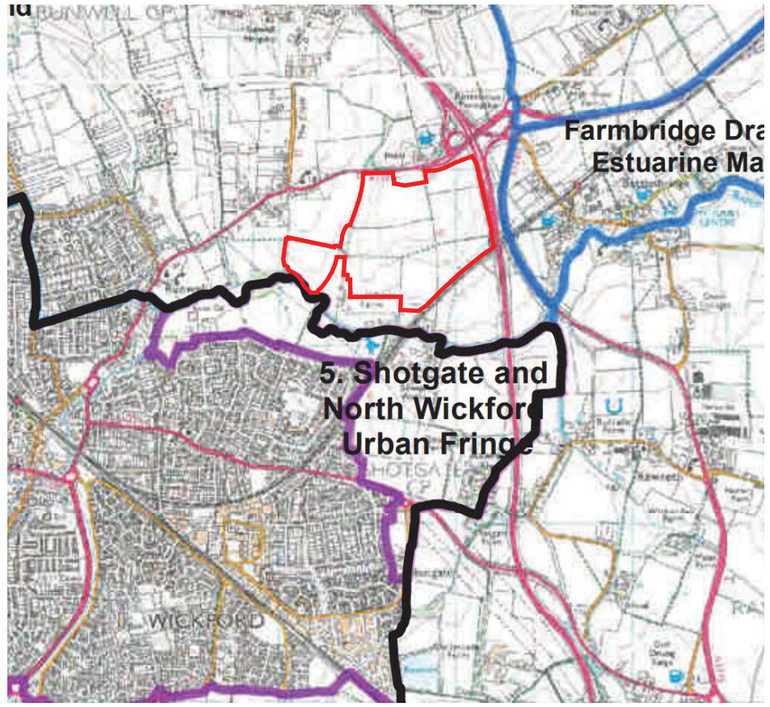

Figure 10: Extract from Basildon Borough Council's Landscape Capacity Study (site boundary as red line)

- *Pylon lines and A130 are dominant features*
- *Vegetation along the River Crouch forms prominent feature*
- *Well connected by public right of ways*
- *Historic field pattern well preserved*
- *Views east towards open farmland of the Crouch valley*
- *Views west towards urban edge of Shotgate and Wickford.'*

Effects upon F11 South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland Regional Character Area (RCA)

6.36 The site is similar in some aspects to the RCA, with its medium scale arable fields with hedged and treed field boundaries, as well as a linear settlement pattern along the adjacent Runwell Road. However, the character area is not in proximity to Hanningfield reservoir and is influenced to a greater degree by adjacent road and rail infrastructure and is not designated for its landscape, historical or ecological value. There are limited views towards the wooded horizons further to the north due to the low lying nature of the area, when compared to other areas of the character area. Its value is deemed to be no higher than medium to low, with a balance of greenfield site influenced by surrounding urbanising features resulting is a medium susceptibility to change. However, the characteristic features of the South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland RCA lie within the study area and therefore, a balanced medium sensitivity has been used.

6.37 Due to the scale of the proposed development within the character area, the proposals would introduce a man-made feature into an agricultural landscape, albeit one that is already influenced by existing electrical infrastructure within the site and by road, rail and energy infrastructure, as well as the nearby sewage works and built form surrounding the site. However, the proposed development would change the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape, albeit with the proposals would not affect those characteristic features of greatest value within the character area i.e. Hanningfield reservoir. It is therefore predicted that the proposed development would give rise to a low magnitude of change upon the wider character area during construction and at Year 1, which would result in a Moderate to Minor adverse level of effect.

6.38 Although existing landscape features within the site would be retained and protected, with the proposed development introducing a number of enhancements in the form of tree and hedgerow planting, the proposals would likely still form a man-made minor alteration to the physical and perceptual attributes of the character area. Therefore, a Moderate to Minor adverse level of effect would persist at Year 5.

Effects on Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe Landscape Character Area (LCA)

6.39 The value of the LCA is influenced by the adjacent settlement edge to a degree, as well as other areas of infrastructure including the A130, pylons, the railway line and the sewage works. However, the land closest to the site has recreational value to the local community and some local historic value associated with Wickford Memorial Park and its links to World War II, therefore on balance, it is deemed to have a medium value. Due to the prominent vegetation aligning both sides of the River Crouch which provide visual separation between the site and the LCA, the susceptibility to the type of development proposed is likely to be low. On balance, a medium sensitivity is considered appropriate.

6.40 The Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe Landscape does not directly cover the site, therefore, no direct effects upon the LCA would occur as a result of the proposed development. Due to the physical and visual separation from the LCA brought about by the vegetation pattern along the River Crouch, as well as along the nearby railway line, there would be very limited intervisibility between the site and the LCA. It is therefore considered that the perceptual or aesthetic characteristics of the landscape character area and its immediate setting would not be adversely affected by the proposed development. A worst case very low temporary magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods, resulting in a no greater than Minor indirect level of effect, which is likely to reduce in the longer term.

Effects on Local Landscape Character

Sensitivity of the site and immediate surroundings

6.41 As stated previously, the site is similar in some aspects to the RCA. The site is not covered by any designation that recognises a specific landscape or scenic importance and there are no Listed Buildings or identified historical or ecological interests with which it is directly associated. Whilst it contains some elements of value, in the form of the existing trees and hedgerows and a public right of way which crosses the site, it is not accessible for recreation beyond this route and is of a nature which is not rare in the local landscape. It is therefore, not considered to be a 'valued landscape' as discussed in the NPPF. However, the site would be susceptible to the type of development proposed but also influenced by the adjacent road, rail and energy infrastructure. The susceptibility to change of the site and immediate surrounding is judged to be no greater than medium, with a value of medium to low. Therefore, the sensitivity of the site and immediate surroundings is assessed as medium.

Effects on the site and immediate surroundings

6.42 The landscape character of the site and surroundings has the potential to be influenced to some degree by the proposed development for a temporary period. The proposed development would introduce a new man-made feature into the landscape, which although of only limited height, it would incorporate most of the site area and therefore adversely alter the physical and perceptual attributes of the site. It is acknowledged however, that the layout would allow retention of all valuable features within and surrounding the site and that the proposed built components would typically take up less than 25% of the physical site. The influence upon the surroundings would be limited by the network of mature field boundary hedgerows and adjacent woodlands during this temporary period.

6.43 The magnitude of change to the site and surrounding area is assessed as medium to high, which when combined with its medium sensitivity would result in a Moderate level of effect upon the landscape character of the site during construction and at Year 1.

6.44 With the introduction of a number of additional enhancements in the form of tree and hedgerow planting along with the creation of wildflower meadows and the management of existing hedgerows to a height of 3m or above, there would be some improvements to the physical and perceptual attributes of the site, a medium magnitude

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of change	Level of Effect
Landscape Features						
Landform and topography	Medium to Low	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low	Minor adverse
				Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
				Year 5	Low	Minor adverse
Water features and drainage	Medium	Low	Medium	Construction	--	No effect
				Year 1	--	No effect
				Year 5	Very Low	Minor benefit
Land use, buildings and infrastructure	Medium to Low	Medium to High	Medium	Construction	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
				Year 1	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
				Year 5	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
Vegetation	Medium	Low	Medium	Construction	Low	Minor adverse
				Year 1	Very Low	Minor beneficial
				Year 5	Low	Minor beneficial
Landscape Character						
F11 – South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland RCA	Medium to Low	Medium	Medium	Construction	Low	Minor adverse
				Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
				Year 5	Low	Minor adverse
Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe LCA	Medium	Low	Medium	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse
				Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse
				Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse
The site itself	Medium to Low	Medium	Medium	Construction	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
				Year 1	Medium to High	Moderate adverse
				Year 5	Medium	Moderate adverse

Table 1: Summary of Landscape Effects

7. VISUAL EFFECTS

Introduction

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

7.2 Effects are considered during construction, at Year 1 and at Year 5 and beyond. New planting takes a number of years to mature and average growth rates have been taken into consideration. The effectiveness of the vegetation both in terms of integrating the development into the surrounding landscape and in providing visual screening would improve over time and needs to be considered appropriately. A summary of visual effects are included in Table 2.

7.3 A photographic record is included in Appendix 2 with the viewpoint locations shown on Figure 11.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

7.4 The Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Figure 11) identifies the potential locations from which the development may be visible. The Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (SZTV) has been produced using Digital Terrain Modelling (DTM) and LIDAR data. Existing built development (8m tall) and larger blocks of woodland have also been modelled (15m tall) to take account of the screening effect that these would provide. However, the screening effect provided by smaller blocks of woodland and hedgerows/hedgerow trees, particularly those surrounding the site, have not been taken into account, and consequently the actual extent of the area from which the proposed development is visible is likely to be much smaller.

7.5 The SZTV has been run at an average height of 3m across the site for the elements which form the Proposed Development. However, this is a worst case scenario, as the proposed solar panels would be less that 3m high for most of the day and only 2.1m high at midday, therefore, their visibility would be less at certain times of the day.

Sensitivity

7.6 Residential receptors, users of the hotel, users of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) network, visitors to cemeteries/church yards and users of the local park for recreation are considered to have a high visual

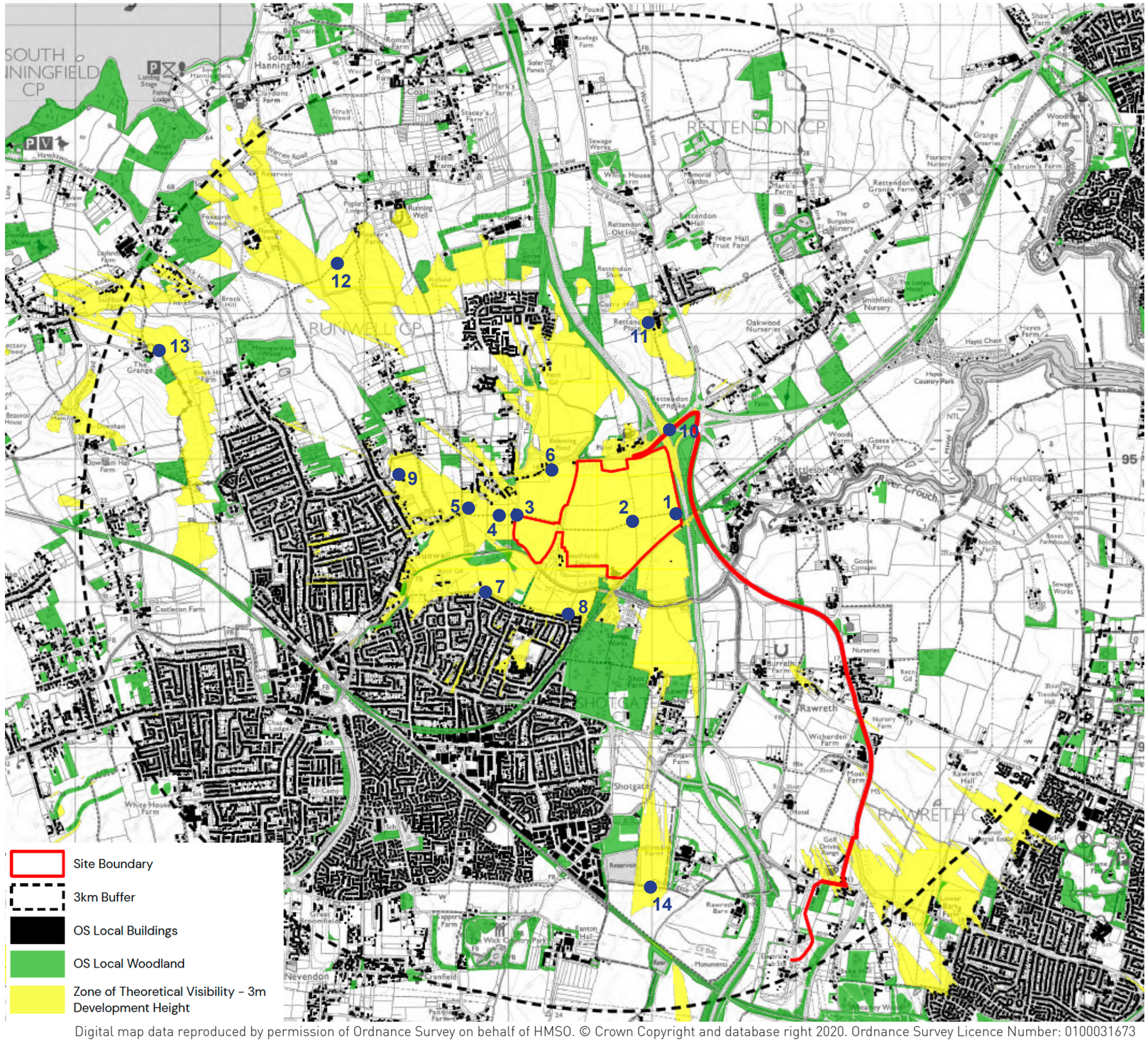

Figure 11: Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoints

sensitivity to the change proposed. In all cases they were considered to have a high susceptibility to changes in their views and that these views were of a high value. Users of Runwell Road (A132), where the view is not the focus of the activity are considered to have medium sensitivity which is a combination of a medium susceptibility and medium value associated with the views from these routes. People using nearby A130 and the Crouch Valley line rail route are considered to have low sensitivity reflecting the low susceptibility and value associated with the views from these routes.

7.7 The approach to sensitivity of visual receptors is set out in Appendix 1.

Residential Receptors

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

7.9 Of the properties located within the area immediately surrounding the site, there are a number of residential properties from which potential visibility of the development could exist and whereby the change to views could be considered as being more than incidental.

7.10 Despite its proximity to the site, there is no visibility from Battlesbridge, which is substantiated by the SZTV, therefore, the village is not considered further as part of the assessment.

7.11 Although there is some theoretical visibility shown towards the St Luke's Park garden village, in reality, due to the vegetation aligning Runwell Road, as well as surrounding the site and within the intervening landscape, there is no intervisibility between garden village and the site. Therefore, the garden village is not considered further as part of the assessment.

7.12 Although there is some visibility along the north-western edge of Rayleigh, these properties are located over 3km from the site. With this distance combined with the numerous intervening areas of vegetation, the site would be barely discernible from the settlement edge and therefore, is not considered further as part of the assessment.

7.13 Although there is some limited visibility to the south of Rettendon village, only Little Rettendon Place and All Saints Church are considered in the report.

Travelodge and residential properties to the north-east

7.14 These properties and hotel building are located on the opposite side of Runwell Road (A132) close to the north-east site boundary. Vegetation in front of the properties and hotel limit some outward views, with the vegetation adjacent to the site also obscuring any direct views into the site. Some glimpses are possible through an opposing field gate, however, as the site falls away to the south views into the site are limited.

7.15 During construction and at Year 1, views by residents and hotel users would be limited to glimpses through the field gate, which would be utilised as the vehicular entrance to the proposed development. All other views towards the proposed development would either be filtered by vegetation surrounding the properties, or further filtered by vegetation aligning Runwell Road. A low magnitude of change is predicted, which when combined with the high sensitivity, results in a Moderate to Minor level of effect.

7.16 With the benefit of new tree planting along the north-eastern edge of the proposed development and woodland planting surrounding the substation and battery storage area, any limited views would be further filtered in the longer-term. As such, a very low magnitude of change is predicted at Year 5 despite the proximity of the proposed development, resulting in a Minor level of effect.

Southlands Farm

7.17 Southlands Farm lies adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The residential property is oriented to face southwards, however, some windows face northwards with oblique views towards the site. Views are partly obscured by the complex of agricultural buildings to the north of the property. Although the property does benefit from some visual enclosure through garden vegetation, some parts of the curtilage are open, with the parts of the site adjacent to the property not defined by any boundary vegetation or barriers.

7.18 Due to the open aspect of the farm to the adjacent site, a worst case high magnitude of effect is predicted to occur during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Major adverse level of effect. Although hedgerow planting is proposed around the edges of the development where closest to the farm, this would have yet to mature.

7.19 With the benefit of maturing proposed hedgerows around the periphery of the site, some direct views of the solar panels and associated infrastructure would be filtered. However, as land within the site rises steeply to the north-east, views towards the panels would still be notable. A medium to high magnitude of change is predicted at Year 5, resulting in a Moderate to Major level of effect.

Southlands Cottages

7.20 These two semi-detached properties are located to the south of Runwell Road and lie close to the site. The properties benefit from some visual enclosure through surrounding garden vegetation. The site is located to the south-east of the properties at its closest point, however, mature vegetation screen direct views towards this area. The western part of the site is also located to the south of the properties at a distance of approximately 0.3km, with the site having an open aspect along this boundary.

7.21 Due to the open aspect of the western part of the site, the proposed development would be notable from the residential properties. Although a tree lined hedgerow is proposed along the boundary of the development, this would have yet to mature. A worst case medium to high magnitude of effect is predicted to occur during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse level of effect.

7.22 With the benefit of the maturing tree lined hedgerow along the boundary of the proposed development managed to a height of 3m and over, direct views towards the solar panels would be filtered. A medium to low magnitude of effect is predicted to occur at Year 5, resulting in a Moderate to Minor adverse level of effect.

Properties along Runwell Road to the north-west

7.23 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 6 within Appendix 2.

7.24 A number of residential properties align the former route of Runwell Road, however, the route has recently been constructed further to the north, incorporating a roundabout junction to accommodate traffic associated with St Luke's Park garden village. The properties are located on higher ground to the north of the western part of the site, although the site boundary is offset from the edge of the property boundaries by over 0.2km. Views are possible towards the site, with the boundary having an open aspect, however, falling landform does limit these views to a degree. Views to central and eastern parts of the site are filtered by mature vegetation aligning the access track to Southlands Farm.

7.25 Due to the offset of the proposed development from the properties at over 0.2km and the falling topography, views would be limited from some properties along Runwell Road. Although a proposed woodland tree belt is proposed along the boundary of the development, this would have yet to mature. A worst case medium magnitude of effect is predicted to occur during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Moderate adverse level of effect.

7.26 With the benefit of the maturing woodland tree belt along the boundary of the proposed development, direct views towards the solar panels would be filtered, albeit limited by falling topography and distance form the properties. A low magnitude of effect is predicted to occur at Year 5, resulting in a Moderate to Minor adverse level of effect.

Properties off Browns Avenue and Barnet Park Road

7.27 Due to the vegetation aligning the western boundary of the site, direct views of the proposed development from these properties would be filtered. A low magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods as a result of the proposed development, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect. Additional tree planting along the western boundary of the site would serve to filter views towards the proposed development further.

Properties off Runwell Chase

7.28 Due to the intervening vegetation and built form between these roads and the site, there would be very limited visibility towards the site, with properties further north along the road having even less opportunity to view the proposed development. A worst case very low magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods, resulting a no greater than Minor adverse level of effect.

Properties within Wickford

7.29 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Locations 7 and 8 within Appendix 2 and photomontages within Appendix 3.

7.30 The north-eastern edge of Wickford lies beyond the River Crouch to the south-west of the site and is located on gently rising land extending up to Southend Road. With the housing areas located on the opposing valley side, some glimpsed views of the site may be possible from select properties, limited by the mature vegetation located either side of the River Crouch, as well as vegetation within the site.

7.31 Due to the potential visibility of the proposed development from a select number of properties within Wickford, a medium to low magnitude of change is predicted during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect. However, it should be noted that many residents would not be able to view the proposed development or would only see limited parts of the site and therefore, the level of effect is a worst case scenario. Any view from Wickford would be seen in context of the electricity pylons crossing the open space to the south of the River Crouch.

7.32 With the benefit of new trees and hedgerows throughout the site, as well as the management of existing hedgerow to a height of 3m or above, some views of the proposed development are likely to reduce. A low magnitude of change is predicted at Year 5, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect.

Properties along eastern edge of Runwell

7.33 Due to the network garden vegetation aligning the properties, the series of intervening well vegetated field boundaries and the built form either side of Runwell Road, there would be no views towards the proposed development.

Little Rettendon Place

7.34 This property lies on locally high ground on the south-western most edge of Rettendon, with views over the surrounding area, including glimpses towards the site through vegetation north and aligning Runwell Road.

7.35 Due to the elevated nature of the view by residents towards the proposed development, a medium to low magnitude of change is predicted during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect. However, any view of the site would be seen in context of traffic along the A130 dual carriageway, pylons crossing the landscape and views towards other urban areas beyond the site.

7.36 With the benefit of new planting along site boundaries, some views would be filtered towards the proposed development, however, due to the elevated nature of the property, a Moderate to Minor level of effect would continue.

Scattered properties to the north-west

7.37 A number of residential properties and farmsteads are located on locally elevated land within the agricultural landscape to the north-west of the site. Most properties are surrounded by vegetation and therefore, would have limited visibility towards the site, with any glimpse seen at a distance of approximately 2km. A very low magnitude of change is predicted as result of the proposed development during all time periods, leading to a Minor level of effect.

Recreational Receptors

PROW 229_23 and 229_8 within the site

7.38 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Locations 1, 2 and 3 within Appendix 2.

7.39 These PROW cross the site in an east-west orientation and provide a link between Runwell Road to the west and Battlesbridge village to the east.

7.40 The proposed development would be located on both sides of the footpath along the most of the route whilst in the site, with the gap either side of the route between proposed fencing being approximately 20m wide. The exception to this is to the west of the site, where the proposed development would be located on the southern side of the footpath only. Within western and central parts of the site, a proposed native hedgerow would be planted along the northern side of the corridor, with the southern edge of the corridor left open to avoid canalising of the route and allowing better orientation by footpath users. A woodland belt would be planted to the south of the route to the west of the site, leaving an open aspect to the north. Due to the proximity of the proposed development to those using the PROW and with the proposed mitigation not yet visually effective, a high magnitude of change is predicted during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Major level of effect.

7.41 With the benefit of the proposed native hedgerow maturing along the northern side of the PROW and woodland planting to the west of the route, views of the proposed development would be reduced, however, views towards the panels and surrounding fencing would be possible to the south. A medium to high magnitude of change is predicted at Year 5, resulting in a Moderate to Major level of effect. However, it should be noted that along western parts of the footpath within the site, the visual effect would be a lot less as a result of the filtering effect by the proposed woodland belt and open aspect tot he north of the route.

PROW 229_23 beyond the site

7.42 The PROW crosses underneath the A130 and railway line before emerging close to Battlesbridge village. Due to the intervening embankments associated with the bridge crossing and planting either side of the road, there would be no view of the proposed development from the route beyond the eastern site boundary.

PROW 231_8 beyond the site

7.43 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 4 within Appendix 2.

7.44 The PROW crosses an established mature tree lined hedgerow beyond the western site boundary and passes either side of equestrian paddocks with associated buildings/stables. The path then gently falls further to the west and links with Runwell Road.

7.45 Due to the dense and established vegetation along the western boundary of the site, views towards the proposed development are limited to glimpses through a single field gate gap within the vegetation. Any view towards the proposed development would be seen in context of equestrian activities in the foreground. Views towards the proposed development would be limited to a length of approximately 190m of the route where closest to the site, with the remaining extents of the public

footpath up to Runwell Road having no view of the solar panels. At worst, a low magnitude of change would occur during construction and at Year 1 of operation, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect.

7.46 With the benefit of new tree planting along the western boundary, views towards the proposed development would reduce over time, however, a Moderate to Minor level of effect would continue at Year 5.

Wickford Memorial Park (including PROWs)

7.47 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 7 within Appendix 2.

7.48 Wickford Memorial Park is located to the south of the River Crouch adjacent to the north-eastern edge of Wickford. Due to the dense network of trees and vegetation throughout Wickford Memorial Park, as well as the dense vegetation aligning both sides of the River Crouch and woodland areas on both sides of the river, there would be no view of the proposed development from most locations within the park. The exception to this would be to the north-east of the park, where closest to the site, where some very limited glimpses may be possible through the dense vegetation aligning the river. A very low magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods, resulting in a Minor level of effect.

Open Space east of Wickford Memorial Park (including PROWs)

7.49 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 8 within Appendix 2 and photomontages within Appendix 3.

7.50 The area of publicly accessible open space continues along the River Crouch to the east of Wickford Memorial Park creating a corridor of accessible land adjacent to the urban edge of Wickford. A PROW (231_17 and 279_219) follows the southern edge of the River Crouch, with a number of informal routes crosses the open space providing circular links in between seasonal meadows and recently planting woodland areas.

7.51 Despite the open nature of the space, due to the dense vegetation aligning River Crouch, views towards the proposed development would be limited, with only a single visual gap within the vegetation noted allowing glimpses into the site, including from the PROW. Despite the proximity of the proposed development to the open space, at worst, a low magnitude of change is predicted during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect.

7.52 With the benefit of proposed trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the proposed development, some views would be filtered, however, due to the rising nature of land within the site, similar views would be experienced in Year 5 to those seen in other time periods. Therefore, a Moderate to MInor level of effect would continue.

Runwell Park

7.53 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 8 within Appendix 2.

7.54 Due to the extent of intervening vegetation within the intervening landscape and as a result of established vegetation around the site, including along the western site boundary, a no greater than very low magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods, resulting in a Minor level of effect.

All Saints Church, Rettendon

7.55 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 11 within Appendix 2 and photomontages within Appendix 3.

7.56 The church lies on locally high ground to the south-west of Rettendon, with views from the church yard and seating within the church yard over the surrounding area, including towards the site, limited in part by vegetation aligning the edge of the church extents, as well as within adjacent fields.

7.57 Due to the elevated nature of the view by visitors to the church, some glimpses towards the proposed development would be possible, seen in context of traffic along the A130 dual carriageway, pylons crossing the landscape and views towards other urban areas beyond the site. A medium to low magnitude of change is predicted during construction and at Year 1, resulting in a Moderate to Minor level of effect.

7.58 With the benefit of new planting along site boundaries, some views would be filtered towards the proposed development, however, due to the elevated nature of the church, a Moderate to Minor level of effect would continue.

Elevated PROWs to the north-west

7.59 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Locations 12 and 13 within Appendix 2.

7.60 A number of locally elevated PROWs cross the agricultural landscape to the north-west of the site. Most footpaths would have limited or no visibility towards the site due to the numerous intervening trees, vegetation and field boundaries in the surrounding landscape, with any glimpses seen at a distance of approximately 2km or over. A very low magnitude of change is predicted as result of the proposed development during all time periods, leading to a Minor level of effect.

PROW 229_21

7.61 The PROW crosses agricultural land where closest to the site, rising up towards Rettendon, where the route passes Little Rettendon Place residential property and the chruch yard of All Saints Church. There was little evidence that this public footpath is used at the time of the site visit, with entrances to the route being overgrown. However, despite this evidence, it is assumed that the route is still used by the public.

7.62 Views by users of the public right of way are deemed to be similar in nature to adjacent properties and views from All Saint's Church church yard, therefore, a Moderate to Minor level of effect is predicted during all time periods.

Bridleway 300_55

7.63 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Location 14 within Appendix 2.

7.64 Due to the distance of the bridleway from the site and the limited visibility of the proposed development from the route, seen at an oblique angle to the direction of travel, a very low magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods, resulting in a no greater than Minor level of effect.

Road and Rail Users

7.65 Although there may be some very limited glimpses towards the site from the locally elevated network of residential roads to the north-east of Wickford, due to the extent of intervening garden vegetation, parked cars and vegetation within open space south of the River Crouch, these roads have not been considered further in the report.

Runwell Road (A132)

7.66 Views are indicatively represented by photographs taken from Photograph Locations 5 and 10 within Appendix 2.

7.67 The road runs adjacent to the northern boundary of the site, with the road providing a connection between the centre of Wickford to its junction with the A130, located to the north-east of the site and beyond to South Woodham Ferrers. Despite the proximity of the route to the site, intervisibility of road users are limited by the vegetation aligning the route, including within the site itself. The exception to this is from the bridge crossing of the A130 (refer to Viewpoint 10) where

some glimpses are possible towards the site through the network of tree lined field boundary hedgerows within the site. Little or no views are possible from the road towards the site beyond the north-western edge of the site.

7.68 A worst case medium to low magnitude of change is predicted during construction and at Year 1 as a result of the proposed development, leading to a Moderate to Minor level of effect. However, this level of effect would be limited to where the road crosses over the A130, with other parts of the road likely to have a lower level of effect or no effect upon the route.

7.69 With the benefit of new tree planting along the northern and north-eastern boundaries of the site, some direct views towards the proposed development would be filtered, in particular from the bridge crossing the A130. However, a Moderate to Minor level of effect would remain.

A130

7.70 Due to the vegetation aligning the route, most views towards the proposed development would be obscured, however, where the road is adjacent to the site, some oblique glimpses may be possible by users of the road, albeit whilst travelling at the national speed limit. A worst case low magnitude of change is predicted during all time periods, resulting in a Minor level of effect. Mitigation planting along parts of the north-eastern edge would serve to filter some direct views in the longer-term.

Crouch Valley line rail route

7.71 The railway line passes adjacent to the south-eastern edge of the site. Due to the vegetation aligning both sides of the rial route, very few outward views would be possible towards the proposed development. Therefore, a very low magnitude of change is predicted for users of the Crouch Valley rail route during all time periods, resulting in a no greater than Minor level of effect.

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of change*	Level of Effect*
Residential receptors				
Travelodge and residential properties to the north-east	High	Construction	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse
Southlands Farm	High	Construction	High	Major adverse
		Year 1	High	Major adverse
		Year 5	Medium to High	Moderate to Major adverse
Southlands Cottages	High	Construction	Medium to High	Moderate to Major adverse
		Year 1	Medium to High	Moderate to Major adverse
		Year 5	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Properties along Runwell Road to the north-west	High	Construction	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Medium	Moderate adverse
		Year 5	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Properties off Browns Avenue and Barnet Park Road	High	Construction	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Properties off Runwell Chase and Lynford Drive	High	All periods	Very Low	Minor adverse
Properties within Wickford	High	Construction	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Properties along eastern edge of Runwell	High	All periods	No view	No effect
Little Rettendon Place	High	Construction	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Scattered properties to the north-west	High	All periods	Very Low	Minor adverse
Recreational receptors				
PROW 229_23 and 231_8 within the site	High	Construction	High	Major adverse
		Year 1	High	Major adverse
		Year 5	Medium to High	Moderate to Major adverse
PROW 229_23 beyond the site	High	All periods	No view	No effect
PROW 231_8 beyond the site	High	Construction	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Wickford Memorial Park (including PROWs)	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse
Open Space east of Wickford Memorial Park (including PROWs)	High	Construction	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Runwell Park	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse
All Saints Church, Rettendon	High	Construction	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Elevated PROWs to the north-west	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse
PROW 229_21	High	Construction	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
Bridleway 300_55	High	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse
Road users				
Runwell Road (A132)	Medium	Construction	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 1	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
		Year 5	Medium to Low	Moderate to Minor adverse
A130	Low	Construction	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low	Minor adverse
		Year 5	Low	Minor adverse
Crouch Valley line rail route	Low	Construction	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Very Low	Minor adverse
		Year 5	Very Low	Minor adverse

Table 2: Summary of Visual Effects

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Landscape Character

8.1 As an inevitable consequence of the change from undeveloped arable fields to a solar farm, the proposed development would give rise to Moderate long-term adverse effects upon the landscape character of the site and immediate surroundings. However, it should be noted that with the introduction of a number of additional enhancements in the form of tree and hedgerow planting along with the creation of new grassland and the management and enhancement of existing trees and hedgerows, there would be some improvements to the physical and perceptual attributes of the site.

8.2 Due to the scale of the proposed development within the F11 – South Hanningfield Wooded Farmland Regional Character Area, the proposals would introduce a man-made feature into a predominantly agricultural landscape, albeit in proximity to numerous nearby roads, rail routes and settlements, which would change the physical and perceptual attributes of the landscape. Although existing landscape elements would be retained and protected within the site, with the proposed development introducing a number of enhancements in the form of tree, hedgerow and woodland planting, the proposals would likely form a change to the physical and perceptual attributes of the regional character area. A Minor adverse level of effect would occur in the longer-term.

8.3 Although not within the boundary of the site, the Shotgate and North Wickford Urban Fringe Landscape Character Area lies close to the southern boundary. Due to the intervening vegetation pattern It is considered that the perceptual or aesthetic characteristics of the landscape character area and its immediate setting would not be adversely affected by the proposed development.

Landscape Features

8.4 The site is comprised of a series of medium scale arable fields which are mostly irregular in shape, with some to the east defined by adjacent road and rail infrastructure. Although the site is greenfield, being typical of the nearby agricultural landscape, it is influenced by the nearby A-roads, the railway line and development, as well as by the network of pylons and associated overhead powerlines. The proposals would represent a change to the current land use from predominantly agricultural fields to an operational solar farm with additional infrastructure, albeit in context of surrounding development. As such, a Moderate adverse level of effect is predicted upon land use of the site in the longer-term.

8.5 In relation to vegetation, existing trees, woodland and hedgerows within and surrounding the site would be protected. With the benefit of maturing tree, hedgerow and woodland planting, the proposed vegetation would integrate the development with its surroundings, resulting in localised benefits in the longer-term.

8.6 There would be limited adverse effects to local landform and topography and the potential for some benefits to the local watercourse in the longer-term.

Visual Receptors

8.7 The proposed layout has sought to retain and augment existing field boundary vegetation and has introduced new trees, hedgerows and woodland in order to minimise harmful visual effects. Due to the gently undulating nature of the surrounding landscape with the network of surrounding vegetation and woodlands, the visibility of the proposed development is limited in nature.

8.8 Some inevitable adverse effects would occur along those public rights of way which cross the site. Although, the routes would be set in a landscape corridor, with a new hedgerow on one side of the proposed development to avoid canalising the footpath, Moderate to Major adverse levels of effects are likely to remain in the longer term.

8.9 The proposed development has been offset from most nearby residential properties where possible and sought to create or strengthen hedgerows along field boundaries, which has resulted in reduced visual effects in the longer-term.

Conclusion

8.10 From a landscape and visual perspective, any notable effects on landscape character or visual receptors as a result of the proposed development would be confined to surrounding local areas with visual effects reduced by the retention of the existing vegetation, the proposed mitigation and the context of surrounding developments.

8.11 Overall, and despite the extent of the proposed development, the total extent of the landscape and visual effects would be localised and limited in nature.

9. REFERENCES

9.1 The following documents have been consulted during the preparation of this statement:

- National Planning Policy Framework, July 2021;
- Chelmsford Local Plan 2013-2036, May 2020;
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd edition) - Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013;
- Landscape Institute GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13, June 2013;
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19, September 2019;
- Natural England (2014) National Character Area (NCA) 111;
- Essex Landscape Character Assessment, Chris Blandford Associates, 2003; and
- Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Uttlesford Landscape Character Assessments, Chelmsford Borough Council, Braintree DC, Brentwood BC, Maldon DC and Uttlesford DC, 2006.

APPENDIX 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

An LVA must consider both:

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

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

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES

The nature or sensitivity of an individual landscape feature or element reflects its susceptibility to change and its value. It is therefore a function of factors such as its quality, rarity, contribution to landscape character, degree to which the particular element can be replaced and cultural associations or designations that apply. A particular feature may be more 'sensitive' in one location than in another often as a result of local values associated with the feature or in relation to its function as a key or distinctive characteristic of that local landscape. Therefore it is not possible to simply place different types of landscape features into sensitivity bands. Where individual landscape features are affected, professional judgement is used as far as possible to give an objective evaluation of its sensitivity. Justification is given for this evaluation where necessary.

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

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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

In this appraisal, the nature or sensitivity of landscape character is considered with reference to published landscape character areas/types and where relevant local landscape units as defined in this LVA for the purposes of this study. Information regarding the key characteristics of these local character areas/units has been extrapolated from relevant published studies where possible and combined with observations from on-site appraisal. With judgments undertaken employing professional judgement.

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

NATURE (SENSITIVITY) OF VISUAL RECEPTORS

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

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

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

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

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS – GENERAL NOTE

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

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

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

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

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

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

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE FEATURES

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

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

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

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

- Very Low Magnitude of Change - No notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; no notable introduction of new features into the landscape; and negligible change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Low Magnitude of Change - Minor loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of minor new features into the landscape; or minor alteration to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

- Medium Magnitude of Change - Some notable loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of some notable new features into the landscape; or some notable change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- High Magnitude of Change - A major loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of major new features into the landscape; or a major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.
- Very High Magnitude of Change - Total loss or alteration to existing landscape features; introduction of dominant new features into the landscape; a very major change to the key physical and/or perceptual attributes of the landscape.

NATURE (MAGNITUDE) OF EFFECTS ON VIEWS AND VISUAL AMENITY

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

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

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

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

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

TYPE OF EFFECT

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

DURATION OF EFFECT

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

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

REVERSIBILITY OF EFFECT

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

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

LEVEL OF EFFECT

The purpose of an LVA when produced outside the context of an EIA is to identify the relative level of effects on landscape and visual amenity arising from the proposed development. The judgements provided within the LVA may then inform the planning balance to be carried out by the determining authority.

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

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

PEGASUS GROUP

DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | PLANNING | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE

Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM
Date & time of photograph	- 09/08/2022 @ 11.00
Approx. OS grid reference	- 577187 , 194628

Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 9m
Distance from site	- Within site boundary
Projection	- Cylindrical
Sheet Size	- A1

Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Height of camera AGL	- 1.5m
Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240

VIEWPOINT 1 (PART A) - LOOKING WEST

Footpath No. 229_23 adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site

PEGASUS GROUP

DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | PLANNING | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE

Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM
Date & time of photograph	- 09/08/2022 @ 11.00
Approx. OS grid reference	- 577187 , 194628

Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 9m
Distance from site	- Within site boundary
Projection	- Cylindrical
Sheet Size	- A1

Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Height of camera AGL	- 1.5m
Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240

VIEWPOINT 1 (PART B) - LOOKING WEST

Footpath No. 229_23 adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site

PEGASUS GROUP

DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | PLANNING | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE

Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM
Date & time of photograph	- 09/08/2022 @ 10.50
Approx. OS grid reference	- 576889 , 194569

Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 17m
Distance from site	- Within site boundary
Projection	- Cylindrical
Sheet Size	- A1

Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Height of camera AGL	- 1.5m
Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240

VIEWPOINT 2 (PART A) - LOOKING WEST

Footpath No. 231_8 Footpath running centrally through the site

PEGASUS GROUP

DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | PLANNING | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE

Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM
Date & time of photograph	- 09/08/2022 @ 10.50
Approx. OS grid reference	- 576889 , 194569

Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 17m
Distance from site	- Within site boundary
Projection	- Cylindrical
Sheet Size	- A1

Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Height of camera AGL	- 1.5m
Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240

VIEWPOINT 2 (PART B) - LOOKING WEST

Footpath No. 231_8 Footpath running centrally through the site

PEGASUS GROUP

DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT | PLANNING | ECONOMICS | HERITAGE

Camera make & model	- Canon EOS 5D
Lens make & focal length	- Canon EF 50mm, f/1.4 USM
Date & time of photograph	- 09/08/2022 @ 11.35
Approx. OS grid reference	- 576075 , 194611
Viewpoint height (AOD)	- 10m
Distance from site	- Adjacent to the site
Projection	- Cylindrical
Sheet Size	- A1
Visualisation Type	- Type 1
Horizontal Field of View	- 90°
Height of camera AGL	- 1.5m
Page size / Image size (mm)	- 841 x 297 / 820 x 240

VIEWPOINT 3 (PART A) - LOOKING EAST

Footpath No. 231_8 adjacent to the western boundary of the site