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7. LANDSCAPE

Introduction

- 7.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) addresses the potential landscape and visual effects of the construction and operation of the proposed development west of Aston Road, north of Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire (hereafter referred to as ‘the Proposed Development’). The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to determine the effects likely to arise because of the Proposed Development. The LVIA has been undertaken by experienced Chartered Landscape Architects at SLR Consulting Ltd (SLR) on behalf of Acorn Bioenergy Limited (ACORN).

Content of the Assessment

- 7.2 This assessment contains the following sections:
- Introduction: setting out the content of the LVIA, the approach taken, the description of the location and nature of the Proposed Development and extent of the Study Area;
 - Assessment methodology: describing the guidance relevant to the assessment, the methods used and the level of effects;
 - Planning context: outlining the key policies of relevance to the assessment;
 - Development design and mitigation: summary of the design and measures taken to avoid or minimise the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development through the design;
 - Assessment of effects on landscape character, designations and elements: describes the landscape character of the Proposed Development Site and Study Area based on desktop reviews, site visits and consultations and identifies the residual effects of the Proposed Development on landscape receptors and landscape designations;
 - Assessment of effects on visual amenity: describes the visual amenity of the Proposed Development Site and Study Area based on desktop reviews, site visits and consultations and identifies the residual effects of the Proposed Development on representative viewpoints and principal visual receptors; and
 - Conclusions.

Approach

- 7.3 This assessment follows best practice guidance produced by the Landscape Institute’s ‘Guidance for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (GLVIA) (3rd Edition 2013) and evaluates the likely effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character, designations and elements and visual amenity of the Site and its surroundings.
- 7.4 The methodology used in the assessment of landscape and visual effects is presented in Appendix 7A. The assessment of the level of landscape and visual effects identified, through the use of the

methodology, is presented in Appendix 7B and 7C respectively but is reviewed and summarised in the main chapter text. Appendix 7D refers to specific Landscape Character Types.

The Site, Context and Project Description

7.5 The Proposed Development is located on land off Ashton Road, north of Ashton Keynes and west of South Cerney, as illustrated by Figure 1 Site Location. The proposed anaerobic digestion (AD) facility would accept in the region of 91,000 tonnes per annum of feedstock from local farms and process it to generate carbon negative biomethane. The Proposed Development would consist of a range of new buildings and structures (as outlined below), hardstanding, soft landscaping with an access road off Ashton Road.

7.6 Key components of the Proposed Development are shown in Site Layout Drawing 29419/P/101 Rev E and include:

- Two digestate lagoons with a combined storage capacity of. 20,000 m³ (10,000 m³ each);
- Five large digester tanks with storage capacity of 41,000m³ with straight wall height of 9m with a gas dome on top with 7.6 m gas dome 34m diameter and a max height of 17m;
- Four 25m³ pasturisation tanks measuring 3m diameter x 11m high;
- Slurry tanks, pre tanks and dirty water tanks- 3 x 8m x 8m and 3 no 6 m x 8m;
- Chicken manure reception shed – 26m long x 19.5m x 8m high to ridge;
- Gas flare with a stack height of 9m and flue diameter of 2.4m;
- Three silage clamps, two measuring 101.25m long x 35m wide x 3.52m high and one measuring 123.75m x 35m x 3.52m high;
- Separator building measuring 18x long x 15m width and 8m to ridge;
- Straw building “L” shaped measuring 18.7 x 12m and 48m long x 16m wide and 8m to ridge;
- Feeder hoppers x 3 approximate area 220m³;
- Biogas Upgrade Unit 26 x 9 x 3m with vent height of 7.5m;
- CO² Capture Unit 2pprox. 10m x 16m x 4.75m high;
- Two CO² tanks 13.2m x 3m 3.4m high;
- Two Combined Heat and Power Units 13m x 3m x 3m with stack 9m;
- Two compressors 13m x 3m x 3m with stack 5m high;
- Two compressed gas storage vessels each 6.5 x 3m x 3m high;
- A new site access road from the east;
- Pump room container x 3 – 13m x 3m x 3m high;
- LNG tank, vaporiser and pump – 13.7m x 2.4m x 2.6m high;
- Remote lagoon offtake station for HGV;

- Biomethane off take vehicle bay;
- Weighbridge and site office /staff welfare unit (canteen, showers, toilets) – 4 x 40ft containers on top of each other;
- Rainwater harvesting lagoon (underground);
- Parking area – 6 bay car parking area with visitor car parking in office area and 1 no offtake station for HGV; and
- Site boundary fence.

The Study Area

- 7.7 GLVIA 3 clarifies how study areas should be determined on a project specific basis. Paragraph 5.2 states that the study area extent should be: “... *based on the extent of Landscape Character Areas likely to be significantly affected either directly or indirectly*” or “*on the extent of the area from which the development is potentially visible, defined as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility, or a combination of the two.*”
- 7.8 An initial 5 km Study Area was defined to inform a review of aerial photographs and desktop analysis of designations and character areas. The site visit concluded that the Study Area should reflect the extent of the ZTV and the level of intervisibility across the Study Area which in places covers a 5 km radius.

Viewpoints

- 7.9 The results of the initial Study Area analysis were used to identify potential viewpoints from a range of distances and directions to offer a representative sample of the likely visibility of the Proposed Development. Seven representative viewpoints were located within the 2 km Study Area and two additional representative viewpoints were located beyond 2 km to demonstrate the character and visibility from within specific areas, as shown on Figure 8 Screened ZTV and Viewpoint Locations. The actual extent of visibility was verified during site visits on 27th September and 7th October 2022, with a further site visit on 7th March 2023 to verify winter views.

Consultation

- 7.10 Wiltshire Council was contacted to discuss the Study Area, representative viewpoints, need for visualisations and additional data prior to the site visit. No comments were received so the site visit, determination of the study area, viewpoints and visualisations were undertaken without consultation.
- 7.11 A Screening Opinion to determine whether the Proposed Development is an EIA development or not has not been received. As such this LVIA forms part of a voluntary EIA and supports a planning application accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 7.12 No technical difficulties or practical problems were encountered in carrying out the LVIA presented in this document.
- 7.13 GLVIA3 suggests that consideration should be given to seasonal variation in effects where appropriate but acknowledges that the timing of the assessment may mean that this is not practical. The site visits were conducted when conditions were dry and mild, and visibility was good. The images captured for the LVIA were taken when deciduous trees were in leaf (in autumn) with additional fieldwork carried out in February when the deciduous trees were bare to inform a worst-case scenario.
- 7.14 No night-time assessment has been undertaken, although a desk-based review of the CPRE Dark Skies map has been included. A Lighting Strategy has been designed to be compliant with the residential receptor criteria as set out in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 01/21: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Specifically, the assessed lighting associated with the Proposed Development is compliant with the obtrusive light criteria as set out for ILP Environmental Zone E2.

Assessment Methodology

Introduction

- 7.15 The following sources have been used to inform the preparation of the methodology and as guidance in the preparation of the written assessment and in the production of figures. Further details are included in Appendix 7A:
- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3), The Landscape Institute with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2012);
 - Technical Guidance Note - TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals, The Landscape Institute (2019); and
 - Technical Guidance Note - TGN 02-21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations) The Landscape Institute (2019).
- 7.16 Landscape is a definable set of characteristics resulting from the interaction of natural, physical and human factors: it is a resource in its own right. Its assessment is distinct from visual assessment, which considers effects on the views and visual amenity of different groups of people at particular locations. A clear separation of these two topics is recommended in GLVIA3.
- 7.17 As GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.23) states, professional judgement is an important part of the LVIA process: whilst there is scope for objective measurement of landscape and visual changes, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements. It is critical that these judgements are based upon a clear and transparent method so that the reasoning can be followed and examined by others.

- 7.18 Impacts can be defined as the action being taken, whereas effects are the changes which result from that action. This method of appraisal assesses landscape and visual effects.

Landscape and Visual Effects:

Landscape Effects

- 7.19 Landscape, as defined in the European Landscape Convention, is “*an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors*”, (Council of Europe, 2000). Landscape does not apply only to special or designated places, nor is it limited to countryside.
- 7.20 GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.34) recommends that the effect of the development on landscape receptors is assessed. Landscape receptors are the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the Proposed Development and can include individual elements (such as hedges or buildings), aesthetic and perceptual characteristics (for example sense of naturalness, tranquillity or openness), or, at a larger scale, the character of a defined landscape character area or landscape type. Designated areas (such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)) are also landscape receptors.
- 7.21 This assessment is being undertaken because the Proposed Development has the potential to remove or add elements to the landscape, to alter aesthetic or perceptual aspects, and to add or remove characteristics and thus potentially change overall character.

Visual Effects

- 7.22 Visual effects are the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. Visual receptors are the people whose views may be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 7.23 Visual receptors are the people whose views may be affected by the proposed development. They generally include users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) or other recreational facilities or attractions; travellers who may pass through the study area because they are visiting, living or working there; residents living in the study area, either as individuals or, more often, as a community; and people at their place of work.
- 7.24 Viewpoints are chosen for a variety of reasons but most commonly because they represent views experienced by relevant groups of people.

Categories of Effects

- 7.25 In the assessment, the potential effects on the landscape and visual resource are grouped into four categories: effects on landscape character, landscape designations, landscape elements, and visual amenity.
- 7.26 Effects on landscape character arise either through the introduction of new elements that physically alter the pattern of elements that makes up landscape character, or through visibility of

the Proposed Development, which may alter the way in which the pattern of elements is perceived. This category of effects is made up of landscape receptors, which fall into two groups; landscape character types / areas and national or local landscape designated areas.

- 7.27 Effects on landscape elements are restricted to the area within the Site's boundary and are the direct effects on the fabric of the Site, such as a change in land use, landform or removal or addition of trees. This category of effects is made up of landscape elements, which are the components of the landscape such as hedgerows or woodland that may be physically affected by the development of the Site.
- 7.28 Effects on visual amenity is an appraisal of how the Proposed Development would affect views throughout the Study Area. The assessment of visual effects is presented as an assessment of the effects that the Proposed Development would have on views from principal visual receptors, which are notable individual properties, farmsteads and settlements, travellers along routes, or visitors to features and attractions found throughout the study area (as ascertained through the baseline study).
- 7.29 The assessment of effects on landscape character and visual amenity are informed by a series of viewpoints that have been selected to represent visibility of the Proposed Development from the principal visual receptors around the Study Area. Further information on these viewpoints and visual receptors is provided in Section 6 of this assessment.

Nature of effects

- 7.30 Landscape and visual effects can be positive, negative or neutral in nature. Positive effects are those which enhance and/or reinforce the characteristics which are valued. Negative effects are those which remove and/or undermine the characteristics which are valued. Neutral effects are changes which are consistent with the characteristics of the landscape or view.

Assessment of the level of effect

- 7.31 The methodology for the assessment of landscape and visual sensitivity and magnitude of change is presented in Appendix 7A. The level of effects is ascertained through a combination of the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor and the magnitude of change that would arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

Sensitivity

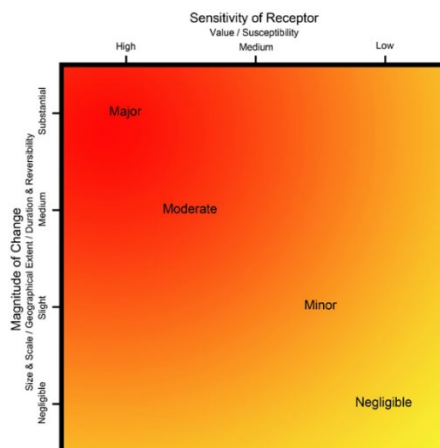
- 7.32 The sensitivity of landscape receptors is assessed by combining an appraisal of the susceptibility of landscape receptors to the type of change which is proposed with the value attached to the landscape. (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.39 - 5.47 and TGN 02-21).
- 7.33 Sensitivity of visual receptors is assessed by combining an appraisal of the susceptibility of visual receptors to the type of change which is proposed with the value attached to the views. (GLVIA3, paragraph 6.30 – 6.37).
- 7.34 The full methodology for assessing sensitivity is described in Appendix 7A, Table 1 and 2.

Magnitude of Change

- 7.35 The magnitude of landscape change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change (GLVIA, paragraph 5.48 - 5.52).
- 7.36 The magnitude of visual change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change (GLVIA, paragraph 6.38 – 6.41).
- 7.37 The full methodology for assessing magnitude of change is detailed in Appendix 7A Table 1 and 2.

Assessment of the Overall Level of Effects

- 7.38 The assessment of the overall landscape or visual effects is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptors and the magnitude of the change. In this assessment, effects are assessed as 'minor', 'moderate', 'major', 'negligible' and 'none'. It should be noted that for the assessment intermediate levels may also be included such as medium-high or medium-low where the change falls between definitions. This is based on professional judgement.
- 7.39 This evaluation is carried out for each receptor described in the baseline section of this report. For the purposes of this assessment, moderate and major impacts are deemed 'significant'.
- 7.40 The diagram below summarises the nature of the relationship, but it is not formulaic. Judgements are made about each effect using this diagram as a guide.



Method of baseline data collation

Desk study

- 7.41 A desk study was carried out as part of the LVIA. The study identified aspects of landscape and visual resource that may need to be considered as receptors in the LVIA including National

Character Areas, Landscape Character Types (LCTs) or Landscape Character Areas (LCAs), landscape planning designations and site specific landscape elements. In terms of the visual resource the following receptors were considered – users of national / regional trails, national cycle routes, PRoW, roads, rail, residential properties / settlements and places of work.

7.42 The following sources have been referred to in the desk study:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted January 2015
- A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire – Wiltshire’s Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030, The Strategy, February 2022
- Cotswolds District Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted 3 August 2018
- Cotswolds District, Local Countryside Designation Review: Special Landscape Areas, February 2001
- Cotswold District Special Landscape Review – Landscape Context and Physical Changes, Final Report, May 2017
- Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2026, Made May 2017
- National Character Area Profiles, 2014
- Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, December 2006
- Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, January 2006
- Cotswolds Water Park Landscape Character Assessment, August 2009

Site visit

7.43 Visits to the Site and the Study Area have been carried out to review the baseline conditions of the Site, identify potential landscape and visual receptors, take representative viewpoint photographs, carry out and review the assessment of effects. As previously mentioned, site visits and viewpoint photography took place on 27th September and 7th October 2022 with a further site visit undertaken on 7th March 2023 to record winter views.

Preparation of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility

7.44 A screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was prepared (Figure 2 refer) to inform the viewpoint selection. A ZTV is a tool to explore from where the Proposed Development may theoretically be visible. In producing the screened ZTV, the ZTV software used a combination of EA LiDAR at 1m resolution digital surface modelling (DSM) which includes the screening function of built form and vegetation and digital terrain data (DTM). The ZTV was generated at a height of 2 m and the earth’s curvature was taken into consideration.

7.45 The highest points of the Proposed Development were based on the tallest structure within the Proposed Development, the digester tanks at 17m height, and plotted using a 50 m grid points

forming a mesh across the whole Site – the maximum developable area¹. The model and computer generated ‘lines of sight’ to show what could be seen from these points and thus the places from which the Proposed Development may be visible. This was then used to inform representative viewpoints, reviewing these against the topography (Figure 3 refer) and tested in the field.

Photography and Visualisations

- 7.46 Photography taken to demonstrate the landscape and views visible from the representative viewpoints is illustrated under “Assessment of Visual Amenity and Visual Effects” and were non verified Type 1 photographs informed by guidance produced by the Landscape Institute. The existing views were recorded at the position of each viewpoint using a Nikon D610 full frame camera and a fixed 50mm. The camera was set 1.5m above ground level with a Manfrotto tripod and panoramic head. The photographs were stitched in PTGUI and cylindrically projected to reflect natural vision and proportion.
- 7.47 Five Type 2 wirelines were prepared to show the outline of the main proposed buildings and structures (their form and extent) in relation to the existing landscape context / views at each selected representative viewpoints with reference to the requirements of the Landscape Institute. The representative viewpoints and associated wirelines were presented for both autumn and winter to reflect a worst-case scenario refer to Figures 9.1A, B, C and D to 9.13.A, B, C and D). Images A and C show the autumn and winter baseline whilst B and D show the respective wirelines. For viewpoint 8 wirelines cover 9.8A to 9.11D.²
- 7.48 Two photomontages to Type 3 were also prepared to support the wirelines refer to Figures 10.1 A, B, C and D to Figure 10.3 A, B, C and D. These show the baseline and proposed development at Year 0, Year 5 and Year 15.

Cumulative Effects

- 7.49 The assessment of cumulative effects is essentially the same as for the assessment of landscape and visual effects in that the level of landscape and visual effect is determined by assessing the combination of sensitivity of the landscape or visual receptor (ranging from high to negligible) and the magnitude of change (ranging from high to no change).
- 7.50 Types of cumulative effect are defined as follows:
- Cumulative Landscape Effects: where more than one type of development may have an effect on a landscape designation or particular area of landscape character.

¹ It should be noted that the ZTV helped inform the siting of the digester tankers, which were then positioned at the lowest level on Site.

² It should be noted that the exact positions of the viewpoints to support the autumn and winter could not be replicated resulting in a slight variation in the position of the Proposed Development.

- Cumulative Visual Effects: where the cumulative or incremental visibility of similar types of development combined generate a cumulative visual effect.

7.51 These can be further defined as follows:

- Simultaneous or combined: where two or more developments may be viewed from a single fixed viewpoint simultaneously, within the viewer's field of view and without requiring them to turn their head.
- Successive or repetitive: where two or more developments may be viewed from a single viewpoint successively as the viewer turns their head or swivels through 360°.
- Sequential: where a number of developments may be viewed sequentially or repeatedly at increased frequency, from a range of locations when travelling along a route within the Study Area.

7.52 A cumulative landscape or visual effect simply means that more than one type of development is present or visible within the landscape. Other forms of existing development and land use such as woodland and forestry, patterns of agriculture, built form, and settlements already have a cumulative effect on the existing landscape that is already accepted or taken for granted. These features often contribute strongly to the existing character, forming a positive component of the local landscape. Landscapes, however, will have a finite capacity for new development, beyond which further change or alteration to the existing landscape character may be unacceptable in landscape terms.

7.53 Whilst the Cumulative LVIA considers other development, it should not be considered as a substitute for individual assessment in respect of each of the other developments concerned.

7.54 The methodology for cumulative assessment follows that contained within GLVIA3. GLVIA3 (para 7.8) and requires that the baseline includes additional changes to the baseline landscapes or visual resources because of other development.

Magnitude of Change

7.55 Cumulative landscape and visual effects may result from additional changes to the baseline landscape or visual resources, as a result of the Proposed Development, in conjunction with other developments. The principle of magnitude of cumulative change thus makes it possible for the Proposed Development to have a major effect on a particular receptor, while having only a minor cumulative effect in conjunction with other existing developments. The cumulative landscape and visual magnitude of change is determined with reference to the criteria set out above and the following considerations:

- *The number of visible existing and/or potentially visible proposed developments.*
- *The distance to existing and/or proposed developments.*

Planning Context

National Policy

- 7.56 A revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019) was published in July 2021.
- 7.57 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF³ states that the purpose of the planning system is to “*contribute to the achievement of sustainable development*”. Paragraph 8 states that in order to achieve sustainable development the planning system has economic, social and environmental objectives. At paragraph 8(c), under environmental objective, it is stated that the planning system should “*protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment*”.
- 7.58 NPPF paragraph 10 states that “*at the heart of the Framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development***” (bold text as per NPPF).
- 7.59 Paragraph 11 sets out the fundamental principle of this document: that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. All development that is in accordance with the development plan should be approved “*without delay*” and that “*where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date*” permission should be granted for development “*unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.*”
- 7.60 Paragraphs in Section 12 “Achieving well-designed places” (126, 132 and 134) relate to the need for good design in new developments. Paragraph 126 states that “*good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*”. Paragraph 132 states that applicants should work closely “*with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs which take account of the views of the community*”. Paragraph 134 states that “*development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design*”.
- 7.61 Paragraph 174 in Section 15 “Conserving and enhancing the natural environment” states that the planning system, “*should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [inter alia] ...protecting and enhancing valued landscapes*” and by “*recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*”. Paragraph 175 states that the planning system should “*distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites*”.
- 7.62 Paragraph 176 states that “*great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection*”. Paragraph 180 states that where development results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (July 2021) National Planning Policy Framework

trees), the development should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy introduced.

Local Policy

- 7.63 The Site and majority of the Study Area lies within Wiltshire Unitary Authority with the remaining Study Area in Cotswold District Council's administration (Figure 2 refer). The Wiltshire Core Strategy was adopted in January 2015 and is the current Local Plan for Wiltshire Council, whilst Cotswolds District Council's Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted August 2018 is the current Local Plan for Cotswold District.

Wiltshire Unitary Authority

Core Strategy, Adopted January 2015

- 7.64 The Development Plan includes the Wiltshire Core Strategy incorporating saved policies from district local plans, Chippenham Site Allocations Plan, Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan, Minerals and Waste Plans and MADE Neighbourhood Plans. The Core Strategy (and saved policies from district local plans) form a substantive part of the Development Plan under review. The following policies are of relevance to the LVIA and should be read in conjunction with the planning statement which accompanies the application:

- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- Core Policy 51: Landscape
- Core Policy 52: Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 54: Cotswolds Water Park
- Core Policy 57: Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

- 7.65 Policy 54 refers to the Cotswolds Water Park; the Site falling within its boundary. The Policy states:

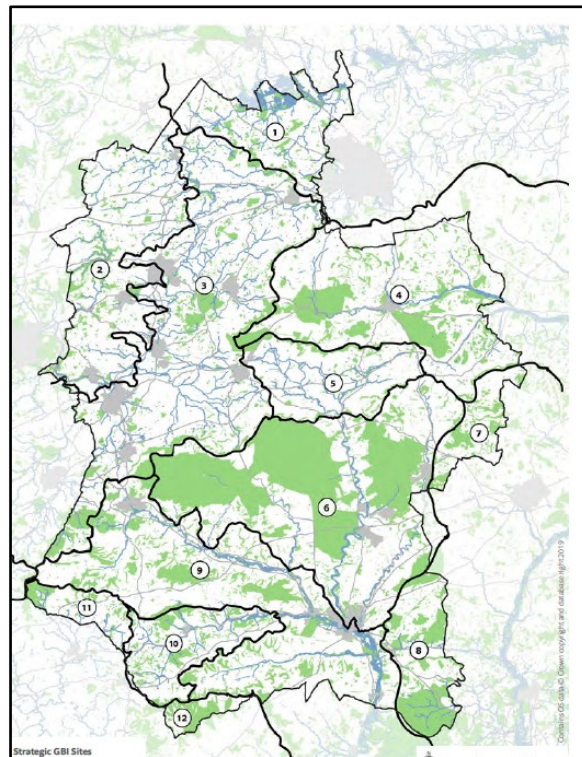
"In the Cotswold Water Park, proposals for outdoor or water-based sports, leisure and recreation based development will be supported where they help transform the area to an informal recreation and leisure resource for Wiltshire residents and visitors in line with the key objectives of the Cotswold Water Park Vision and Implementation Plan. Proposals for any such development must meet the following criteria:

- i. Increase or enhance public accessibility and enjoyment of the lakes and countryside.*
- ii. Contribute towards the local economy in the Cotswold Water Park.*
- iii. Strengthen the local landscape character and engender a sense of place.*
- iv. Contribute towards enhancement of biodiversity within the Cotswold Water Park.*
- v. Retain the character of individual settlements including the tranquillity of their settings.*
- vi. Protect the Cotswold Water Park's built heritage, and enhance accessibility and interpretation of such features where possible.*
- vii. Demonstrate high levels of sustainability, particularly including sustainable building design, accessibility by sustainable transport modes and sustainable drainage systems."*

A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire – Wiltshire’s Natural Environment Plan 2022-2030, The Strategy, February 2022

- 7.66 The Strategy sets out a vision, strategic goals and principles for delivering green and blue infrastructure across Wiltshire by a range of partners and stakeholders, working together at a variety of scales. It provides a high-level framework for developing delivery strategies and detailed implementation plans that reflect community needs and national priorities. The Site lies within Strategic Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Area 1 - Thames Vale. Strategic GBI Areas have been defined to provide an integrated spatial framework for identifying strategic priorities and opportunities to strengthen Wiltshire’s GBI Network at a landscape scale.

Plate 1:
Wiltshire’s Strategic GBI Opportunity Areas



Cotswolds District Council

Cotswolds District Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted 3 August 2018

- 7.67 The following policies are of relevance to the assessment and should be read in conjunction with the planning statement which accompanies the application:

- Policy EN1 Built, Natural and Historic Environment
- Policy EN2 Design of the Built and Natural Environment
- Policy EN4 The Wider Natural and Historic Landscape

- Policy EN6 Special Landscape Areas
- Policy EN7 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
- Policy EN8 Biodiversity and Geodiversity: Features Habitats and Species
- Policy EN9 Designated Sites
- Policy EN10 Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy EN11 Designated Heritage Assets – Conservation Areas
- Policy EN12 Non designated Heritage Assets
- Policy INF7 Green Infrastructure
- Cotswolds District, Local Countryside Designation Review: Special Landscape Areas, February 2001

7.68 Kemble / Ewen Special Landscape Area (SLA) lies to the northwest of the Site. The 2001 Local Countryside Designation Review concluded that Kemble and Ewen should be designated as a Special Landscape Area (SLA). The key qualities of the area include:

- “Gently undulating low plateau with medium and large arable fields bounded by good hedges.
- Small pastoral valleys with woodland.
- Clear open streams providing good habitats and visual interest.
- Linear woodlands forming enclosure and screening.
- Small unspoilt village of Ewen.”

[Cotswold District Special Landscape Review – Landscape Context and Physical Changes, Final Report, May 2017](#)

7.69 This document reviewed the evidence underpinning the current SLA designations, reported on significant issues and made recommendations as to how any changes or revisions should be dealt with. It concluded that Kemble and Ewen SLA should remain describing it as a “*gently transitional landscape*”. In addition to the characteristics of the SLA across different LCAs the following qualities apply:

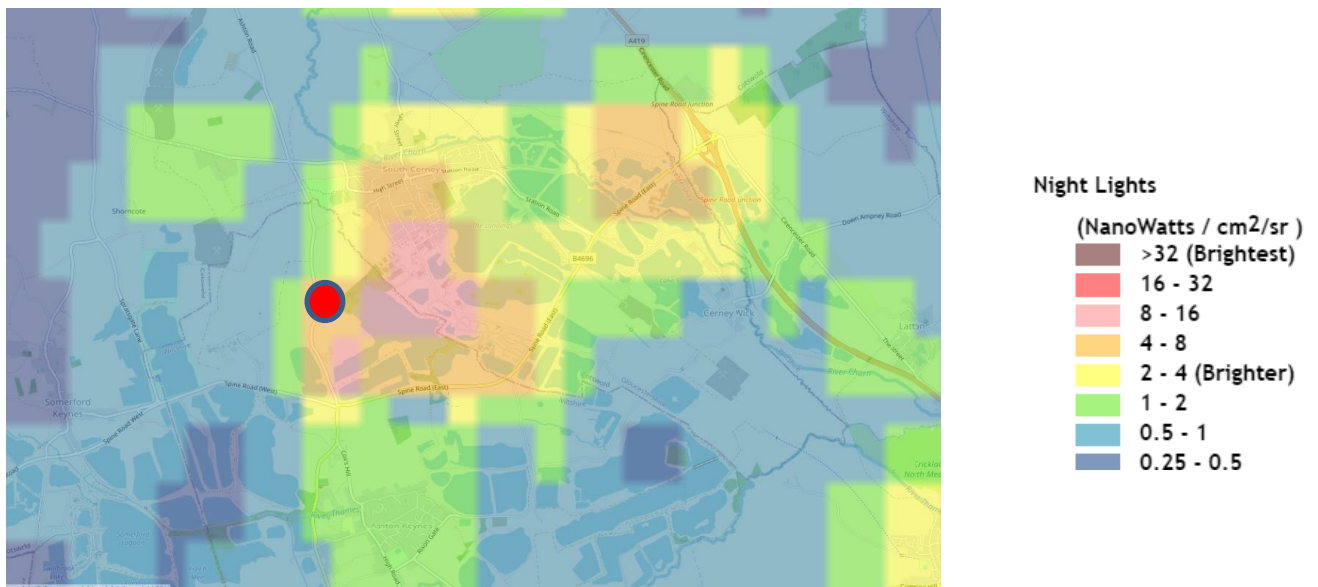
- “The sinuous headwaters of the River Thames with associated riparian vegetation, valley bottom pasture and woodland.
- The Thames Path running adjacent to the river and through Ewen.
- The unspoilt sweeping open valleys of the Thames and its tributaries.
- The tranquillity of the area away from the main roads, particularly associated with watercourses.
- The well treed dismantled railway and disused Thames and Severn Canal which form strong lines and enclosure across the landscape.

- The Conservation Area at Kemble with the church spire which acts as a local landmark which is particularly visible in views from the east.
- The virtually straight Fosse Way Roman road.
- The linear gappy character of Ewen and its Cotswold stone buildings.”

Dark Night Skies

7.70 The Site sits in an area which is relatively bright in terms of night light⁴ as referred to by the Campaign for Rural Protection of England (CPRE). The level of radiance (0.5-1 to 4-8 nanowatts / cm²/sr) covers the middle bands on the scale detailed in Plate 2 below.

Plate 2:
CPRE Dark Night Skies(the red dot denotes the Site)



Land Allocations

7.71 The Site is not covered under Local Plan allocations however there are three employment land allocations within the 5 km Study Area. The closest being Lakeside Business Park, Broadway Lane (circa 0.4 km to the east), and Love Lane Industrial Estate (circa 4.08 km) and Village Farm (circa 4.39 km) which both lie to the north.

⁴ [Dark skies - CPRE](#)

Neighbourhood Plan

Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2026, Made May 2017

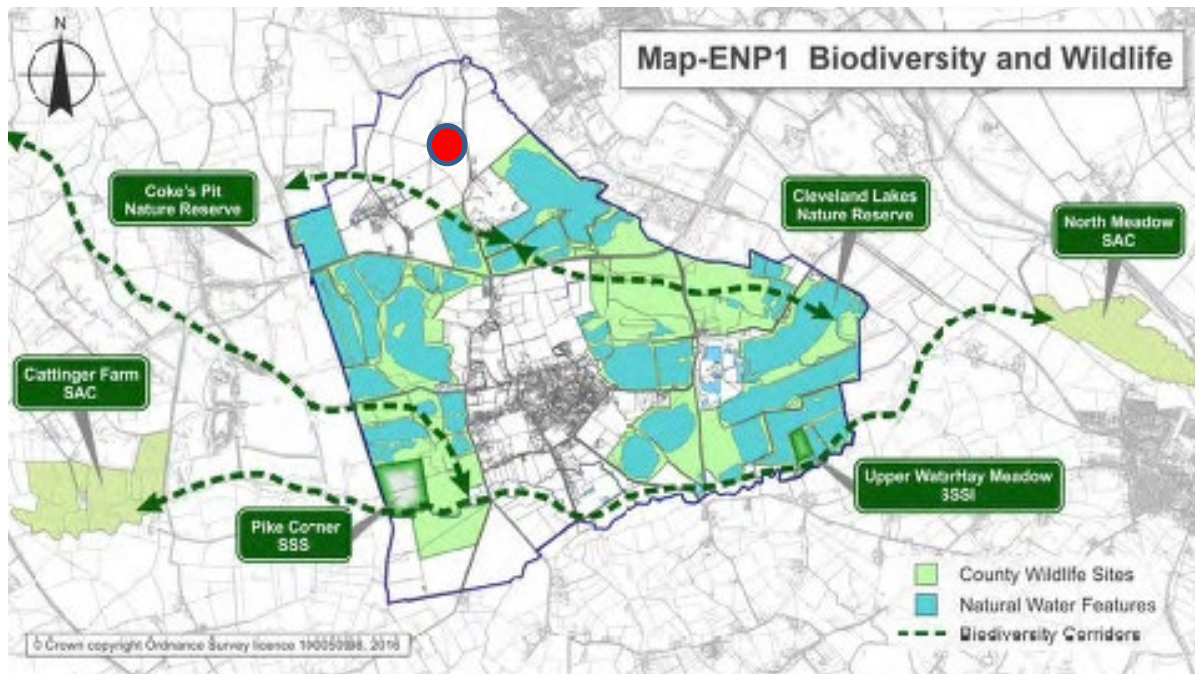
7.72 The Site falls within Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Development Plan Area. The Neighbourhood Plan has a few policies of relevance to the Site summarised under the policy headings below:

Policy ENP1 Protection of biodiversity and Wildlife:

“Development should minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible.” Plate 3 shows that there is a Biodiversity Corridor which runs to the south of the Site.

Plate 3:

Map- ENP1 Biodiversity and Wildlife (the red dot denotes the Site)



Policy ENP2 Environmental infrastructure and accessibility

*“a. Proposals to add to the existing public rights of way network in the area will be supported.
b. Proposals to provide additional cycleways will be supported. Where possible, these should connect with existing cycleways, the Sustrans national cycleway network and/or the Wiltshire Cycleway project.”*

Policy ENP3 Enhancing the landscape character of the Parish and retaining the character of the village including the tranquillity of its setting

“a. Developments in the Parish should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. Developments should also retain the character of the settlement including the tranquillity of its setting and its sense of place.”

b. Additionally, proposals for outdoor or water based sports, leisure and recreation based development will be expected to: increase or enhance public accessibility”.

- 7.73 The supporting text refers to Core Policy 54 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy which addresses the Cotswold Water Park states that:

“Several settlements within the Cotswolds Water Park are of significant heritage value as recognised through Conservation Area designations, while all settlements have a unique character which contributes to the area’s sense of place. Development could potentially impact upon this character through inappropriate design or loss of tranquillity, particularly associated with noisy activities. Such developments will need to be located, designed and managed sensitively to ensure the unique character and the tranquil setting of these settlements is maintained.”

Policy HCP1 Local character

“With regard to national and local heritage and conservation policies, development is expected to fulfil the following criteria:

- a. Styles, proportions, materials and finishes used for new build and conversions of both residential and commercial properties must be in harmony with their surroundings, in particular when these are in close proximity to Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments (SMs).*
- b. New residential development should be appropriate to its surrounding context in terms of scale, density, layout, height and massing.”*

- 7.74 The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies new and existing PROWs and Cycleways as detailed in Plate 4 and 5 below.

Plate 4:
PRoW Map PRJ2 Proposed Rights of Way (the red dot denotes the Site)

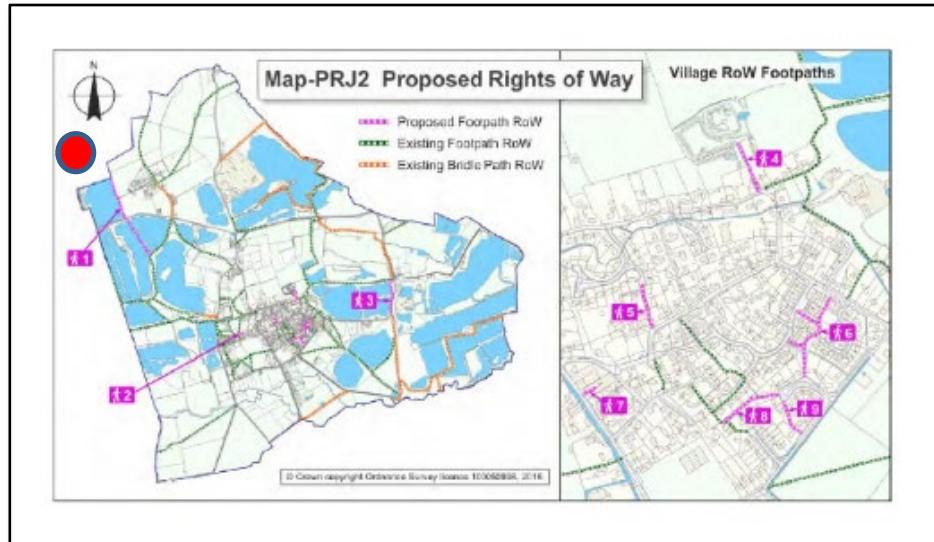
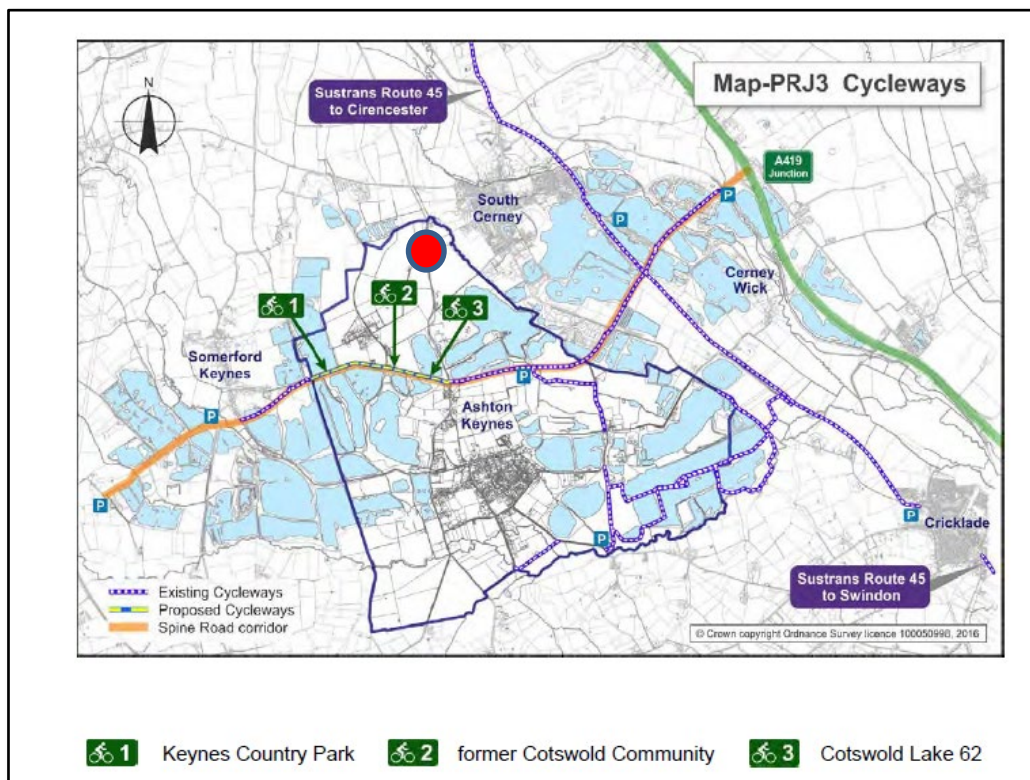


Plate 5:
Map PRJ3 Cycleways (the red dot denotes the Site)



- 7.75 Plate 4 shows a proposed footpath to the western side of the Site, beyond the Cotswold Community and Plate 5, illustrates a proposed cycleway to the south of the Site creating a route between Somerford Keynes to the west and Ashton Keynes to the east.

Landscape Designations and Related Designations

- 7.76 Landscape designations and planning context of relevance to the LVIA, together with a number of publicly accessible recreational areas and routes, are shown on Figure 4 Landscape Planning Context, Figure 5 Access and Recreation and Figure 5a Access and Recreation (1 km from the Site) respectively, and include:

Landscape / Planning designations:

- AONB: The Cotswolds AONB lies beyond the 5 km Study Area to the northwest / north of the Site.
- Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area lies circa 2.2 km to the northwest of the Site.

Access and Recreation:

- National / regional routes: There are a few long distance / regional routes including the Thames and Severn Way to the east which roughly runs parallel with Sustrans Route 45.
- Public Rights of Way: A footpath (AKEY4) runs along the Site's western boundary and clips the north-western corner of the Site linking Cotswold Community to the southwest with South Cerney to the northeast. Another footpath (AKEY33) runs to the north of Lakeside Business Park and around Cotswolds Water Park (Ashton Keynes Section).
- Sustrans National Cycle Route: Sustrans On Road Cycle Route 45 runs in a northwest / southeast direction to the northeast of the Site, encroaching into the 2 km buffer.
- Cotswolds Water Park: The Site lies to the northwest of Cotswolds Water Park (Ashton Keynes Section) and Cotswold Country Park and Beach to the west.
- CROW / Open Access Land: There is an area of CROW /Open Access land approximately 4.5 km to the south-east of the Site.

Cultural Heritage /Nature Conservation Assets:

- Scheduled Monuments: There are nine Scheduled Monuments within the 5 km Study Area. The closest is a settlement east of Ashtonfields (Cotswolds Community) circa 0.25 km to the southwest of the Site. Three other Scheduled Monuments within a 3 km radius include:
 - South Cerney castle circa 1.39 km to the northwest
 - Hall's Close: a ringwork and bailey 100m west of Kentend Farm circa 1.67 k m to the southeast
 - Moated site at Church Farm circa 1.64km to the south
- Conservation Areas: There are several Conservation Areas within the 5 km Study Area. These include:

- Preston Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.42 km to the northeast)
- Harnhill Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.77 km to the northeast)
- Driffild Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.44 km to the northeast)
- South Cerney Conservation Area (WC) (circa 0.58 km to the northeast)
- Ashton Keynes Conservation Area (WC) (circa 1.01 km to the southwest)
- Oakesey Conservation Area (WC) (circa 3.75 km to the southwest)
- Somerford Keynes Keynes (CDC) (circa 1.97 km to the southwest)
- Kemble Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 4.67 km to the west)
- Ewan Conservation Area (CDC) (circa 3.34 km to the west)
- Conservation Area appraisals do not appear to have been prepared for either Authority.
- Listed Buildings: There are several Listed Buildings within a 2 km radius of the Site with a number clustered in South Cerney to the northeast and Ashton Keynes to the south / south-east. The closest Listed Buildings include:
 - Four Grade II properties forming part of Cotswolds Community and including Ashtonfields Community Hall and Chapel, Reception Offices, attached staff rooms and Ashtonfields farmhouse lying circa 0.58 km to the south-west of the Site.
 - Walnut Tree Farm (Grade II) circa 0.65 km to the north-east.
- Ancient Woodland: There is a small area of Ancient Woodland to the north referred to as Siddington Copse and beyond 2 km radius of the Site.
- Special Area of Conservation: Two SACs lie to the south-west and south-east respectively; 3.2 km to the south-west and North Meadow Cricklade circa 4.69 km to the south-east.
- National Nature Reserves: Two lie within 5 km radius.; these include Coke's Pit Lake which is also a Local Nature Reserve circa 1.22 km to the south-west and North Meadow Cricklade circa 4.69 km to the south-east and a Special Area of Conservation.
- SSSI: Cotswolds Water Park which wraps around the Site to the south, east and west, the closet point being circa 0.14km to the southeast.
- Local Wildlife Sites: There are several Local Wildlife Sites throughout the 5 km Study Area. The closest is Shorncote Lake which lies circa 0.42 km to the north-west.
- TPOs: There are no TPOs on or within the vicinity of the Site.

7.77 It should be noted that the LVIA only considers heritage and nature conservation assets where they are distinct local landscapes or tourist/visitor attractions and where views are an important contributory factor to the experience.

Future Baseline

Planning Application 16.02609/OUT: Cotswolds Community School

7.78 An outline application was submitted for the redevelopment of the Cotswold Community which lies to the south-west of Ashton Downs and the Site. Proposals seek to provide 75 dwellings and associated works including the replacement of 27 existing dwellings and the conversion of existing

listed buildings. The proposal, which was granted planning consent on 2 June 2018 will provide three, four, five and six bedroom houses plus two bedroom bungalows.

Planning Summary

- 7.79 The Site lies within the Cotswolds Water Park and Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan boundary. Whilst the Cotswolds AONB lies beyond the 5 km Study Area, Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area sits circa 2.2 km to the northwest of the Site.
- 7.80 The Study Area includes numerous nature conservation designations at a national to local level ranging from SACs to Local Wildlife Sites.
- 7.81 A Scheduled Monument lies within 500 m of the Site and there are a few Listed Buildings within a 2 km buffer to the northeast and southwest. The closest two Conservation Areas are South Cerney to the east and Ashton Keynes to the south. A PRoW (footpath) cuts across the north-west corner of the Site, whilst another PRoW (bridleway) runs close to the south-eastern edge of the Site. Keynes Country Park lies within 2 km of the Site.
- 7.82 The Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Wiltshire identifies that the Site lies within Strategy Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Area 1 - Thames Vale. Strategic GBI Areas have been defined to provide an integrated spatial framework for identifying strategic priorities and opportunities to strengthen Wiltshire's GBI Network at a landscape scale. Ashton Keynes Neighbourhood Plan also identifies a new cycle route connection to the southwest of the Site, linking with the wider network and Sustrans Route 45.
- 7.83 In terms of night pollution, CPRE's dark night skies study identifies that the area is relatively bright in terms of night light.
- 7.84 A new housing development, granted permission in 2018 is being built out to the south-west of the Site on the former Cotswolds Community School.

Development Design, Mitigation and Potential Impacts

Introduction

- 7.85 The following attributes of both the Site and the Proposed Development are those which are the most likely to result in landscape and visual effects. The nature of the proposal is described alongside the loss of landscape elements and proposed mitigation measures. Potential impacts resulting from the Proposed Development are also summarised below and are considered in relation to the assessment of effects.

Nature of Proposals

- 7.86 Site access would be via Ashton Road. Some access improvement works would be undertaken to allow for improved visibility particularly to the south of the Site.

- 7.87 Key elements of the Proposed Development, in terms of their potential to affect landscape character and visual amenity largely related to the following:
- 5 No. Digester tanks at 17m tall;
 - 4 No. Pasteurisation tanks at 11m tall (top of agitator);
 - Gas Flare, 9m tall stack;
 - 2 No. CHP Units, 9m stack;
 - 3 No Slurry/pre/dirty water tanks at 8m tall;
 - Straw building and chicken manure reception buildings at 8m tall, to ridge, 6m to eaves;
 - Biogas upgrade unit, vent height 7.5m;
 - 2 No site office /staff welfare unit (canteen, showers, toilets) – 4 x 40ft containers on top of each other;
 - 2 No. Compressors, with 5m stack; and
 - 3 No. Silage clamps at 3.52m high.
 - Separator building measuring 18x long x 15m width and 8m to ridge;
 - CO2 Capture Unit approx. 10m x 16m x 4.75m high; and
 - Two CO2 tanks 13.2m x 3m 3.4m high.
- 7.88 The remaining structures are 3 m tall or smaller.
- 7.89 Most of the buildings and structures would run parallel with a north south service road / hardstanding area. The digester tanks are set out a simple line to the east of the Site between the access road and Ashton Road at the lowest level on Site. The finishes of the buildings and structures would replicate those already found at numerous farms within the agricultural context of the Site. Colours selected for the buildings / structures would be a muted moss, dark green or light grey to ensure that the Proposed Development assimilates into surrounding vegetation.
- 7.90 There would be some localised earthworks required to create the development platforms, covered lagoons and arc clamps.
- 7.91 The Site would be secured with a suitably coloured 2.4m high v mesh fencing installed around the core site. Deer/wildlife fencing would be installed around lagoons. Double leaf vehicle access gates and a pedestrian access gate would allow entry into the Site.
- 7.92 Some limited external lighting would be required to ensure safe working during the winter months when light is reduced in the early mornings and afternoon/early evenings. All external lights would be directed downwards into operational areas and be hooded (using light spill shields) to reduce potential light disturbance outside of the Site. Lighting shall only be used within permitted hours of operation or if necessary, during maintenance or emergency work with dimming, timer and photocell controls.

- 7.93 A Lighting Strategy has been designed to be compliant with the residential receptor criteria as set out in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note 01/21: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Specifically, the assessed lighting associated with the Proposed Development is compliant with the obtrusive light criteria as set out for ILP Environmental Zone E2 (which refers to the location as rural – sparsely inhabited rural areas, village or relatively dark outer suburban location). The Lighting Strategy does not consider emergency and CCTV lighting. Mitigation measures have included not lighting the site access road mouth.

Loss of Physical Landscape Elements

- 7.94 The Proposed Development would result in the loss of the following landscape elements:
- Approximately 261 linear metres (lm) of hedgerow (Category C hawthorn) which runs east west across the Site and a section of a mixed native hedgerow alongside Ashton Road would be removed to accommodate the covered lagoons, new site access and visibility splays to the south.
 - Four ash trees. One ash tree (Category C1 T1) located within the east west hawthorn hedgerow would be removed to accommodate the covered lagoons and three ash trees to the south-east of the Site along Ashton Road would be removed to improve visibility along the access road; and
 - 6.86 ha of arable farmland.

A “Do Nothing” Scenario

- Based on a “Do Nothing” scenario the fields which would accommodate the Proposed Development would remain in arable and farmed for the foreseeable future.

Proposed Embedded Mitigation

- 7.95 The principal mitigation of landscape and visual effects is ‘embedded’ mitigation achieved through careful design of the various elements of the Proposed Development, such as the layout of the buildings and how the layout responds to the landform and orientation of the Site, the density and massing of the buildings, and the integration of existing and proposed planting, which can reduce effects, or in some cases, prevent effects from arising.
- 7.96 The potential for mitigation is described in the following two sections covering the assessment of landscape and visual effects. There is very limited potential for ‘add-on’ mitigation of landscape and visual effects that would follow on from the construction of the Proposed Development and therefore this has not been considered in this assessment.
- 7.97 A proposed Landscape Strategy has been prepared as part of this application, as illustrated by Figure 6.
- 7.98 The overall strategy is to maintain and enhance the existing landscape structure of woodland blocks, with hedgerows and trees to contain and integrate the Proposed Development into the wider LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vale (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland).

Habitat management would focus on improving the condition of the existing and proposed habitats.

7.99 Proposed mitigation planting and management includes:

- Offsite measures which would allow the existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees to be retained and managed with additional emergent trees maturing. The aim would be to increase the height of the hedgerow to a height of 2.5 to 3m. Any gaps would be infilled with native trees and / or shrubs and any non-native invasive plant species would be removed, as appropriate. This includes the hedgerow to the north and east of the Site as well as new native hedgerow planting to the north-west and south-west of the Site to provide visual screening. Planting and the management of such planting is covered under a Memorandum of Agreement between Acorn and the landowner.
- New native tree and shrub planting (covering approximately 0.82 ha) in the form of both a linear belt of trees to the north, west and south-west of the arc clamps and covered lagoons with smaller copses around the lagoons to the south. Tree and shrub planting would provide long term visual screening for adjacent users of the PRow. Additional individual native trees (7 no) would be introduced in tighter locations where the width between structures is insufficient to establish a belt of trees.
- 228 lm of new native species-rich hedgerow with trees (approximately 18 in no) would be introduced to the north-western edge of the Site linking with existing hedgerows. This would provide beneficial screening for visual receptors along the local rights of way network to the north, west and south-west. The hedgerow would be planted at five plants per linear metre and once established the aim would be to increase the average height and width of woody growth to greater than 1.5m along length of the hedgerow, with at least one mature tree per 30m stretch. Access to hedge bases would be managed (restricted) to improve habitat value; and
- 1.34 ha of shade tolerant species rich grassland within the remaining perimeter standoffs and buffers, where space allows to improve overall biodiversity, with 0.14 ha of wet grassland along the embankments of the land drain to the southwest and south of the Site.

Potential Impacts (Landscape and Visual)

7.100 Despite the extent of embedded mitigation, potential remains for impacts to arise in relation to the development during construction and operation. The Proposed Development is regarded as having a lifespan of 25 years and is theoretically reversible, however in terms of the LVIA is considered permanent, with potential operational impacts identified for Years 0 and 15.

Potential impacts during construction (Short-term, Temporary or permanent)

- Site preparation and earthworks including vegetation clearance and the presence of compounds / temporary spoil heaps;
- Removal of hedgerow to allow for new site access and infrastructure;
- Presence of moving construction vehicles and large machinery, including cranes;

- Presence of disturbed land;
- Active change in the landscape / land use as development progresses;
- Views of construction process and extensive areas of bare earth;
- Views of construction traffic;
- Light associated with floodlighting to allow a full working day in winter; and
- Areas of bare earth from temporary stockpiles and new landforms before they have had a chance to 'green up' from the landscape works.

7.101 The construction period assessment considers the temporary and / or permanent effects of the construction activities. The long-term effects of the introduction of the Proposed Development are considered as operational period permanent impacts, although it is acknowledged that they occur progressively during the construction period.

7.102 The construction phase environmental impacts of the Proposed Development would be managed through the implementation of a CEMP which would be part of a discharge of requirements and include mitigation measures under the 'Considerate Contractors' process.

Potential impacts during operation (Year 0, long-term permanent)

- Introduction of new buildings and structures, hardstanding, parking and internal roads, storage of digestate in lagoons, surface water management;
- Loss of existing landscape resource - land use and landcover;
- Creation of new landscape elements;
- Landform changes;
- Mitigation and enhancement hedgerows, tree and shrub planting and species-rich grassland associated with standoffs and buffer strips;
- Impacts on existing adjacent landscape character areas;
- Visual intrusion;
- Views of vehicles (deliveries of materials (silage or straw bales or poultry litter) / export of materials (gas and digestate) and occasional site security lighting during periods of low light levels; and
- Changes to views appreciated by key receptors.

7.103 It should be noted that during the operations traffic movements associated with the Proposed Development would vary throughout the year, with the highest levels occurring seasonally to allow for feedstock transfer (June and July for Rye Silage, followed by September / October for Maize Silage).

- 7.104 Where localised views of vehicle lights are possible, these are likely to be seen in the context of the lights from vehicles using the wider road network, such as the M1 or other agricultural machinery along farm tracks and associated with East Lodge Farm.

Potential impacts during operation (Year 15, long-term permanent)

- 7.105 At Year 15 the following permanent impacts would be experienced:
- The maturing of the proposed mitigation and enhancement hedgerow, tree and shrub planting and how this might influence potential impacts, otherwise occurring at Year 0 above;
 - Views of buildings, structures and associated infrastructure; and
 - Views of vehicles and occasional site security lighting during periods of low light levels.

Assessment of effects on landscape character, elements and designations

Introduction

- 7.106 This section describes the landscape character of the Proposed Development Site and Study Area based on desktop reviews, site visits and consultations. It also identifies the residual effects of the Proposed Development on landscape receptors and landscape designations following construction and during operation (Year 0 and Year 15).
- 7.107 The landscape assessment is based upon both a desk top appraisal of existing landscape character assessments and plans as well as a site-based survey. In accordance with GLVIA3 the main landscape receptors, (landscape character, landscape designations and site landscape elements), which have the potential to be affected by the Proposed Development have been identified and their sensitivity to the proposed development has been assessed by considering their value and susceptibility. The magnitude of change which would be experienced by each of these receptors has then been assessed by determining the size and scale of change, the geographical extent of that change, and the duration and reversibility of that change.

Baseline

- 7.108 The relevant published landscape character assessments within the Study Area (and wider context out to 5 km) are shown on Figure 7.

Landscape character – National

- 7.109 The Site lies within National Character Area Profile (NCAP) 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales with a small proportion of the Study Area to the northwest / north falling within NCAP 107 Cotswolds, Figure 7 refer.
- 7.110 For the purposes of this assessment NCAP 108 and 107 has been scoped out. The NCAPs are too generic and covers a considerable area. It is considered that for this scale of appraisal the county /

local landscape character assessment is a more appropriate tool by which to determine landscape character discussed below.

Landscape Character – County / Local

- 7.111 At a county level the Site is covered by Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005 and falls within LCT (Landscape Character Type) 12 Open Clay Vale, Landscape Character Area (LCA) 12a Thames Open Clay Vale. Remaining land within Wiltshire and the Study Area is either covered by LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowland (LCA 11b Minety Rolling Clay Lowland) or LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16 A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands).
- 7.112 Land to the north-west which lies within Gloucestershire falls within LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowland as described in the Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, January 2006. Key characteristics for both county level assessments are detailed in Appendix 7D.
- 7.113 The Site falls within the Cotswold Water Park Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which was commissioned by Wiltshire Council and produced by LDA Design in 2009. The LCA covers most of the Study Area with the Site lying within LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vale; LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland.
- 7.114 For the purposes of this LVIA and in recognition of the need to ensure the LVIA is appropriate and proportionate to the Proposed Development, only LCAs or LCTs at a local level within the Cotswolds Water Park LCA were considered alongside LCTs / LCAs lying outside of the Cotswolds Water Park but within the Study Area at a county level. Where relevant references were drawn from the county levels assessments to inform the assessment of landscape receptors.
- 7.115 In summary the following LCTs/LCAs lie within the Study Area the details of which (covering key characteristics, positive landscape features of significance, condition, strength of character and inherent landscape sensitivities) are covered in Appendix 7D:

Cotswold Water Park Landscape Character Assessment, 2009:

- LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland).
- CT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands).
- LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands).
- LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands).
- LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland).
- LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland).

Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, 2006:

- LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands.

Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005:

- LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowlands (LCA 11B Minety Rolling Clay Lowlands).

- LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands).

Study of Land surrounding key settlements, Cotswolds District: Update, 2014

- 7.116 The Study of Land surrounding key settlements updated the Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment considering the impact of any physical change since 2000, any revised assessments, policies and up-to-date guidance. It focused on the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites coming forward which were considered by Cotswold District Council as being deliverable. The study formed part of the evidence base used to inform the Local Development Framework.
- 7.117 Two settlements considered which lie within the Study Area are Kemble and South Cerney. The Study identified that three sites around Kemble (which lies just on the edge of the Study Area) were either of High / Medium, or Medium sensitivity to housing development. One site on the western edge of South Cerney and close to the Site and adjacent school (SC_13A) was a medium / low sensitivity to development see Plate 6 below.

Plate 6:
Housing Sites, Constraints And Designations



Kemble Landscape Appraisal September 2017

- 7.118 Kemble lies just on the edge of the 5 km Study Area. The Kemble Landscape Appraisal, September 2007 was undertaken on behalf of the Parish Council. The Appraisal identifies the landscape character and value of the surrounding landscape and puts forward recommendations for the protection and enhancement of positive attributes and improvement of negative elements within the landscape. It is considered that given the nature of the topography, intervening vegetation and distance of the Site any impacts on landscape character would be negligible.

The Site and Study Area

- 7.119 GLVIA3 recommends that a landscape character assessment should be carried out as part of the baseline study (paragraph 5.4). This should consider:
- the elements that make up the landscape (physical, land cover and the influence of human activity);
 - aesthetic and perceptual aspects; and
 - the overall character of the area.
- 7.120 An assessment of the landscape baseline is set out in the following paragraphs.
- 7.121 The Site, a roughly square arable field lies between a PRoW (footpath to the west) which leads down to Cotswolds Community (now advertised as Ashton Fields a development site for housing) and Ashton Road to the east. It is bound on all sides by an over mature and/or unmanaged hedgerows which are gappy to the north and south. Vegetation is predominately hawthorn with some field maple and occasional hedgerow trees including oak. Throughout the Study Area field patterns are medium to small with land use a mix of pasture (sheep and cattle) with some horse grazing and arable, the latter more prevalent on higher ground. Field boundaries beyond the Site are largely native hedgerows with occasional trees.
- 7.122 The topography across the Site gently slopes down in a west east direction towards Ashton Road with the highest ground west of the Site boundary. The Site lies on Ashton Downs, a small hill in an otherwise relatively flat landscape with ground rising to the north and west, mostly beyond a 2 km radius of the Site.
- 7.123 A PRoW (footpath -AKEY4) runs to the north, west and south of the Site; just clipping its north-western corner and connecting to a wider network of routes which spread across the Study with a greater prevalence to the south. Long distance routes include the Thames Path to the south and the Thames and Severn Way which runs roughly north /south to the east of the Site. Noticeable from the site visit were a number of allocated park and display car parks with no parking along several roads and laybys closed. The Cotswolds Country Park and Beach was closed and other access points to waterside locations were private unless crossed by a PRoW. Trails, PRoW and waterbodies were well used by different recreational users.
- 7.124 Waterbodies are a dominant feature to the southeast, south and southwest of the Site reflecting the history of large-scale sand and gravel extraction throughout the area. Despite the extensive nature of such waterbodies, the sense of their scale is limited due to extensive peripheral

vegetation . The River Thames or Isis and River Churn feed into these waterbodies running in a roughly north south direction.

- 7.125 The Study Area whilst being rural in character is dominated by the waterbodies described above. South Cerney forms the main village to the east of the Site with the southern edge of Cirencester to the north. Smaller settlements are scattered across the Study Area connected by minor roads. The A419 cuts across the eastern edge of the Study Area with a rail line running northwest south-east past Kemble and Upper Minety.
- 7.126 From the north-western corner of the Site there are middle to long distance views east which includes the western edge of South Cerney and Aggregate Industries to the southeast and in outward views from footpaths on the western edge of South Cerney the Site is partially discernible. On lower slopes within the Site there is a strong sense of enclosure. Elsewhere small pockets of woodland and scrub alongside the hedgerows create an enclosed landscape with open views contained largely to higher ground and edge of waterbodies.
- 7.127 Tranquillity levels are relatively high and most of the area appears well used in terms of recreation.

Summary of receptors

- 7.128 The main landscape receptors likely to be affected by the Proposed Development are:

Landscape Character:

Cotswold Water Park

- LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland).
- LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands).
- LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands).
- LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands).
- LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland).
- LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland).

Gloucestershire LCA

- LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands.

Wiltshire LCA

- LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowlands (LCA 11B Minety Rolling Clay Lowlands).
- LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands).

Landscape designations

- Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area lies circa 2.2 km to the northwest of the Site.

Site Elements:

- Sloping landform.
- Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries.
- Change in landuse and rural character.
- Openness / Enclosure.
- Tranquil.

7.129 The following landscape receptors were scoped out:

- Cotswolds AONB including its setting and special qualities
- LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1B The Ampney Lowlands).
- LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowlands (LCA 11B Minety Rolling Clay Lowlands).
- LCT 12 Open Clay Vale (LCA 12A Thames Open Clay Vale).

7.130 All the above LCAs and Cotswolds AONB have no or limited intervisibility with the Site as reflected on the ZTV and verified on Site.

Effect on Landscape Character

7.131 The potential landscape impacts of the different elements of the Proposed Development relate to their intervisibility with the landscape receptors as new landscape features including how this affects their perceptual qualities/ elements and tranquillity. This includes the presence and activity of temporary construction plant during the construction period and vehicle movements during operation and includes the presence of new light sources within the landscape.

7.132 Whilst the value of the LCAs is considered to range from Community to Local Authority, their individual susceptibility to the Proposed Development is related to their ability to “*accommodate the proposed development without undue adverse consequences for the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies*” (Paragraph 5.40, GLVIA3). Aspects of the character of the landscape that may be affected by a particular type of development include landform, skylines, land cover, enclosure and aesthetic and perceptual aspects such as the scale of the landscape, its form, line, texture, pattern and grain, complexity, and its sense of rurality, openness, movement, remoteness, wildness or tranquillity.

7.133 The Proposed Development is regarded as having a lifespan of 25 years and is theoretically reversible, however in terms of the LVIA considered permanent.

Potential Construction Phase Effects- Landscape Character

Cotswold Water Park

LCT3 River Basin Clay Vales, LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland

- 7.134 The Site lies within the centre of LCA 3A which is described as “*an existing settled landscape of small mainly stone built village settlement with a dynamic and evolving wetland landscape*” with “*small scale, regularly enclosed pasture fields with horse and sheep grazing separated by low, well maintained and regularly trimmed hedgerows dominant valley bottoms*” with “*occasional medium scale arable fields aligning the shallow slopes and occasional local hillocks that rise above the floodplains*”. Key characteristics of the Study Area and Site align with these descriptions, the Site forming part of the extent “*medium scale arable fields*” and “*occasional hillocks*”.
- 7.135 The ZTV indicated there is a theoretically high potential for intervisibility between the Proposed Development within LCA, approximately 1 km of the Site and this extends to the north and west as well as to the south either across areas of open water, where views of the development may be apparent unobscured by vegetation, or from slightly higher ground.
- 7.136 Construction activities would be discernible including the movement of vehicles especially on higher ground and the gradual changes in landuse / landform with the temporary introduction of a few new features, such as materials storages areas, construction compound, parking areas etc and creation of a new access point off Ashton Road. The temporary presence and movement of cranes at a lower level would also be noticeable. Activities would result in the loss of some characteristic features (existing boundary vegetation, agricultural land use, open views and rural character as well as impacts on tranquillity though the extent of loss relative to the LCA overall is small). It is predicted that this LCA has a Medium sensitivity, a Slight to Medium magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at construction, resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands)

- 7.137 LCA 1A lies to the north-west of the Site and beyond a 2 km radius. The landscape is described as having a “*gently sloping mainly south easterly grain*”, “*productive mixed arable and grazed fields*” with a “*predominance of large-scale arable fields resulting in a simple, uniform landscape in places*”, typical of the LCA within the Study Area.
- 7.138 The ZTV shows that only a small proportion of the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible and this would be from higher ground to the south-western edge of the LCA.
- 7.139 During construction only high-level construction activities associated with the temporary presence and movement of cranes may be discernible and this would only affect a small proportion of the LCA. It is predicted that the LCA which has a Low to Medium sensitivity, a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at construction, resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)

- 7.140 The LCA 2A lies within a 2 km radius of the Site to the north-west and west. The LCA is described as a *“medium to large scale landscape with a very gently undulating landform that can give the impression of being flat”*. There is a *“general sense of openness and expansiveness with long distance views to the south”* and *“Vertical features also gain visual prominence in the open landscape and the eye is often drawn to a number of high voltage pylons”*.
- 7.141 Whilst the ZTV indicates that there is a theoretically high potential for intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA only the temporary presence and movement of cranes would be discernible above existing vegetation running along the PRoW to the west of the Site. This is due to the orientation of the Proposed Development relative to the LCA and the siting of the digester tankers on lower ground. It is therefore predicted that the LCA has a Medium sensitivity, a Slight magnitude of change on the LCA at construction, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect.

LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands)

- 7.142 LCA 2B lies to the north-east of the Site beyond its 2 km radius. The landscape is *“very gently undulating and open, expansive landscape”* with *“distant views to the Thames River Basin Lowland to the south”*. Fields are *“medium scale arable”* with smaller pasture fields along watercourses.
- 7.143 Whilst the ZTV indicates that there is a theoretically high potential for intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA, with the siting of the digester tankers on lower ground it is likely that only the temporary presence and movement of cranes would be discernible. This would be either above existing vegetation in the foreground or seen against a rising landform from this angle. It is therefore predicted that the LCA has a Medium sensitivity, a Slight magnitude of change on the LCA at construction, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect.

LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland)

- 7.144 The LCA 3B lies to the east of the Site and beyond its 2 km radius. The landscape is described as a *“low lying and predominantly flat landscape”*, dominated by arable farming. Large field sizes combined *“with the distant expansive views”* create the impression of a simple and open landscape.
- 7.145 The ZTV indicates that only a small proportion of the LCA would be theoretically visible and this is from higher ground, south of Dukes Brake and Vines Brake. Due to the siting of the digester tankers on lower ground it is likely that only the temporary presence and movement of cranes would be discernible either above existing vegetation in the foreground or seen against a rising landform from this angle. It is predicted that the LCA has a Low to Medium sensitivity, a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at construction, resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland)

- 7.146 LCA 3D extends to the south / south-west of the Site, beyond a 2 km radius of the Site boundary and LCA 3A. The landscape is described as *“low lying area of predominately pasture farmland”* with

“small to medium sized fields”; the latter sometimes irregular; a “quiet pastoral landscape” lying to the south and southwest of the Site and beyond LCA 3A.

- 7.147 The ZTV illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is widespread covering roughly half of the LCA with a greater prevalence from higher ground. However due to the siting of the digester tankers on lower ground, it is likely that only the temporary presence and movement of cranes would be discernible either above existing vegetation in the foreground or seen against a rising vegetated landform. It is predicted that the LCA has a Low to Medium sensitivity, a Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at construction, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect.

LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland)

- 7.148 The LCA 4A lies to the south-east of the Site and falls just within the Study Area. The LCA is described as forming *“a transition between the flatter, wetter landscapes with some open water ditches and waterside willows, through to a more pastoral landscape of mixed pasture and arable with mature hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees.”* Field sizes are variable and there are *“wide views across Thames Clay vale to the north”*.
- 7.149 The extent of the ZTV shows that roughly a third of the LCA within the Study Area would be theoretically visible from higher ground. Given that the digester tankers would be sited on the Site’s lower slopes, visible construction activities are only likely to be associated with the temporary presence and movement of cranes. It is predicted that the LCA has a Medium sensitivity, a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at construction, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect.

Gloucestershire LCA

LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands

- 7.150 LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands lies to the north and west beyond a 2 km radius of the Site and extending up to and outside the 5 km Study Area boundary. The LCT is described as a *“gently sloping, undulating lowland”* with a *“predominance of medium to large scale arable fields and smaller scape improved pastures”* with *“occasional woodland copses and shelterbelts”*
- 7.151 The ZTV illustrates that only a small proportion of the LCTs is theoretically visible and it appears that this is largely from higher ground to the southern edge of the LCT.
- 7.152 As with many other peripheral LCTs construction activities are likely to only be associated with the temporary presence and movement of cranes and this would only affect a small proportion of the LCT. It is predicted that the LCT has a Medium to High sensitivity (roughly half of the LCT lies within Kemble and Ewen SLA), a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at construction, resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

Wiltshire LCA

LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)

7.153 This LCT just clips into the 5 km Study Area, forms a very small proportion of the Study Area and lies to the south-west of the Site. The LCA is described as *“predominantly rolling mixed pastoral and arable farmland, in a pattern of large fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees” confirmed by the Site visit.*

7.154 The extent of the ZTV shows that slightly less than half of the LCT within the Study Area would be theoretically visible though this would be from slightly higher ground within the Study Area.

Construction activities are likely to only be associated with the temporary presence and movement of cranes and this would only affect a small proportion of the LCT give the siting of digester tanks on lower slopes of the Site. It is predicted that the LCT has a Low sensitivity, a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCT at construction, resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

Potential Construction Phase Effects- Landscape Designations

7.155 Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area lies circa 2.2 km to the north-west of the Site. The landscape is described as *“Unspoilt sweeping open valleys”, with a “well treed dismantled railway and disused Thames and Severn Canal which form strong lines and enclosure across the landscape”* and high levels of tranquillity *“away from the main roads.”*

7.156 The ZTV identifies that in terms of theoretical visibility only the southern fringes of the SLA are affected. The construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements from within the SLA but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features in its outward views. Where visible this would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and would be over 2 km away. There would be very limited potential for changes to the landscape character and its key qualities.

7.157 It is predicted that the SLA has a Medium to High sensitivity, a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the SLA and its special qualities at construction, resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

Potential Construction Phase Effects - Site Elements/Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects

7.158 The following construction effects would be experienced by site elements (considering both physical and aesthetic / perceptual aspects):

- **Sloping landform:** The landform is of Medium sensitivity, with a Medium magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate adverse significant effect on landform.
- **Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries:** Vegetation is of Medium sensitivity with a Medium magnitude of change resulting from the loss of hedgerows to accommodate the

covered lagoons, entranceway and visibility splays. Construction activities would generate a Moderate adverse significant effect on vegetation.

- **Change in landuse and rural character:** A change in landuse and rural character is of Medium sensitivity with a Medium to Substantial magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse significant effect on landform and rural character.
- **Open / Enclosed on lower ground:** The sense of openness alters from relatively open on high ground to the west with middle to distant views, to partially enclosed along the Site's eastern boundary. It is predicted that this element is of Medium sensitivity, would be experience a Slight to Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.
- **Tranquillity:** The sense of tranquillity diminishes west east across the Site. Construction activities would result in a reduction in tranquillity across the Site, the context of which is already influenced by nearby detractors such Ashton Road and Aggregate Industries. Works may particularly influence the tranquillity of the western side of the Site where these local detractors are screened. Tranquillity is of Medium to Low sensitivity (west to east across the Site), with Medium to Low magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate adverse significant to Minor adverse not significant effect.

Potential Operational Phase Effects (Year 0 and Year 15) – Landscape Character

Cotswold Water Park

LCT3 River Basin Clay Vales, LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland

- 7.159 Year 0: Once constructed the Proposed Development would introduce new features into the LCA. This would include the digester tankers and particularly the domed membrane visible at a higher elevation as well as lower-level structures, the most noticeable being the silage clamps and covered lagoons on the higher western slopes of the Site. It is predicted that this LCA has a Medium sensitivity, a Slight to Medium magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA at Year 0, resulting in Moderate adverse significant effect.
- 7.160 Whilst the Proposed Development would appear prominent in the immediate landscape visual connections to other LCT/s LCAs would not be interrupted by the development and a layering of vegetation would screen lower elevational views further afield.
- 7.161 Year 15: Following the establishment and growth of new mitigation and existing planting it is anticipated that there would a change in effects. Intervisibility of structures at a lower elevation would reduce, though partial intervisibility associated with the digester tanks (domed membranes) at a higher level and the silage clamps would remain, diminishing with distance away from the Site. It is predicted that the sensitivity would be Medium, magnitude of change would alter to Slight resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect on landscape character (Year 15).

LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands)

- 7.162 Year 0: When the Proposed Development is operational new features would be introduced and in outward views from the LCA, where these exist, the upper elevations of higher-level structures may

be discernible, remaining features would be absorbed into the surrounding vegetation. It is predicted that the sensitivity of the LCA would be Low to Medium, magnitude of change would be Slight resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

- 7.163 Year 15: The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme would result in a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix would partially screen upper-level structures including the digester tankers and associated domes. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Low to Medium, magnitude of change would reduce to Negligible to Slight resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)

- 7.164 Year 0: Once the Proposed Development is operational intervisibility between the Proposed Development and LCA would be low. Lower-level structures such as the chicken shed, separation buildings and welfare offices would not be discernible. Upper elevations of the gas flare to the south-east corner of the Site and the five digester tankers, both sited at a lower level may be discernible above vegetation edging the northern and western boundary of the Site. The use of a sympathetic colour range would help to merge Proposed Development into its surroundings alongside mitigation planting. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Medium, magnitude of change would remain to Slight to Medium resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect on landscape character.
- 7.165 Year 15: Once mitigation planting matures there would be a change in effect. Native hedgerow tree planting and native woodland tree and shrub planting on higher ground would contribute to visual screening some of the upper elevations of the domed membranes of the digester tankers and gas flare. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Medium, magnitude of change would reduce to Slight resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands)

- 7.166 Year 0: New features would be introduced into the landscape seen in its outward views and visible against a backdrop of rising ground forming part of the hillside on which the Site sits. Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA would be limited to silage clamps / covered lagoons on higher slopes and the domed membranes of the digester tankers at a higher elevation impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual elements of the LCA. It is predicted that this LCA would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, have a Slight to Medium magnitude of change on the LCA, resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect on the landscape character on Operation.
- 7.167 Year 15: The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme and existing vegetation would generate a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix and allowing offsite planting to mature particularly along the northern edge of the Site would screen the silage clamps / covered lagoons and upper elevations of the domed membranes of the digester tankers from this orientation. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Low to Medium, magnitude of change would remain to Slight resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland)

- 7.168 Year 0: The Proposed Development would introduce new features into the landscape seen in its outward views and visible against a backdrop of rising ground forming part of the hillside on which the Site sits. Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA would be limited to silage clamps / covered lagoons on higher slopes and the domed membranes of the digester tankers at a higher elevation impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual elements of the LCA. It is predicted that this LCA would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, have a Slight magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on the landscape character at Operation.
- 7.169 Year 15: The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme and existing vegetation would not generate a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix would not screen the silage clamps / covered lagoons or upper elevations including the domed membranes of the digester tankers from this orientation. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Low to Medium, magnitude of change would remain to Slight resulting in a Minor adverse unchanged not significant effect on landscape character.

LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland)

- 7.170 Year 0: New features would be introduced into the landscape seen in its outward views and be visible against a backdrop of rising land forming part of the Site and existing boundary vegetation on higher ground. Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA would be limited to the silage clamps / covered lagoons on higher slopes and the domed membranes of the digester tankers at a higher elevation impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual elements of the LCA. It is predicted that this LCA would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, have a Slight to Medium magnitude of change on the landscape character of the LCA, resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect on the landscape character at Operation.
- 7.171 Year 15: The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme would result in a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix would screen lower and upper-level structures including the digester tankers and associated domed membranes. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Low to Medium, magnitude of change would reduce to Slight resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland)

- 7.172 Year 0: When the Proposed Development is operational new features would be introduced and in outward views from the LCA, where these exist, the upper elevations of higher-level structures (namely the domed membranes associated with the digester tankers) would be discernible, remaining features would be absorbed into the surrounding vegetation. It is predicted that the sensitivity of the LCA would be Medium, magnitude of change would be Slight resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

- 7.173 Year 15: The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme would result in a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix would partially screen upper-level structures including the digester tankers and associated domes, with greater visibility further east in the LCA. The sensitivity of the LCA would be Medium, magnitude of change would reduce to Negligible to Slight resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

Gloucestershire LCA

LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands

- 7.174 Year 0: Once the Proposed Development is constructed upper elevations of the digester tankers with associated domed membranes may be discernible. Remaining lower-level structures would be absorbed into the surrounding vegetation, including the gas flare. Intervisibility with the remaining LCT is limited to higher elevations. It is predicted that the LCT is of a Medium to High sensitivity, would experience a Slight magnitude of change, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on the landscape character at Operation.
- 7.175 Year 15: The proposed landscape scheme would mature minimising intervisibility of the Proposed Development (higher structures) within the LCT further. Tree planting along the northern and western edge of the Site would contribute to higher level screening though partial intervisibility associated with higher levels of the domed membranes of the digester tanks may remain. It is predicted that the sensitivity would be Low, magnitude of change would alter to Negligible to Slight resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

Wiltshire LCA

LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)

- 7.176 Year 0: New features would be introduced into the landscape once the Proposed Development is constructed and this would be limited to the upper elevations of the digester tankers with associated domed membranes. Remaining lower-level structures would be absorbed into the surrounding vegetation, including the gas flare. Intervisibility with the remaining LCT is limited to higher elevations. It is predicted that the LCT is of a Low sensitivity, would experience a Slight magnitude of change, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on the landscape character at Operation.
- 7.177 Year 15: The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme would result in a further change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCT and with higher structures. Tree planting along the western and southern edge of the Site would contribute to higher level screening though partial intervisibility associated with higher levels of the digester tanks may remain. It is predicted that the sensitivity would be Low, magnitude of change would alter to Negligible to Slight resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect on landscape character.

Operational Phase Effects (Year 0 and Year 15) – Landscape Designations

- 7.178 Year 0: Once the Proposed Development is operational intervisibility between the Proposed Development and Kemble and Ewen SLA would be low. Lower-level structures such as the chicken shed, separation buildings and welfare offices would not be discernible. Upper elevations of the gas flare to the southeast corner of the Site and the five digester tankers, sited at a lower level would be discernible. The use of a sympathetic colour range would help to merge Proposed Development into its surroundings alongside mitigation planting.
- 7.179 There may be negative impacts on the SLA's aesthetic and perceptual qualities which refers to "unspoilt sweeping open valleys" and "tranquillity". The Site sits on the edge of a prominent hill surrounded by relatively low land. Intervisibility is minimised by existing vegetation on higher ground edging the Site's western boundary. In terms of impacts on night skies as discussed before the area within which the Site sits is relatively bright and night glow is within operational limits.
- 7.180 It is predicted that SLA would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect on the SLA at Operation.
- 7.181 Year 15: Once mitigation planting matures there would be a change in effect. Native hedgerow tree planting and native woodland tree and shrub planting on higher ground would contribute to visual screening of some of the upper elevations of the domed membranes of the digester tankers and gas flare. It is predicted that the sensitivity would be Medium to High, magnitude of change would be Negligible to Slight resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect on the SLA.

Potential Operational Phase Effects - Site Elements/Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects

- 7.182 Year 0: The following effects are predicted on site elements considering both physical and aesthetic / perceptual aspects:
- **Landform:** The landform is of Medium sensitivity, with a Medium magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate adverse significant effect on landform.
 - **Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries:** Vegetation is of Medium sensitivity with a Medium magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate significant effect on vegetation. Whilst new planting is introduced it would be too juvenile to mitigate any effects.
 - **Change in landuse and rural character:** A change in landuse and rural character is of Medium sensitivity with a Medium to Substantial magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate to Major unchanged adverse significant effect.
 - **Open / Enclosed on lower ground:** Upon operation and on completion, the Proposed Development would create a more complex arrangement of elements and features across the Site, with enclosure achieved through the creation of new landforms -retaining walls / embankments and buildings / structures. Additional tree and shrub planting would also be carried out to extend and enhance the existing boundaries, whilst forming new areas of enclosure and division, as part of the peripheral landscaping scheme. Such planting at this stage would however be immature. It is predicted that this element is of Medium

sensitivity, would be experience a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate adverse significant effect.

- **Tranquillity:** Tranquillity is of Medium to Low sensitivity (west to east across the Site), with Medium to Low magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate adverse significant to Minor adverse not significant effect west – east.

7.183 Year 15: The following effects are predicted on site elements considering both physical and aesthetic / perceptual aspects:

- **Landform:** It is predicted that there would be a Medium sensitivity associated with landform and a Medium magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate adverse effect which has remained unchanged.
- **Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries:** Vegetation would be of Medium sensitivity with a Slight to Medium magnitude of change, resulting in a Minor to Moderate positive effect as planting matures.
- **Change in landuse and rural character:** There would be a Medium sensitivity associated with landuse and rural character, a Medium to Substantial magnitude of change, resulting in a Moderate to Major unchanged adverse significant effect.
- **Open / Enclosed on lower ground:** Following the establishment and growth of the tree and shrub planting, at Year 15 it is anticipated that there would be the creation of an enclosing woodland with mature copses and hedgerows. Mitigation and off-site planting would alter the sense of openness to enclosure further particularly from higher ground to the west. It is predicted that this element is of Medium sensitivity, would be experience a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate neutral effect as mitigation planting matures providing a greater degree of enclosure including from higher ground.
- **Tranquillity:** Tranquillity is of medium to low sensitivity (west to east across the Site), with Medium to Low magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate adverse significant to Minor adverse not significant no change effect west – east.

7.184 It should be noted that effects on Site elements are localised to the Site itself.

Assessment of effects on visual amenity and visual receptors

Introduction

7.185 This section describes the visual amenity of the Proposed Development Site and Study Area based on desktop reviews, site visits and consultations. It identifies the residual effects of the Proposed Development on representative viewpoints and principal visual receptors following construction and during operation (Year 0 and Year 15).

7.186 In accordance with the recommendations of GLVIA3, the significance of the potential visual effects has been determined by assessing both the sensitivity of visual receptors and the potential magnitude of visual effect.

Overview of Visibility

- 7.187 The screened ZTV, as shown on Figure 8, indicates the main areas of theoretical visibility. Within an approximately 2 km radius of the Site the extent of theoretical visibility lies to the north, north-west, west and north-east of the Site with intermittent visibility to the south, south-east and east.
- 7.188 Beyond a 2 km radius of the Site the highest concentration of theoretical visibility is to the north-east around a disused airfield off the A419, with a further band to the north, north-west and west. There is limited visibility to the south and east.
- 7.189 Field surveys conclude that the visible extent of the Proposed Development within the local landscape is much less than the ZTV, restricted by the topography, in conjunction with mature hedgerows / hedgerow trees and linear woodland blocks around the Site and within its immediate context.
- 7.190 Considering the retention of existing hedgerows and trees around the boundaries of the Site alongside new planting covered under a Memorandum of Agreement⁵, additional mitigation planting and hedgerow management, any potential visibility apart from immediately adjacent to the Site is likely to be limited to the upper portion of the tallest elements. This would be, construction cranes or digester tankers and associated domed mounds on operation, along with vehicle movements travelling in and out of the Site from Ashton Road.
- 7.191 Visual effects of development would be from the following locations:
- Residential areas – the western edge of South Cerney (including a new residential development at Saxon Meadows which includes three storey town houses) and northern edge of Ashton Keynes as well as potentially smaller settlements, individual dwellings and farmsteads;
 - Public Rights of Way in close proximity to the Site, particularly where routes are more open, including part of PRow AKEY4 which passes alongside western the Site; and
 - The local road network, particularly Ashton Road and other nearby routes which have more open views across to the Site.
- 7.192 Some additional, more distant areas are included in the assessment (such as on the edge of Somerford Keynes and between Ewen and Cirencester), to illustrate context and the wider panoramic views from these locations.

Summary of potential visual receptors

- 7.193 For the purpose of the assessment, whilst it is the people living, working, passing through or enjoying recreational activities in the area who see the view and enjoy the visual amenity, it is the places they may occupy that are mapped and described as the ‘receptors’ of the views.

⁵ Protected through off site agreements with adjacent landowners.

7.194 The following visual receptors have the potential to experience changes in their views.

Residential receptors:

- 7.195 Potential residential receptors include those on the edge of settlements such as South Cerney and Ashton Keynes to the east and south-east respectively as well as Waterhay, Oakesy, Poole Keynes Somerford Keynes, Kemble and Ewen, Siddington and the southern edge of Cirencester.
- 7.196 In addition, there are a few individual properties and farmsteads within open countryside including properties off Ashton Road; one to the north of the Aggregate Industries Works and south-east of the Site, and a clustered to the north, including The Downs Farm and Cross Roads Farm. It should be noted that the land forming the Cotswolds Community has been sold and is being developed for housing referred to as Ashton Fields. This lies to the south-west of the Site and is considered as part of the future baseline
- 7.197 Despite the ZTV which reflected a more than worst case scenario, subsequent field work confirmed that there would little to no visibility predicted from Waterhay, Oakesy, Poole Keynes Somerford Keynes, Kemble and Ewen, Siddington and the southern edge of Cirencester.

Recreational and Visitor receptors:

- 7.198 Recreational and visitor receptors to PRoW (footpaths and bridleways) and the Cotswolds Water Park may experience views of the Proposed Development, particularly those within close proximity to the Site, and where land is more open or where there are gaps in intervening vegetation. Such views include those along the following:

PRoW receptors (working in a clockwise direction within 1km of the Site(Figure 5a refer):

- PRoW Footpaths (South Cerney Footpaths 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 53) run between Ashton Road and Upper Up / High Street to the north-east;
- PRoW BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) runs in a north-west direction northwest of South Cerney and north-east of the Site;
- PRoW Footpath (AKEY4) which runs to the north, south and alongside the Site's western boundary;
- PRoW Bridleway (AKEY33) to the south-east wraps around the Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park and links to AKEY40 and AKEY 32) as well as PRoW Bridleway (South Cerney Bridleway 48) to the east;
- PRoW Bridleway (AKEY40) wraps around the Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park and links to AKEY40 and AKEY 32);
- PRoW Bridleway (AKEY 32) wraps around the Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park and links to AKEY40 and AKEY 32);
- PRoW Footpath (AKEY24) links to AKEY40 / AKEY 32 around the Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park and cuts across the Spine Road East;
- PRoW Footpath (AKEY1A) which runs along the northern edge of the Spine Road East;

- PRoW Footpath (AKEY 6) and PRoW Footpath (AKEY 2) run to the south of the Spine Rod (West) wrapping round Furze Brake;
- PRoW Bridleway (AKEY3) runs north of Spine Road (west) and links to PRoW Footpath (AKEY 5);
- PRoW Footpath (AKEY5) lies to west and runs from Cotswolds Community Centre to Shorncote Lake; and
- PRoW Footpath (Somerford Keynes Footpath 11) runs around Shorncote Lake Local Wildlife Site with Siddington Footpath 9 connecting to it further north and running from Ashton Road.

Receptors of National Trails and Regional Routes:

- The Thames Path, a national trail and at its closes point approximately 1.8 km south of the Site
- Thames and Severn Way approximately 1.75 km to the northeast; and
- Sustrans Route 45 approximately 3.48 km to the west.

Visitors and users of the Cotswold Water Park (working in a clockwise direction and within 1 km radius of the Site):

- South Cerney Golf Club to the east, approximately 1.87 km to the northeast;
- Visitors to Hoburne Cotswold Holiday Park approx. 1.25 km to the south-east of the Site;
- Visitors to Keynes Country Park (also referred to as Cotswold Country Park & Beach) approximately 0.9 km to west;
- Visitors to Cotswolds Park SSSI and Shorncote Lake Local Wildlife Site approximately 0.42 km to the northwest; and
- Visitors to four acre caravan site to the north west of the Site approximately 1 km to the north-west.

7.199 As indicated on the ZTV, there is little to no visibility predicted from recreational routes and visitor facilities including holiday parks such as Lower Mill Estate and Neigh Bridge to the south-west. As such these receptors have been scoped out of the assessment.

Transport receptors:

- 7.200 The ZTV illustrates theoretical visibility from parts of the local road network, however during the site visit it was evident that hedgerows and other vegetation, which is prevalent along these roadsides, enclose views outwards from the road corridor to varying degrees.
- 7.201 As such, it is anticipated that vegetation in combination with the direction and speed of travel would result in intermittent and transient views only from the local road network such as Ashton Road immediately east of the Site, and two roads to the north / northwest between Ewen and Upper Siddington and Ewen and South Cerney.

- 7.202 The highest potential for visibility was identified as being from Ashton Road for short length of route immediately adjacent to the Site and to the south resulting from the loss of vegetation to accommodate visibility splays.

Industrial receptors

- 7.203 Industrial receptors may include visitors and workers to Aggregate Industries North End Works which lies to the south-east of the Site and Shorncote Quarry and Sewage Treatment Works to the north-west.

Representative viewpoints

- 7.204 The following nine representative viewpoints have been selected to demonstrate the range of views experienced by visual receptors around the application site. The location of these views is indicated on Figure 8 and Figures 9.1 to 9.9 show the viewpoint photos with supporting wirelines reflecting both autumn and winter views). Images A and C show the autumn and winter baseline whilst B and D show the respective wirelines. Figures 10.1 and 10.3 are photomontages from viewpoints 8 and 9 and show baseline (A), Year 0 (B), Year 5 (C) and Year 15 (D) mitigation planting.
- 7.205 The viewpoints selected and reasons for their inclusion are as described in the Table 5.1 below.

Table 1
Summary of Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoint	Reason for selection
1 View from PRoW BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) off School Lane on the western edge of South Cerney	Representative viewpoint looking across the Site in a south westerly direction. Potential for high / medium sensitivity receptors: • Users of the PRoW • Residents on the north-western edge of South Cerney
2 View from PRoW AKEY4 on the edge of South Cerney	Representative view from PRoW looking across the Site in a south westerly direction. Potential for high / medium sensitivity receptors: • Users of PRoW
3 View from PRoW AKEY24 / (footpath) / AKEY40 (Bridleway) on the edge of Cotswolds Water Park (Autumn and winter wireline)	Representative view from PRoW looking towards the Site in a north westerly direction. Potential for high / medium sensitivity receptors: • Users of PRoW • Users of Cotswolds Water Park (including users of the Yacht Club off Whitefriars Lane)
4 View from PRoW AKEY6 (footpath) on the edge of a waterbody just north of the Thames Path and west of Manor House	Representative view from a PRoW towards the Site in a northerly direction. Potential for high / medium sensitivity receptors: • Users of PRoW and Thames Path • Residents of adjacent residential property referred to as the Manor House

Viewpoint	Reason for selection
(Autumn and winter wireline)	Recreational users of adjacent waterbodies (including swimmers and canoeists)
5 View from PRoW BPK10 (Poole Keynes Footpath 10) and the River Thames or Isis Trail (Autumn and winter wireline)	Representative view from PRoW / River Thames or Isis Trail looking towards the Site in an easterly direction. Potential for high / medium sensitivity receptors: Users of PRoW / River Thames or Isis Trail
6 View from a minor road (also Sustrans National Cycle Route 45 and the Thames & Severn Way) linking Ewen and Chesterton edging Cirencester	Representative view from PRoW / Thames and Severn Way (Sustrans Route 45) looking towards the Site in a south easterly direction. Potential for high / medium receptors: - Users of PRoW / Thames and Severn Way - Users of Sustrans Route 45 - Road Users
7 View from a track around the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI, north-west of Ashton Down - (Autumn and winter wireline)	Representative view from a track in the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI looking towards the Site in a south easterly direction. Potential for high / medium sensitivity receptors: - Users of track / path - Visitor to the SSSI
8 View from PRoW AKEY4 on the north-western edge of the Site (Autumn and winter wireline) Photomontage (10.1-10.2)	Representative view from PRoW looking towards the Site in a south easterly direction. Potential for high sensitivity receptors: Users of PRoW
9 View from PRoW AKEY4 on the south-western edge of the Site (Autumn and winter wireline) Photomontage(10.3)	Representative of view from PRoW looking towards the Site in a south easterly direction. Potential for high/medium to low sensitivity receptors: Users of PRoW

Type 2 Wirelines were prepared for viewpoints 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 (autumn and winter views) and Type 3 photomontages for Viewpoints 8 and 9.

Effect on Visual Amenity / Visual Receptors

7.206 The potential visual impacts of the different elements of the Proposed Development relate to their intervisibility with the receptors as new landscape features including how this affects their

perceptual qualities/ elements and tranquillity. This would include the presence and activity of temporary construction plant during the construction period and vehicle movements during operation. This also includes the presence of new light sources within the view.

- 7.207 All changes to the view during construction are regarded as short term and temporary. Operational phase Year 0 is long-term permanent (whilst embedded mitigation measures have an opportunity to mature). At year 15 the changes to the view are regarded to be long term and permanent.
- 7.208 More detailed assessment of visual effects is set out in Appendix 7C and summarised below.

Potential Construction Phase Effects

- 7.209 Construction activities associated with the Proposed Development would result in the loss of a short section of hedgerow at the entrance of the Site and to the south (including three ash trees). There would also be the loss of one ash and hedgerow running east west through the Site. The temporary introduction of a number of new features, such as materials storages areas, construction compound, parking areas etc may be discernible.

Residential receptors

- 7.210 The majority of residential properties within the Study Area would have no, or very limited visibility of the construction activities. The only exception to this is predicted to be those on the edge of settlements and individual properties within open countryside or close to the Site or from properties on slightly higher ground.
- 7.211 Residential receptors are considered to be of Medium to High sensitivity; with a High susceptibility to change and a Medium value on the basis that their properties or the settlement in question lies within the Cotswolds Water Park which is covered by a local planning designation which seeks to strengthen and engender a sense of place.
- **Property to the southeast of the Site off Ashton Road:** Residents of a property to the south-east of the Site off Ashton Road would experience views of construction activities. Whilst intervening vegetation would partially screen works taking place, the widening of the Site entranceway and consequential loss of trees and hedgerows to accommodate the visibility splays may be apparent as well as the presence of some low and high-level activities including cranes associated with the construction of the digester tankers. Views would be partial, filtered and more apparent during winter months. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours to avoid night glow from construction vehicles and temporary structures on site. Residents would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience a Slight to Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.
 - **Properties to the north of the Site off Ashton Road:** Residents of properties to the north of the Site off Ashton Road would experience partial and filtered views of high-level activities including cranes associated with the construction of the digester tankers. Views would be partial, filtered and more apparent during winter months. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours to avoid night glow from construction vehicles and temporary

structures on site. Residents would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

- **Edge of South Cerney (near viewpoint 1 and 2):** Residents on the western and north-western edge of South Cerney (including residents at Saxon Meadows) would experience open, direct or partial, filtered views of the temporary presence and movement of cranes associated with the construction of the digester tanks especially in winter months. Intervening vegetation namely the high hedgerows along Ashton Road and a linear belt of woodland in the foreground would screen low level activities. Residents of properties would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight to Medium magnitude of change (subject to their orientation and proximity to the Site) resulting in either a Minor adverse (viewpoint 1) or Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect (near viewpoint 2 and Saxon Meadows).
- **Residents former Cotswolds Community (Ashton Fields):** New residents to the south-west may experience partial, filtered views from their upper storeys of their properties of the temporary presence and movement of cranes associated with the construction of the digester tanks especially in winter months. Due to the nature of the topography on Ashton Down and intervening vegetation low level activities would be screened. Residents of properties would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect. It should be noted that this is considered as part of a future baseline. Whilst work has been undertaken in terms of vegetation clearance as of March 2023, no construction work has yet taken place.
- **Edge of Ashton Keynes:** Residents on the northern edge of the settlement may experience partial, filtered views of the temporary presence and movement of cranes associated with the construction of the digester tanks especially in winter months. Intervening vegetation namely the high hedgerows along Ashton Road and a linear belt of woodland in the foreground would screen low level activities. Residents of properties would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.
- **Remaining residents between 1- 2 km:** Due to the relatively low level of surrounding settlements and properties and nature of intervening vegetation there would be no or limited views of the Proposed Development. Views from slightly elevated ground would be partial and of higher construction activities associated with the presence and movement of cranes; worse during winter months. Where the presence of the cranes is more apparent or encroaches slightly above the skyline the magnitude of change and consequential nature of effect is slightly higher and would range from Negligible, Negligible to Slight, Slight and Slight to Medium depending on their location, orientation, proximity and presence of intervening vegetation. Residents of such properties would be of Medium to High sensitivity, resulting in a Negligible, Negligible to Minor or Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

Recreational and Visitor Receptors

Users of PROW:

- 7.212 Recreational users and visitors are considered to have a Medium to High sensitivity with a Medium or Medium to High Value depending on whether the route/ facilities lie within the Cotswolds Water Park which is covered by a local planning designation or forms part of a national route promoted on maps and literature. Receptors have been grouped under the headings below based on the effect they are likely to experience from a specific route .
- 7.213 Working in a clockwise direction and focusing on routes within 1 km of the Site users of PROW may experience the following effects:
- **Users of PROW Footpaths (South Cerney Footpaths (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 53 (Viewpoint 1):** These routes run between Ashton Road and the north-west fringes of South Cerney. Users would experience at worst partial views of taller (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) from higher ground, with a barely discernible effect on the views of users of this routes overall. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.
 - **Users of PROW Footpath (AKEY4) (Viewpoint 2, 8 and 9):** This route runs to the north, alongside the Site's western boundary and to the south-west: Users would experience sequential views of construction activities ranging from open, direct to partial filtered through intervening vegetation, with more immediate views adjacent to the Site between gaps in existing hedgerow. Depending on the direction of travel most construction activities would be visible (including the construction of the digester tanks, chicken shed / straw building, gas flue, separator building, arc clamps, covered lagoons and associated reprofiling of the landform). The cranes, (which would break the skyline) would be discernible in the view. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Medium to Substantial magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse significant effect.
 - **Users of PROW Bridleway (AKEY33 and South Cerney 48):** This route runs from Ashton Road to the south-east of the Site and connects with Bridleway AKEY40 and AKEY 32 as well as footpath AKEY24. It runs along the north-western edge of Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park. Users would experience at worst partial views of taller structures (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) through existing vegetation bounding the route. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.
 - **Users of PROW Bridleway (AKEY40)(Viewpoint 3):** This route runs along the north-eastern and southern edge of Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park and connects with Bridleway AKEY33 and AKEY 32 as well as footpath AKEY24. Users would experience at worst partial views of taller structures (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) through existing vegetation bounding the route. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight or Negligible magnitude of

change along the route resulting in a Minor to Minor or Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

- Users of PRoW Bridleway (AKEY 32):** This route runs along the southern edge of Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park and connects with Bridleway AKEY40 and AKEY 33 as well as footpath AKEY24. Users would experience at worst partial views of taller structures (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) through existing vegetation bounding the route. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight or Negligible magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Minor to Moderate or Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.
- Users of PRoW Footpath (AKEY24)(Viewpoint 24):** This route cuts across the Spine Road East and connects with PRoW Bridleway (AKEY 32) and a wider set of Bridleways which run around the Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park. Due to the extent of intervening vegetation users would experience at worst partial views of the upper elevations of taller structures (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks). Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Negligible to Minor not significant effect.
- Users of PRoW Footpath (AKEY 1 and 1A):** This route (AKEY1) cuts across a corner of two roads and connects North End to the south with the Spine Road East (B4696). It then crosses and runs along the northern boundary of the Spine Road and the south-western edge of Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park. Users would experience at worst partial views of taller structures (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) through existing vegetation bounding the route. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.
- Users of PRoW Footpath (AKEY 6)(Viewpoint 4 and PRoW Footpath (AKEY 2):** These routes run to the south of the Spine Road (West) wrapping round Furze Brake. Due to the extent of existing intervening vegetation at worst only partial oblique views may be experienced of the upper elevations of cranes associated with construction works. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.
- Users of PRoW Bridleway (AKEY3) runs north of Spine Road (west) and links to PRoW Footpath (AKEY 5):** This route runs to the north of Spine Road (West) and connects with footpath AKEY4 running to the north-east and AKEY5 to the north. Due to the nature of the topography on Ashton Down and intervening vegetation low level activities would be screened. Users who are of Medium to High sensitivity may experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.
- Users of PRoW Footpath (AKEY5) lies to west and runs from Cotswolds Community Centre to Shorncote Lake:** Only the upper elevations of taller construction activities may be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) due to the position of the digester tankers on the lower slopes of the landform. Users who are of Medium to High

sensitivity may experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

- **Users of PROW Footpath (Somerford Keynes Footpath 9, 11 and 12):** This route (9 and 11) runs around Shorncote Lake Local Wildlife Site with Siddington Footpath 9 connecting to it further north and running from Ashton Road. Only the upper elevations of taller construction activities may be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) due to the position of the digester tanks on the lower slopes of the landform. Users would be of medium to high sensitivity, experience as a worst case a Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.
- **Remaining Users of PROW within the study area:** Throughout the remaining study area there may be partial filtered views of the upper elevations of construction works with views more likely to be apparent to the north-east, east and south-east due to the nature of the topography and intervening vegetation. Based on a worst case scenario users who would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

Receptors of National Trails and Regional Routes:

- 7.214 Recreational receptors using national trails and regional routes are of Medium to High sensitivity with a High susceptibility to change and a Medium to High value. The routes are promoted nationally and regionally and run through the Cotswolds Water Park which is covered by a local planning designation which seeks to strengthen and engender a sense of place.
- 7.215 The nature of effects experienced by users is as follows:
- **The Thames Path / Thames and Severn Way and Sustrans Route 45 (Viewpoint 4, 5 and 6):** Users of the national routes may experience partial, filtered views of the temporary presence and movement of cranes associated with the construction of the digester tanks especially in winter months. Intervening vegetation in the foreground would screen low level activities. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight or Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Minor or Negligible adverse not significant effect. Views may be more discernible to the north-east and from slightly higher ground.

Visitors and users of the Cotswold Water Park:

- 7.216 Visitors and users to the Cotswolds Water Park including users to recreational facilities and various caravan, holiday or country parks (which appear to be for private use) are of Medium to High sensitivity with a Medium to High susceptibility to change and a Medium to High value. Facilities and sites sit within the Cotswolds Water Park which is covered by a local planning designation which seeks to strengthen and engender a sense of place. The nature of effects experienced by users is as follows:
- **South Cerney Golf Club to the east and visitors to Hoburne Cotswold Holiday Park (close to Viewpoint 3):** Due to the intervening vegetation only the taller construction activities may be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks), with a barely

discernible effect on the views of recreational users and visitors overall. Visitors and users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible adverse not significant effect. Views may be more discernible to the east and south-east of the Site.

- Keynes Country Park (also referred to as Cotswold Country Park & Beach), Cotswolds Park SSSI and Shorncliffe Lake Local Wildlife Site and Four acre caravan site (Viewpoint 7): Receptors would experience either a direct or partial view across to the western slopes of Ashton Down though the Site, itself would not be visible. Only the upper elevations of taller construction activities may be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) due to the position of the digester tanks on the lower slopes of the landform. This would generate a barely discernible change on the view overall. Visitors would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience as a worst case a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

Transport Receptors

- 7.217 Views of construction activities from the local road network/ road junctions would be variable, largely dependent upon the level of intervening vegetation between the highway and the Site. Visibility of construction activities would be greatest from a localised area immediately around the Site entranceway and to the north and south, partially resulting from the loss of vegetation to accommodate visibility splays. There are also potential views to the north / north-west between Ewen and Upper Siddington / Siddington and Ewen and South Cerney.
- 7.218 Elsewhere road and rail users (including those using the B4696 to the south, B4040 south/ south-east and the A419 to the east as well as the rail line to the west) would have very limited or no visibility in sequential views of construction works associated with the development due to extent of intervening vegetation and built form.
- 7.219 Road users would be either of Low or Low to Medium sensitivity depending on the nature of the road they are travelling and the speed of traffic. For local roads including Ashton Road, minor roads between Ewen and Upper Siddington / Siddington and Ewen and South Cerney the sensitivity of receptors would be Low to Medium; with a Low to Medium susceptibility to change and a Medium to High value. The roads being situated within the Cotswolds Water Park which is covered by a local planning designation which seeks to strengthen and engender a sense of place. For users of the B4696, B4040 and the A419 to the east plus the users of the rail line, the sensitivity of receptors would be Low; the susceptibility to change being Low and the value being Medium to High for the reasons outlined above:
- 7.220 The nature of effects experienced by transport users is as follows:
- **Ashton Road:** Road users would experience sequential open and partial, filtered, glimpsed views of construction activities from very localised sections of this road. Whilst intervening vegetation would partially screen works taking place, the widening of the Site entranceway and consequential loss of trees and hedgerows to accommodate the visibility splays would be apparent as well as the presence of some low and high-level activities including cranes associated with the construction of the digester tanks. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours to avoid night glow from construction vehicles and temporary

structures on site. Residents would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, experience a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse significant effect.

- **Ewen to South Cerney / Ewen to Upper Siddington/ Siddington and South Cerney:** Users of these minor roads would have potential to gain fleeting, partial and glimpsed views of the upper elevations of cranes during construction through gaps in the roadside vegetation especially in winter, although from most locations this is likely to be screened by intervening vegetation in the foreground. Users would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, experience a Slight magnitude of change generating (based on a worst case) a Minor adverse not significant effect.
- **Remaining study area:** Views of construction activities from remaining roads and rail line would be at worst sequential, partial and heavily filtered by intervening vegetation in the foreground. Views would be very limited with glimpsed views of the temporary presence and movement of cranes associated with the construction of the digester tanks although these would be temporary during construction. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours to avoid night glow from construction vehicles and temporary structures on site. Users would be of Low sensitivity, experience a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change generating (based on a worst case) a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

Industrial Workers:

- 7.221 Workers and visitors to Aggregate Industries North End Works and Shorncote Quarry would be of Low sensitivity due to the nature of the activities taking place on Site and their surrounding environment resulting from a low susceptibility to change and a medium to high value. The works being situated within the Cotswolds Water Park which is covered by a local planning designation which seeks to strengthen and engender a sense of place.
- 7.222 The nature of effects experienced by industrial works are as follows:
- **Aggregate Industries North End Works:** Workers and visitors to Aggregate Industries north End Works would experience views of construction activities. Whilst intervening vegetation along Ashton Road and bounding the norther edge of the Works would partially screen activities taking place, high-level activities including cranes associated with the construction of the digester tankers may be discernible from various locations within the Works. Views would be partial, filtered and more apparent during winter months. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours to avoid night glow from construction vehicles and temporary structures on site. Workers would be of Low sensitivity, experience a Slight to Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.
 - **Shorncote Quarry and Sewage Treatment Works:** Workers and visitors to the Quarry and Treatment Works which is located to the north-west of the Site may experience filtered and partial views of high-level activities including cranes associated with the construction of the digester tankers. Views would be more apparent during winter months. Construction activities would be restricted to daytime hours to avoid night glow from construction vehicles and temporary structures on site. Workers would be of Low

sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight or Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Minor or Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect.

Potential Operational Phase Effects (Year 0 and Year 15)

7.223 On Operation (Year 0) of the Proposed Development, all temporary construction related infrastructure would have been removed and the landscaping scheme associated with the Site implemented, however, the landscaping would be immature and thus not of a size to substantially mitigate any visual effects. By Year 15 planting should be reaching maturity providing screening for some outward views.

Residential receptors:

7.224 The nature of effects experienced by residential users is as follows:

- **Property to the southeast of the Site off Ashton Road:** By Year 0 the entranceway into the Site would have been completed and it is assumed that a new hedgerow would have been planted to the rear of the visibility splays in the field to the south of the Site. Views may be apparent of the upper elevations of low-level structures, the southernmost digester tanker and the front elevations of the remaining tankers behind. New offsite hedgerow planting to the south of the Site would not have reached maturity and the adjacent offsite hedgerow bounding the Site would not have reached a height of 2.5m. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky. Views would be partial, filtered and more apparent during winter months and from upper storey windows and the curtilage of the property. Residents would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate adverse significant effect.
- At Year 15 mitigation planting would be reaching maturity providing some screening to the entranceway and low-level structures within the Site. As views would still be apparent of the domed membranes the magnitude of change would remain unchanged at a Medium generating a Moderate significant adverse effect.
- **Properties to the north of the Site off Ashton Road:** Once construction works are complete the upper elevations of the Proposed Development (namely the domed membrane of the digester tankers) would be discernible in the view especially in winter months and likely to be more apparent from properties upper storeys. Mitigation vegetation would not provide screening from this angle and the proposals would be reliant on the retention of an offsite hedgerow and tree planting with hedgerows managed at 2.5 to 3m. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky. Residents of properties would therefore experience at worst a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Moderate adverse significant effect at Year 0 and at Year 15.
- **Edge of South Cerney (near viewpoint 1 and 2):** Once construction works are complete the upper elevations of the Proposed Development (namely the domed membrane of the digester tankers) would be discernible in the view especially in winter months and likely to be more apparent from properties upper storeys. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky.

Mitigation vegetation would not provide screening from these angles. Proposals would be reliant on existing vegetation in the foreground including hedgerows and hedgerow trees lining either side of Ashton Road. Give the layering effect of such vegetation and the distance of the settlement edge away from the Site residents to the north-west of South Cerney (excluding Saxon Meadows) would experience at worst a Slight to Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect at Year 0 and at Year 15.

- Residents of Saxon Meadows would have more direct and open views across the Site of the arc clamps and covered lagoons on higher slopes as well as the digester tankers and domed membranes at a lower level. This would be particularly discernible from properties on the western edge of Saxon Meadows resulting in a Moderate or Moderate to Major adverse significant effects at Year 0 and Year 15 depending on the orientation of the properties and intervening built form. New mitigation planting to the western edge of the properties has been introduced however it is likely this would only screen views at ground or first floor levels.
- **Residents former Cotswolds Community (Ashton Fields):** By Year 0 the upper elevations of the Proposed Development (namely the domed membrane of the digester tankers) might be discernible in the view especially in winter months and likely to be more apparent from properties upper storeys. Mitigation vegetation would not yet provide screening from this angle and proposals would be reliant on existing vegetation in the foreground. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky. Residents of properties would therefore experience at worst a Slight to Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect at Year 0.
- By Year 15 woodland planting a mix of trees and shrubs bounding the western and southern boundaries of the Site would be reaching maturity and provide further screening. As a result residents of properties would experience at worst a Negligible to Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect at Year 15.
- **Edge of Ashton Keynes:** On completion at Year 0 and given the low level of the digester tankers relative to the remainder of the Site, views would be obscured by intervening vegetation and the Proposed Development would not be discernible from the edge of the settlement or from isolated properties / farmsteads close by. Intervening vegetation would screen the Proposed Development resulting in a Negligible / No Change magnitude of change on Medium to High sensitivity receptors resulting in (based on a worst case) a Negligible adverse not significant effect at Year 0 and Year 15.
- **Remaining residents between 1- 2 km:** Remaining residents of properties within the Study Area would experience at worst partial views of the domed membranes and upper elevations of the digester tankers. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of vegetation. For such Medium to High sensitivity receptors who would experience a view, the magnitude of change would be at worst Slight to Medium resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

- At Year 15 and because of maturing mitigation and existing vegetation the magnitude of change as a worst case would either remain unchanged or alter to Slight to Slight to Negligible resulting in a Minor or Negligible adverse effect.

Recreational and visitor receptors:

Users of PRow:

7.225 The nature of effects experienced by users of PRow are as follows:

- **Users of PRow Footpaths (South Cerney Footpaths 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 53 (Viewpoint 1):** On completion and at Year 0, the upper elevations of the tankers (the domed membranes) may be visible and sit slightly above the skyline. Remaining structures would be screened by intervening vegetation. The depth of field would alter slightly however the presence of the domed membranes would only form a small part of the overall composition of the view. Recreational users would experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change and a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect at Year 0 and Year 15 as mitigation planting would not provide screening from this angle. The lighting of the Proposed Development would be seen in the wider context of the area and not anticipated to be a discernible change.
- **Users of PRow Footpath (AKEY4) (Viewpoint 2, 8 and 9):** Upon operation, there would be a noticeable change in the view, resulting from the addition of built elements. Views would be either open direct or partial and filtered by boundary vegetation. Open views would be over a short length of the route and between two hedgerows largely to the north-west and south-west of the Site. Depending on the direction of travel and location of the receptor relative to the Site, the chicken shed, straw building, separate building, gas flue and covered lagoons would be visible alongside the arc clamps. Whilst the taller digester tanks would be at a lower level than other smaller structures, the domed membranes of the tanks would break the skyline. The composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers would alter. Vehicle movements with associated lighting would be perceptible.
- A new native hedgerow with hedgerow tree planting would be introduced to define the northern boundary of the Site in conjunction with the proposed tree and shrub planting blocks to the rear and along the western boundary. Planting would be immature and at a lower level to receptors and therefore serve no screening function at Year 0. Equally an offsite native hedgerow introduced to the north-west and south-west of the Site to infill gaps would not be effective at Year 0. Recreational users would experience at worst a Medium to Substantial magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Moderate to Major adverse significant effect.
- By Year 15 the landscape scheme would have matured, with additional enclosure from the proposed hedgerow, offsite hedgerows, hedgerow trees, trees and shrub planting. This would result in a further reduction in the visibility of the built elements and assimilation of the Proposed Development into the wider landscape. Given the relative elevation of receptors to the Proposed Development, whilst lower structures would be largely screened, the upper elevations of the digester tankers, namely the domed membranes would remain apparent. The magnitude of change would reduce depending on the location

of the receptor to Medium or Slight to Medium resulting in a Moderate adverse significant to Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

- **Users of PRow Bridleway (AKEY33):** At Year 0 users would experience at worst partial views of middle and upper elevations of the digester tanks (the domed membrane) through existing vegetation bounding the route. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect. The nature of this effect would remain unchanged at Year 15 as mitigation planting would not provide sufficient screening from this angle of view.
- **Users of PRow Bridleway (AKEY40)(Viewpoint 3):** On completion and at Year 0 receptors may experience at worst partial filtered views of the upper elevations of the digester tankers (the domed membranes) particularly from the north-eastern edge of Ashton Keynes section of the Cotswolds Water Park with views of the Proposed Development further west well screened by intervening vegetation. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight to Negligible or No Change magnitude of change along the route resulting in a Minor to Minor, Negligible to Minor adverse or No Change not significant effect. The nature of this effect would remain unchanged at Year 15 as mitigation planting would not provide sufficient screening from this angle of view.
- **Users of PRow Bridleway (AKEY 32):** At Year 0 and at Year 15 there would be no views of the Proposed Development due to screening of intervening vegetation and Aggregate Industries in the foreground. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at No Change magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in No Change neutral not significant effect.
- **Users of PRow Footpath (AKEY24)(Viewpoint 24):** At Year 0 and at Year 15 there would be no views of the Proposed Development due to screening of intervening vegetation and Aggregate Industries in the foreground. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at No Change magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in No Change neutral not significant effect.
- **Users of PRow Footpath (AKEY 1 and 1A):** At Year 0 and at Year 15 there would be no views of the Proposed Development due to screening of intervening vegetation and Aggregate Industries in the foreground. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at No Change magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in No Change neutral not significant effect.
- **Users of PRow Footpath (AKEY 6)(Viewpoint 4 and PRow Footpath (AKEY 2):** At Year 0 and at Year 15 there would be no views of the Proposed Development due to screening of intervening vegetation and Aggregate Industries in the foreground. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at No Change magnitude of change for part of the route resulting in No Change neutral not significant effect.
- **Users of PRow Bridleway (AKEY3) runs north of Spine Road (west) and links to PRow Footpath (AKEY 5):** At Year 0 the upper elevations of the digester tankers (the domed membranes) may be partially visible at an oblique angle and filtered through existing vegetation. Users who are of Medium to High sensitivity may experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change

resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect. By Year 15 and as mitigation planting forming the southern and western boundary of the Site matures there would be No change in magnitude of change and consequently a No Change neutral not significant effect.

- **Users of PRow Footpath (AKEY5) lies to west and runs from Cotswolds Community Centre to Shorncote Lake:** On completion and at Year 0 only the upper elevations of taller structures may be visible (e.g. the domed membranes of the digester tanks) due to the position of the digester tanks on the lower slopes of the landform. Users who are of Medium to High sensitivity may experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect. By Year 15 and as mitigation planting forming the western boundary of the Site matures there would be No change in magnitude of change and consequently a No Change neutral not significant effect.
- **Users of PRow Footpath (Somerford Keynes Footpath 9, 11 and 12):** At Year 0 only the upper elevations of taller structures may be visible (e.g. the domed membranes of the digester tanks) due to the position of the digester tanks on the lower slopes of the landform. Users who are of Medium to High sensitivity may experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect. By Year 15 and as mitigation planting forming the northern-western boundary of the Site matures there would be either a Negligible or No change in magnitude of change and consequently a Negligible to Minor or No Change neutral not significant effect.
- **Remaining Users of PRow within the study area:** Throughout the remaining study area there may be partial filtered views of the upper elevations of the digester tanks and associated domed membranes with views more likely to be apparent to the north-east, east and south-east due to the nature of the topography and intervening vegetation. Based on a worst case scenario users who would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.

Receptors of National Trails and Regional Routes:

7.226 The nature of effects experienced by users is as follows:

- **The Thames Path / Thames and Severn Way and Sustrans Route 45 (Viewpoint 4, 5 and 6):** On completion and at Year 0 users of the national routes at worst may experience partial, filtered views of upper elevations of the digester tanks and associated domed membranes through gaps in the roadside vegetation especially in winter, although from most locations this is likely to be screened by intervening vegetation in the foreground. Recreational users would be of Medium to High sensitivity, experience at worst a Negligible magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible adverse not significant effect. Views may be more discernible to the north-east and from slightly higher ground. From viewpoints 4, 5 and 6 there would be no change in effects.
- By Year 15 the magnitude of change would range from Negligible to No Change generating either a Negligible adverse to No Change not significant effect.

Visitors and users of the Cotswold Water Park:

7.227 The nature of effects experienced by users is as follows:

- **South Cerney Golf Club to the east and visitors to Hoburne Cotswold Holiday Park (close to Viewpoint 3):** By Year 0 only the upper elevations of the domed membrane associated with the digester tankers might be visible. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky. Mitigation vegetation would not provide screening from this angle however given the layering effect of such vegetation and distance away from the Site users who would be of Medium to High sensitivity, would experience at worst a Negligible to No change magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible adverse or No Change not significant effect at Year 0 and Year 15.
- **Keynes Country Park (also referred to as Cotswold Country Park & Beach), Cotswolds Park SSSI and Shorncote Lake Local Wildlife Site and Four acre caravan site (Viewpoint 7):** On completion and at Year 0 there may be partial views of the upper elevations of the domed membrane visible through intervening vegetation. Visitors would be of medium to high sensitivity, experience as a worst case a Negligible to No Change magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible adverse or No Change not significant effect at Year 0 and Year 15.

Transport receptors:

7.228 The nature of effects experienced by transport workers are as follows:

- **Ashton Road:** By Year 0 the entranceway into the Site would have been completed and it is assumed that a new hedgerow would have been planted to the rear of the visibility splays in the field to the south of the Site with hedgerow trees. Views may be apparent of the upper elevations of low-level structures, the southernmost digester tanker and the front elevations of the remaining tankers behind. New offsite hedgerow planting to the south of the Site would not have reached maturity and the adjacent offsite hedgerow bounding the Site to the north of the entranceway would not have reached a height of 2.5m and there would remain a gap which would be fenced to accommodate the new visibility splay. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky. Views would be partial, filtered and more apparent during winter months. Road users would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, experience a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect.
- By Year 15 offsite vegetation would have matured along with mitigation planting providing some visual screening. The magnitude of change would alter to Slight to Medium, resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect.
- **Ewen to South Cerney / Ewen to Upper Siddington/ Siddington and South Cerney:** On completion at Year 0 road users would have potential to gain fleeting, partial and glimpsed views of the upper elevations of the digester tanks and associated domed membranes through gaps in the roadside vegetation especially in winter, although from most locations this is likely to be screened by intervening vegetation in the foreground. Users would be of Low to Medium sensitivity, experience a Slight magnitude of change generating (based on a worst case) a Minor adverse effect.
- By Year 15 the magnitude of change would range from Slight or Slight to Negligible generating either a Minor or Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect. From certain angles particularly west of Ashton Road, mitigation planting would be reaching maturity, in the form of native trees and shrubs, individual trees and there would be an

increase in the height of the offsite hedgerow along the northern and western boundaries of the Site.

- **Road users throughout the remaining study area:** By Year 0 views of the Proposed Development would be at worst sequential, partial and heavily filtered by intervening vegetation in the foreground. At worst there would be partial views of the domed membranes and upper elevations of the digester tankers. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of vegetation. For such Low sensitivity receptors who would experience a view, the magnitude of change would be at worst Slight resulting in a Minor adverse not significant effect.
- At Year 15 and because of maturing mitigation and existing vegetation the magnitude of change as a worst case would either remain unchanged or alter from Slight to Slight to Negligible resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse effect.

Industrial Workers:

7.229 The nature of effects experienced by industrial workers are as follows:

- **Aggregate Industries North End Works:** On completion and at Year 0 views may be apparent of the upper elevations of the digester tankers and associated domed membranes from various locations across the Works. A sympathetic colour palette would be used to “blend” the structures into the surrounding backdrop of woodland and sky. Views would be partial, filtered and more apparent during winter months. Workers would be of Low sensitivity, experience a Medium magnitude of change resulting in a Minor to Moderate adverse not significant effect at Year 0 and Year 15. Effects would remain unchanged as existing and mitigation planting would not generate a change from this location.
- **Shorncote Quarry and Sewage Treatment Works:** From these locations there may be partial or oblique middle distance views of the Proposed Development and namely the upper elevations of the digester tankers and domed membranes (particularly the north and north-western elevations). Views would be more apparent during winter months but filtered through intervening vegetation in the foreground and surrounding Shorncote Local Wildlife Site. Workers would be of Low sensitivity, experience a Slight magnitude of change resulting in a Negligible to Minor adverse not significant effect at Year 0.
- By Year 15 the magnitude of change would reduce to Negligible generating a to Negligible adverse not significant effect. Mitigation planting would be reaching maturity, in the form of native trees and shrubs, individual trees and there would be an increase in the height of the offsite hedgerow along the northern and western boundaries of the Site.

Residual Effects

7.230 There are no feasible additional landscape mitigation measures within the Application Site which could further reduce the landscape and visual effects described above, as such the residual effect will be as those reported within the assessment section.

Table 7-2
Summary of Potential Effects

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level and nature of Effect
Landscape Character			
Cotswolds Water Park			
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland)	Medium	Construction: Slight to Medium Operation Year 0: Medium Operation Year 15: Slight to Medium	Construction: Minor to Moderate adverse Operation Year 0: Moderate adverse significant Operation Year 15: Minor to Moderate adverse
LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands)	Low to Medium	Construction: Negligible to Slight Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Negligible to Slight	Construction: Negligible to Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor adverse Operation Year 15: Negligible to Minor adverse
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)	Medium	Construction: Slight Operation Year 0: Slight to Medium Operation Year 15: Slight	Construction: Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor to Moderate adverse Operation Year 15: Minor adverse
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands)	Medium	Construction: Slight Operation Year 0: Slight to Medium Operation Year 15: Slight	Construction: Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor to Moderate adverse Operation Year 15: Minor adverse
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland)	Low to Medium	Construction: Negligible to Slight Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Slight	Construction: Negligible to Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor adverse Operation Year 15: Minor adverse
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland)	Low to Medium	Construction: Slight Operation Year 0: Slight to Medium Operation Year 15: Slight	Construction: Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor to Moderate adverse Operation Year 15: Minor adverse
LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland)	Medium	Construction: Negligible to Slight Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Negligible to Slight	Construction: Negligible to Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor adverse Operation Year 15: Negligible to Minor adverse
Gloucestershire LCA			

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level and nature of Effect
LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands	Medium to High	Construction: Negligible to Slight Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Negligible to Slight	Construction: Negligible to Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor adverse Operation Year 15: Negligible to Minor adverse
Wiltshire LCA			
LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)	Low	Construction: Negligible to Slight Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Negligible to Slight	Construction: Negligible to Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor adverse Operation Year 15: Negligible to Minor adverse
Landscape Designations			
Kemble and Ewen SLA	Medium to High	Construction: Negligible to Slight Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Negligible to Slight	Construction: Negligible to Minor adverse Operation Year 0: Minor adverse Operation Year 15: Negligible to Minor adverse
Site Elements / Aesthetic and Perceptual Elements			
Sloping landform	Medium	Construction, Operation and Operation Year 15: Medium	Construction, Operation and Operation Year 15: Moderate remaining unchanged – significant
Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries	Medium	Construction: Medium Operation Year 0: Slight Operation Year 15: Slight to Medium	Construction: Moderate adverse – significant Operation Year 0: Moderate adverse – significant Operation Year 15: Minor to Moderate positive
Change in land use and rural character	Medium	Construction, Operation and Operation Year 15: Medium to Substantial	Construction, Operation and Operation Year 15: Moderate to Major remaining unchanged
Openness / Enclosure	Medium	Construction: Slight to Medium Operation Year 0: Medium Operation Year 15: Medium	Construction: Minor to Moderate adverse Operation Year 0: Moderate adverse – significant Operation Year 15: Moderate neutral - significant
Tranquillity	Medium to Low	Construction: Slight to Medium Operation Year 0: Slight to Medium Operation Year 15: Medium	Construction: Minor adverse Operation Year 0 and Year 15: Moderate adverse significant to Minor adverse (across the site)
Visual receptors			

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level and nature of Effect
1 View from PRoW BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) off School Lane on the western edge of South Cerney	Medium to High	Construction, Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: Slight	Construction, Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: Minor adverse
2 View from PRoW AKEY4 on the edge of South Cerney	Medium to High	Construction: Slight to Medium Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: Medium	Construction: Minor to Moderate adverse Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: Moderate adverse significant
3 View from PRoW AKEY24 / (footpath) / AKEY40 (Bridleway) on the edge of Cotswolds Water Park	Medium to High	Construction: Negligible Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change	Construction: Negligible adverse Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change neutral
4 View from PRoW AKEY6 (footpath) on the edge of a waterbody just north of the Thames Path and west of Manor House	Medium to High	Construction: Negligible Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change	Construction: Negligible adverse Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change neutral
5 View from PRoW BPK10 (Poole Keynes Footpath 10) and the River Thames or Isis Trail	Medium to High	Construction: Negligible Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change	Construction: Negligible adverse Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change neutral
6 View from a minor road (also Sustrans National Cycle Route 48 and the Thames & Severn Way) linking Ewen and Chesterton edging Cirencester	Medium to High Low to Medium	Construction, Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change	Construction, Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change neutral
7 View from a track around the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI, north-west of Ashton Down -	Medium to High	Construction: Negligible Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change	Construction: Negligible adverse Operation Year 0 and Operation Year 15: No Change neutral

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Level and nature of Effect
8 View from PRoW AKEY4 on the north-western edge of the Site	Medium to High	Construction and Operation Year 0: Medium to Substantial Operation Year 15: Medium or Slight to Medium	Construction and Operation Year 0: Moderate to Major significant Operation Year 15: Moderate adverse significant or Minor to Moderate adverse not significant
9 View from PRoW AKEY4 on the south-western edge of the Site	Medium to High	Construction and Operation Year 0: Medium to Substantial Operation Year 15: Medium or Slight to Medium	Construction and Operation Year 0: Moderate to Major adverse significant Operation Year 15: Moderate adverse significant or Minor to Moderate adverse not significant

- 7.231 The Site sits on the eastern slopes of Ashton Downs, one of the “occasional hillocks” in Landscape Character Area (LCA) 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland; prominent, though “well wooded”. The assessment found that the effect of the Proposed Development on the surrounding landscape and visual receptors would extend across a 5 km Study Area, the level of effect altering depending on proximity, the relative position of the receptor to the Site and intervening vegetation or built form. Intervisibility would be higher to the north, north-west and north-east and at a higher elevation.

Landscape Effects

- 7.232 In terms of effects on Landscape Character Areas (LCA) or Landscape Character Types (LCT), the Proposed Development would introduce some new elements into the local landscape. There would be a low to high level of intervisibility depending on the proximity, extent and elevation of the LCA or LCT under consideration relative to the Site alongside the presence of intervening vegetation / built form. In outward views high-level structures (associated with the temporary movement and presence of cranes or the permanent presence of the digester tankers and associated mounds) would be discernible impacting on the LCAs or LCTs both physical and / or aesthetically and perceptually.
- 7.233 On operation (Year 0) there would be moderate adverse significant effects on LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland) within which the Site lies. This effect would diminish to not significant by Year 15. Effects on remaining LCTs and LCAs would be insignificant ranging from Negligible to Minor, Minor to Minor to Moderate adverse during construction, operation Year 0 and Year 15. Such effects would reduce over time where appropriate as existing and mitigation planting matures screening lower elevations of the development.
- 7.234 From the Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area (SLA) impacts on the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the designation including views and tranquillity would be limited. Intervisibility between the SLA and the Proposed Development would be low with only the upper elevations of the Proposed Development potentially visible (particularly the digester tankers and their domed

membrane). Effects would range on operation (Year 0) from Minor adverse to Negligible to Minor adverse (Year 15); effects reducing over time and as both mitigation and existing planting matures.

- 7.235 Localised effects on landscape elements specific to the Site would range from Minor adverse insignificant, Moderate adverse significant to, Moderate to Major adverse significant and vary during construction and operation. Key effects relate to a change to landform, land use / rural character, tranquillity and vegetation generating Moderate or Moderate to Major adverse effects on operation (Year 0). Mitigation planting over time would result in a Minor to Moderate positive effect by Year 15 altering from Moderate adverse during construction and Year 0 operation.

Visual Effects

- 7.236 In terms of visual effects recreational receptors utilising footpath AKEY4 to the west of the Site and residents off Ashton Road to the south-east and north of the Site would experience significant effects; Moderate to Major adverse for recreational users and Moderate adverse for local residents respectively.
- 7.237 Effects on recreational users of this adjacent footpath would remain significant but reduce from Moderate to Major to Moderate adverse significant as mitigation planting matures screening the lower elevations of the Proposed Development. Effects for local residents would remain unchanged by Year 15 (moderate adverse) since mitigation planting would not screen the upper elevations of the digester tanks which would be in close proximity to the view.
- 7.238 Remaining visual receptors would experience an Unchanged, Negligible, Negligible to Minor, Minor or Minor to Moderate adverse insignificant effect. Where views are available of the Proposed Development these would be partial and filtered through intervening vegetation and of cranes during construction or the upper elevations of the digester tanks on Operation (Year 0 and Year 15). Over time and as mitigation and existing planting matures some of these effects would diminish.

Conclusion

- 7.239 This LVIA concludes that although the Proposed Development would generate significant visual effects these would be localised to a 1 km radius of the Site and within the Site itself. The Proposed Development would be visible to an extent, through the appropriate use of colour and materials and the introduction of new soft landscape elements within the scheme would reduce effects on the landscape character and visual amenity within the surrounding area.

Introduction

- 1.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify the effects of development on “landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity” (GLVIA3, paragraph 1.1). GLVIA31 (paragraph 2.22) states that these two elements, although inter-related, should be assessed separately. GLVIA3 is the main source of guidance on LVIA.
- 1.2 Landscape is a definable set of characteristics resulting from the interaction of natural, physical and human factors: it is a resource in its own right. Its assessment is distinct from visual assessment, which considers effects on the views and visual amenity of different groups of people at particular locations. Clear separation of these two topics is recommended in GLVIA3.
- 1.3 As GLVIA3 (paragraph 2.23) states, professional judgement is an important part of the LVIA process: whilst there is scope for objective measurement of landscape and visual changes, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements. It is critical that these judgements are based upon a clear and transparent method so that the reasoning can be followed and examined by others.
- 1.4 Impacts can be defined as the action being taken, whereas effects are the changes result from that action. This method of assessment assesses landscape and visual effects.
- 1.5 Landscape and visual effects can be positive, negative or neutral in nature. Positive effects are those which enhance and/or reinforce the characteristics which are valued. Negative effects are those which remove and/or undermine the characteristics which are valued. Neutral effects are changes which are consistent with the characteristics of the landscape or view.

Landscape Effects

- 1.6 Landscape, as defined in the European Landscape Convention, is “an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”, (Council of Europe, 2000). Landscape does not apply only to special or designated places, nor is it limited to countryside.
- 1.7 GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.34) recommends that the effect of the development on landscape receptors is assessed. Landscape receptors are the components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development, and can include individual elements (such as hedges or buildings), aesthetic and perceptual aspects (for example sense of naturalness, tranquillity or openness), or, at a larger scale, the character of a defined character area or landscape type. Designated landscapes, such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), may also be treated as landscape receptors, in which case attention is also given to effects on their special qualities.

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment ‘Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (Third Edition, April 2013)

- 1.8 This assessment is being undertaken because the proposed development has the potential to remove or add elements to the landscape, to alter aesthetic or perceptual aspects, and to add, remove or alter characteristics and thus potentially change overall character.
- 1.9 Judging landscape effects requires a methodical assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of effect which would be experienced by each receptor. The criteria and definitions used in making these judgements are set out below.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 1.10 The sensitivity of landscape receptors is assessed by combining assessments of the value attached to each receptor and the susceptibility of each receptor to the type of change which is proposed. (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.39).

Value Attached to Landscape Receptors

- 1.11 Landscape receptors may be valued at community, local, national or international level. Existing landscape designations provide the starting point for this assessment, as set out in Table A-1 below.
- 1.12 The table sets out the interpretation of landscape designations in terms of the value attached to different landscape receptors. As GLVIA3 (paragraph 5.24) notes, at the local scale of an LVIA study area it may be found that the landscape value of a specific area may be different to that suggested by the formal designation.

Table A-1
Interpretation of Landscape Designations

Designation	Description	Value
World Heritage Sites, candidate World Heritage Site	Unique sites, features or areas identified as being of international importance according to UNESCO criteria. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the attributes of outstanding universal value for which such an area of landscape is valued.	International
National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Scenic Areas (in Scotland)	Areas of landscape identified as being of national importance. Consideration should be given to their settings especially where these contribute to the special qualities for which the landscape is valued.	National
Parks, gardens and designed landscapes	Gardens and designed landscapes included on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest as Grade I, II* or II or included in Historic Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland	National

Designation	Description	Value
Local Landscape Designations (such as Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value and similar) included in local planning documents; or other landscapes of identified value	Areas of landscape identified as having value, which are either recognised at the local authority level by a local designation or other equivalent recognition of value OR are landscapes considered to have elevated value, having regard to the criteria in Table 2 below and/or by virtue of demonstrable physical attributes.	Local Authority
Undesignated landscapes	Landscapes which do not have any formal designation and which are not considered to have demonstrable physical attributes that elevate their value but which may be valued by local communities.	Community
Undesignated landscapes with negative attributes	Landscapes with no designations or demonstrable physical attributes that elevate their value, which are in poor condition or are degraded or fundamentally altered by presence of man-made structures judged to be intrusive.	Low

- 1.13 Where landscapes are not designated and where no other local authority guidance on value is available, an assessment is made by reference to criteria in the Table A-2 below. This is based on Table 1 of Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/21. These factors are not fixed, and should be reviewed on a case by case basis. When assessing landscape value of a site it is important to consider not only the site itself but also its context.
- 1.14 Landscapes may be judged to be of local authority or community value on the basis of one or more of these factors. There may also be occasional circumstances where an undesignated landscape may be judged to be of national value, for example where it has a clear connection with a nationally designated landscape, or is otherwise considered to be of equivalent value to a national designation. Similarly, on occasions there may be areas within designated landscapes that do not meet the designation criteria, or demonstrate the key characteristics/special qualities in a way that is consistent with the rest of the designated area.
- 1.15 An overall assessment is made for each landscape receptor, based on an overview of the above criteria, to determine its value - whether for example it is comparable to a local authority landscape designation or similar, or whether it is of value to local people and communities. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and/or conservation interests make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important cultural or historical associations, might be of equivalent value to a local landscape designation. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or natural or cultural heritage interest is likely to be considered of limited landscape value.

Table A-2
Factors Considered in Assessing the Value of Non-Designated Landscapes

Factor	Definition (with Examples for Clarification)
Natural Heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological or physiographic interest. Presence of wildlife and habitats that contribute to the sense of place. Landscape which contains valued natural capital assets that contribute to ecosystem services.
Cultural Heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical or cultural interest. Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets. Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth.
Landscape Condition	Landscape which is in a good physical state both with regard to individual elements and overall landscape structure. Absence of detracting/incongruous features.
Associations	Landscape which is connected with notable people, events and the arts.
Distinctiveness	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity or place. Presence of distinctive features that are characteristic of a place, or presence of rare/unusual features that confer a strong sense of place. Includes landscape that makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement.
Recreational	Landscape offering recreational opportunities where experience of landscape is important. Includes open access areas, common land and rights of way where appreciation of the landscape is an important element of the experience. Landscape that forms part of a view that that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity.
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense. Distinctive features, or distinctive combinations of features. Strong aesthetic qualities. Visual diversity or contrasts. Memorable/distinctive views or landmarks, or landscape that contributes to these.
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	Landscape with a strong perceptual value notably remoteness, wildness, tranquillity and/or dark skies.
Functional	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function, particularly in the healthy functioning of the landscape. Natural hydrological systems, important parts of the green infrastructure network, pollinator rich habitats. Landscapes that have strong physical or functional links with an adjacent national landscape designation, or are important to the appreciation of the designated landscape and its special qualities.

Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors to Change

- 1.16 As set out in GLVIA3, susceptibility refers to the ability of the landscape receptor to “*accommodate the proposed development without undue adverse consequences for the baseline situation and/or*

the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies". Judgement of susceptibility is particular to the specific characteristics of the proposed development and the ability of a particular landscape or feature to accommodate the type of change proposed, and makes reference to the criteria set out in Table A-3 below. Aspects of the character of the landscape that may be affected by a particular type of development include landform, skylines, land cover, enclosure, human influences including settlement pattern and aesthetic and perceptual aspects such as the scale of the landscape, its form, line, texture, pattern and grain, complexity, and its sense of movement, remoteness, wildness or tranquillity.

- 1.17 For example, an urban landscape which contains a number of industrial buildings may have a low susceptibility to buildings of a similar scale and character. Conversely a rural landscape containing only remote farmsteads is likely to have a high susceptibility to large scale-built development.

Table A-3
Landscape Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The landscape receptor is highly susceptible to the proposed development because the key characteristics of the landscape have no or very limited ability to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.
Medium	The landscape receptor is moderately susceptible to the proposed development because the relevant characteristics of the landscape have some ability to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.
Low	The landscape receptor has low susceptibility to the proposed development because the relevant characteristics of the landscape are generally able to accommodate it without transformational adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.

Defining Sensitivity

- 1.18 As has been noted above, the sensitivity of landscape receptors is defined in terms of the relationship between value and susceptibility to change as indicated in Figure A-1 below. This summarises the general nature of the relationship, but it is not formulaic and only indicates general categories of sensitivity. Professional judgement is applied on a case by case basis in determining sensitivity of individual receptors with the diagram only serving as a guide.
- 1.19 Table A-4 below summarises the nature of the relationship, but it is not formulaic and only indicates general categories of sensitivity. Judgements are made about each landscape receptor, with the table serving as a guide.
- 1.20 Where, taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the landscape receptor, sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment of high/medium or medium/low is adopted. In a few limited cases a category of less than low (very low) may be used where the landscape is of low value and susceptibility is particularly low.

Figure A-1
Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

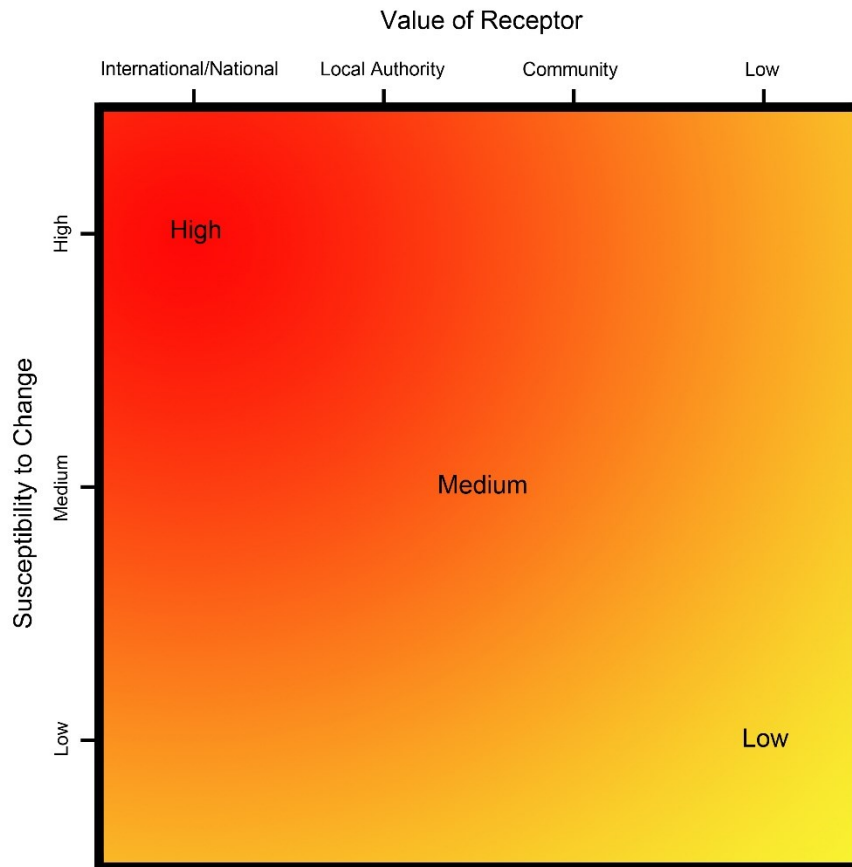


Table A-4
Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Landscape Receptors

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	The landscape receptor is of international or national value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of national value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development
Medium	The landscape receptor is of international or national value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have high susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development
Low	The landscape receptor is of local authority value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have medium susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development OR The landscape receptor is of community value and is considered to have low susceptibility to the effects of the proposed development

Magnitude of Landscape Change

- 1.21 The magnitude of landscape change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change.

Size and Scale of Change

- 1.22 The size and/or scale of change in the landscape takes into consideration the following factors:
- the extent/proportion of landscape elements lost or added; and/or
 - the degree to which aesthetic/perceptual aspects are altered; and
 - whether this is likely to change the key characteristics of the landscape.

- 1.23 The criteria used to assess the size and scale of landscape change are based upon the amount of change that will occur as a result of the proposed development, as described in Table A-5 below.

Table A-5
Magnitude of Landscape Change - Size/Scale of Change

Category	Description
Large level of landscape change	There would be a large level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example, the proposed development: • becomes a dominant feature in the landscape, changing the balance of landscape characteristics; and/or • would dominate important visual connections with other landscape types, where this is a key characteristic of the area.
Medium level of landscape change	There would be a medium level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example: • the proposed development would be more prominent but would not change the overall balance or composition of the landscape; and/or • key visual connections to other landscape types may be interrupted intermittently by the proposed development, but these connections would not be dominated by them.
Small level of landscape change	There would be a small level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example: • there would be no introduction of new elements into the landscape and the proposed development would not significantly change the composition/balance of the landscape.
Negligible level of landscape change/ No change	There would be a negligible level of change in landscape character, and especially to the key characteristics if, for example, the proposed development would be a small element and/or would be a considerable distance from the landscape receptor/ the proposed development will cause no change to the landscape.

Geographical Extent of Change

- 1.24 The geographical extent of landscape change is assessed by determining the area over which the changes will influence the landscape, as set out in Table A-6. For example, this could be at the site level, in the immediate setting of the site, or over some or all of the landscape character types or areas affected.

Table A-6
Magnitude of Landscape Change - Geographical Extent

Category	Description
Large extent of landscape change	The change will affect all or the majority of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Medium extent of landscape change	The change will affect approximately half of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Small extent of landscape change	The change will affect a small extent of the landscape receptor under consideration.
Negligible extent of landscape change	The change will affect only a limited or negligible extent of the landscape receptor under consideration.

Duration and Reversibility of Change

- 1.25 The duration of the landscape change is categorised in Table A-7 below, which considers whether the change will be permanent and irreversible or temporary and reversible.

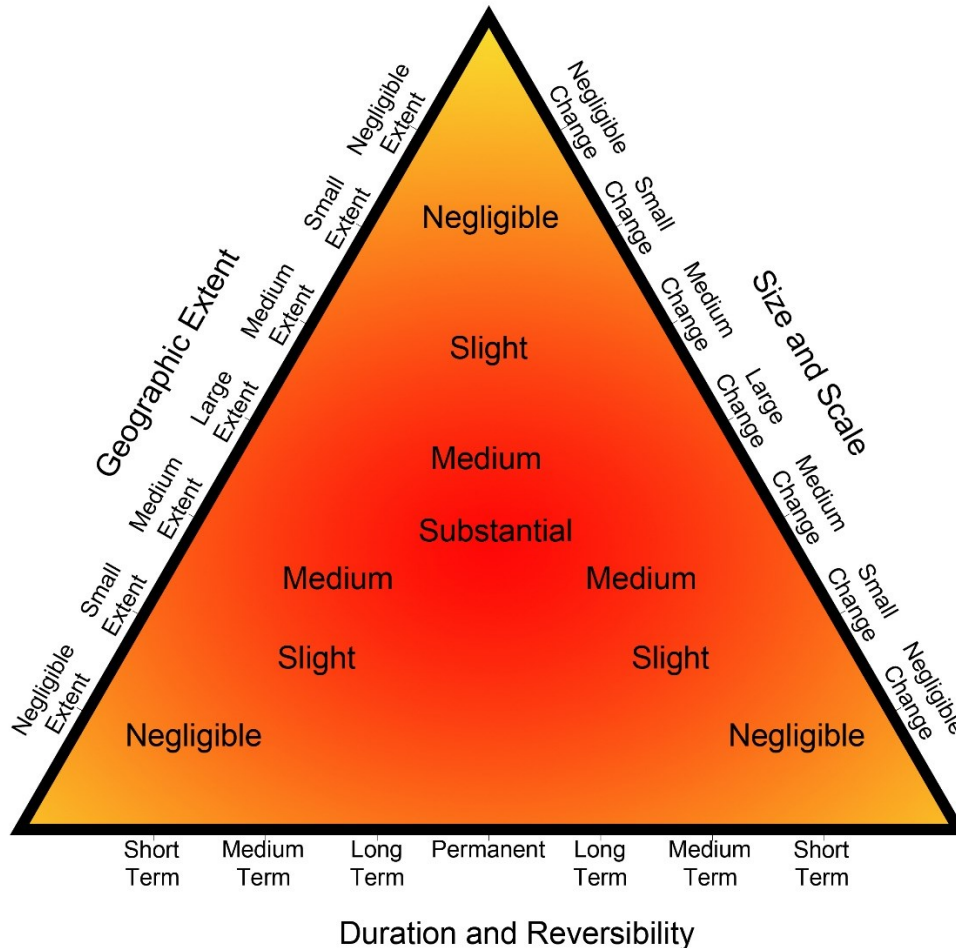
Table A-7
Magnitude of Landscape Change - Duration and Reversibility

Category	Description
Permanent/ Irreversible	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term reversible	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25 years and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.
Medium term reversible	Change that will last for up to 10 years and is wholly or partially reversible.
Temporary/ Short term reversible	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years and is reversible - includes construction effects.

Deciding on Overall Magnitude of Landscape Change

- 1.26 The relationships between the three factors that contribute to assessment of the magnitude of landscape effects are illustrated graphically, as a guide, in Figure A-2 below. Various combinations are possible and the overall magnitude of each effect is determined using professional judgement rather than by formulaic application of the relationships in the diagram.

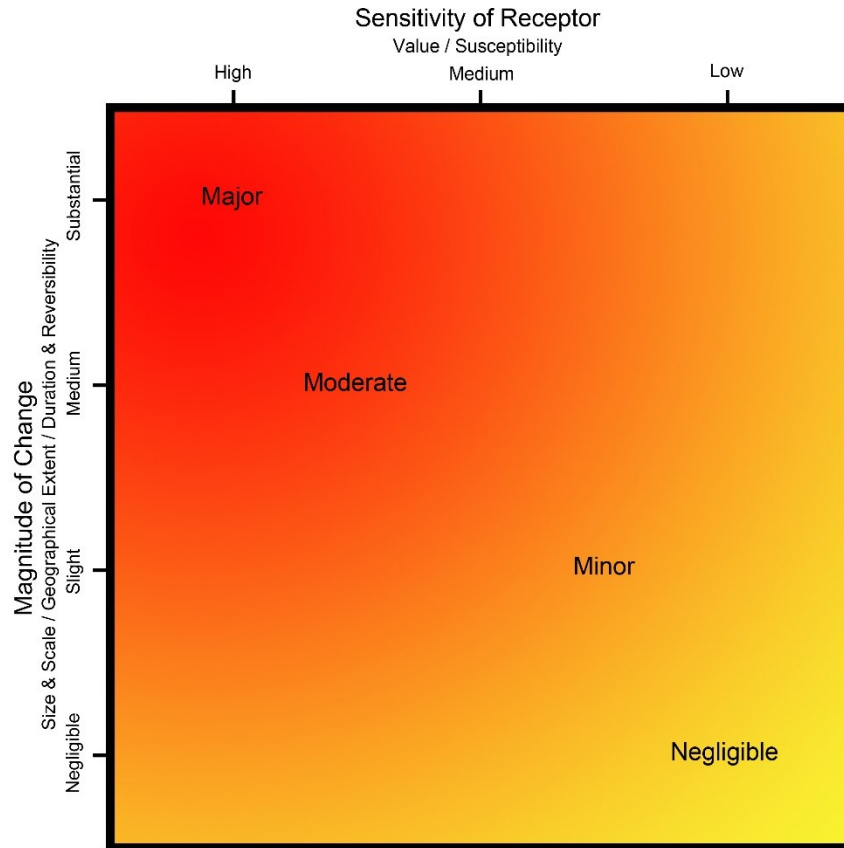
Figure A-2
Determining the Magnitude of Landscape Change



Assessment of Landscape Effects and Significance

- 1.27 The assessment of landscape effects, and whether these are significant or not significant, is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the change. The diagram below (Figure A-3) summarises the nature of the relationship but it is not formulaic. Judgements are made about each landscape effect using this diagram as a guide.

Figure A-3
Assessment of Landscape Effects and Overall Significance



Visual Effects

- 1.28 Visual effects are the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. Visual receptors are the people whose views may be affected by the proposed development. They may include:
- Communities within settlements (i.e. towns, villages and hamlets);
 - Residents of individual properties and clusters of properties outside settlements;
 - People using nationally designated or regionally promoted footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways and others using areas of Open Access Land agreed under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000;
 - Users of the local public rights of way (PRoW) network;
 - Visitors at publicly accessible sites including, for example, gardens and designed landscapes, historic sites, and other visitor attractions or outdoor recreational facilities where the landscape or seascape is an important part of the experience;
 - Users of outdoor sport and recreation facilities;
 - Visitors staying at caravan parks or camp sites;
 - Road users on recognised scenic or promoted tourist routes;
 - Travellers using other roads who may pass through the study area because they are visiting, living or working there;
 - Rail passengers;
 - People at their place of work.
- 1.29 Judging visual effects requires a methodical assessment of the sensitivity of the visual receptors to the proposed development and the magnitude of effect which would be experienced by each receptor.
- 1.30 Viewpoints are chosen, in discussion with the competent authority and other stakeholders and interested parties, for a variety of reasons but most commonly because they represent views experienced by relevant groups of people although they may also include specific promoted or otherwise important viewpoints.

Visual Sensitivity

- 1.31 Sensitivity of visual receptors is assessed by combining an assessment of the susceptibility of visual receptors to the type of change which is proposed with the value attached to the views. (GLVIA3, paragraph 6.30).

Value Attached to Views

- 1.32 Different levels of value are attached to the views experienced by particular groups of people at particular viewpoints. Assessment of value takes account of a number of factors, including:
- Recognition of the view through some form of planning designation or by its association with particular heritage assets; and
 - The popularity of the viewpoint, in part denoted by its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, or on tourist maps, by information from stakeholders and by the evidence of use including facilities provided for its enjoyment (seating, signage, parking places, etc.); and
 - Other evidence of the value attached to views by people including consultation with local planning authorities, some of whom have carried out assessments of valued views, and professional assessment of the quality of views.
- 1.33 The assessment of the value of views is summarised in Table A-8 below. These criteria are provided for guidance only.

Table A-8
Examples of Factors Considered in assessing the Value Attached to Views

Value	Criteria
High	Views from nationally (and in some cases internationally) known viewpoints, which: • have some form of planning designation; or • are associated with internationally or nationally designated landscapes or important heritage assets; or • are promoted in sources such as maps and tourist literature; or • are linked with important and popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience; or • have important cultural associations. Also, may include views judged by assessors to be of high value.
Medium	Views from viewpoints of some importance at regional or local levels, which: • have some form of local planning designation associated with locally designated landscapes or areas of equivalent landscape quality; or • are promoted in local sources; or • are linked with locally important and popular visitor attractions where the view forms a recognised part of the visitor experience; or • have important local cultural associations. Also, may include views judged by the assessors to be of medium value.
Low	Views from viewpoints which, although they may have value to local people: • have no formal planning status; or • are not associated with designated or otherwise high-quality landscapes; or

Value	Criteria
	- are not linked with popular visitor attractions; or - have no known cultural associations. Also, may include views judged by the assessors to be of low value.

1.34 Where judgements are made about the value attached to views experienced by residential receptors, the following considerations also apply:

- Views in a rural or designed context (e.g. an avenue of trees or designed view from a parkland), especially if associated with landscapes of national or local authority value, where residential receptors are positioned to take advantage of the views, will generally be considered to be of high value;
- Views in a semi-rural or general townscape context, and/or where locations of residential receptors are not positioned to take full advantage of views, will generally be considered of medium value; and
- Views in an urban/industrial context, and/or where locations of residential receptors are not positioned to take advantage of views, will generally be considered of low value.

Susceptibility of Visual Receptors to Change

1.35 The susceptibility of different types of people to changes in views is mainly a function of:

- The occupation or activity of the viewer at a given viewpoint; and
- The extent to which the viewer's attention or interest be focussed on a particular view and the visual amenity experienced at a given view.

Table A-9
Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Residents; People engaged in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views; Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by the residents.
Medium	Travellers on scenic routes where the attention of drivers and passengers is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views. People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which may involve appreciation of views e.g. users of golf courses.
Low	People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve appreciation of views;

Susceptibility	Criteria
	People at their place of work whose attention is focused on their work; where the setting is not important to quality of working life; Travellers, where the view is incidental to the journey.

- 1.36 The susceptibility of different groups of viewers is assessed with reference to the guidance in Table A-9 below. However, as noted in GLVIA3 *“this division is not black and white and, in reality, there will be a gradation in susceptibility to change”*. Therefore, the susceptibility of each group of people affected is considered for each project and assessments are included in the relevant text in the report.

Defining Sensitivity

- 1.37 As noted above, the sensitivity of visual receptors is defined in terms of the relationship between the value of views and the susceptibility of the different receptors to the proposed change, as indicated in Figure A-4 and Table A-10. These summarise the general nature of the relationship but the combination of the two factors is not formulaic. Table A-10 provides examples of common combinations but is not comprehensive and other combinations may be judged appropriate. Professional judgement is applied on a case by case basis in determining the sensitivity of individual receptors with the diagram and table only serving as a guide.
- 1.38 Where, taking into account the component judgements about the value and susceptibility of the visual receptor, sensitivity is judged to lie between levels, an intermediate assessment of high/medium or medium/low may be adopted. In a few limited cases a category of less than low (very low) may be used where the visual receptor is of low value and susceptibility is particularly low.

Figure A-4
Levels of Sensitivity Defined by Value and Susceptibility of Visual Receptor Groups

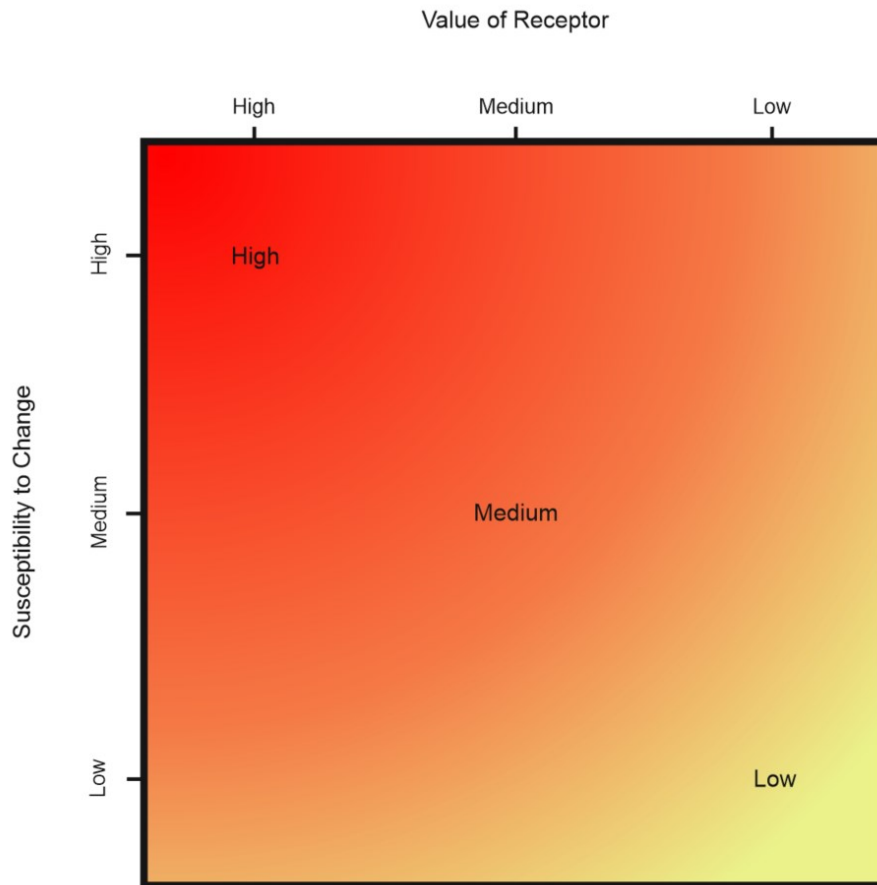


Table A-10
Example Levels of Sensitivity defined by Value and Susceptibility of Visual Receptors

Sensitivity	Criteria
High	The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of high value OR The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of high value OR The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level.

Sensitivity	Criteria
Medium	The visual receptor group is highly susceptible to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level OR The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level OR The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the high level.
Low	The visual receptor group has a medium level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level OR The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the medium level OR The visual receptor group has a low level of susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity and relevant views are of value at the low level.

Magnitude of Visual Change

- 1.39 The magnitude of visual change is established by assessing the size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and the duration and potential reversibility of the change. Representative viewpoints are used as “sample” points to assess the typical change experienced by different groups of visual receptors at different distances and directions from the proposed development.

Size and Scale of Change

- 1.40 The criteria used to assess the size/scale of visual change are as follows:
- the scale of the change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view, changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development and distance of view;
 - the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of factors such as form, scale and mass, line, height, colour and texture; and
 - the nature of the view of the proposed development, for example whether views will be full, partial or glimpses or sequential views while passing through the landscape.
- 1.41 The above criteria are summarised in the Table A-11 below.

Table A-1
Size/Scale of Change

Category	Criteria
Large visual change	The proposed development will cause a complete or large change in the view, resulting from the loss of important features in or the addition of important new ones, to the extent that this will substantially alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers.
Medium visual change	The proposed development will cause a clearly noticeable change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will alter to a moderate degree the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be partial/intermittent.
Small visual change	The proposed development will cause a perceptible change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will partially alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be partial only.
Negligible visual change	The proposed development will cause a barely perceptible change in the view, resulting from the loss of features or the addition of new ones, to the extent that this will barely alter the composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers. Views may be glimpsed only.
No change	The proposed development will cause no change to the view.

Geographical Extent of Change

- 1.42 The geographical extent of the visual change identified at representative viewpoints is assessed by reference to a combination of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), where this has been prepared, and field work. The way that geographical extent is assessed varies with circumstances.
- 1.43 Most commonly a number of representative viewpoints are used as “*sample*” points to assess the typical change experienced by a particular group of visual receptors in locations at different distances and directions from the proposed development. In such cases the geographical extent of the visual change is judged for each group of receptors (for example, people using a particular route or public amenity) drawing on the relevant viewpoint assessments, plus information about the approximate number and distribution of that particular group of people in the Study Area. For example, the geographical extent would be small if the change is experienced at only one or two locations and/or by a smaller number of viewers. Community views may, for example, be experienced from a small number of dwellings, or affect numerous properties in the community, or several different communities. Similarly, changes to a view from a public footpath may be visible from a single isolated viewpoint (small geographical extent), or over a prolonged stretch of the route (large geographical extent).
- 1.44 In the case of individual (rather than representative) viewpoints in a specific location, the following factors (as noted in GLVIA), are considered in judging geographical extent:
- the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;

- the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development; and
- the extent of the area over which changes would be visible.

1.45 For example, from an elevated area of Open Access Land the proposed development may be widely visible from much or all of the accessible area, be close to it and so occupy a wide angle of the view, suggesting large geographical extent. Alternatively, the proposed development may be visible from only a small proportion of the area, be quite distant from it and so occupy a small proportion of the view, suggesting small geographical extent.

1.46 Table A-12 describes the most common categories of geographical extent based on these two approaches.

Table A-12
Geographical Extent of Change

Category	Description
Large extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors in many locations across the Study Area or from the majority, or a large proportion, of a linear route and/or by large numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from much or all of a specific site is close to it and so occupies a wide angle of the view. .
Medium extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors in several locations across the Study Area or from a moderate proportion of a linear route and/or by moderate numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from a moderate part of a specific site, is at a moderate distance from it and so occupies a moderate angle of the view.
Small extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is seen by the group of receptors at a small number of locations across the Study Area or from limited sections of a linear route and/or by a small numbers of viewers; Or: The proposed development is visible from a small part of a specific site, is at some distance from it and so occupies a small angle of the view.
Negligible extent of visual change	Either: The proposed development is not visible in the Study Area or is seen by the group of receptors at only one or two locations or from a very short length of a linear route and/or by a very small number of viewers; OR: The proposed development is visible from only a very small part of a site, is at a considerable distance from it and so occupies a very small angle of the view.

Duration and Reversibility of Change

1.47 The duration of the visual change at viewpoints is categorised in Table A-13 below, which considers whether views will be permanent and irreversible or temporary and reversible.

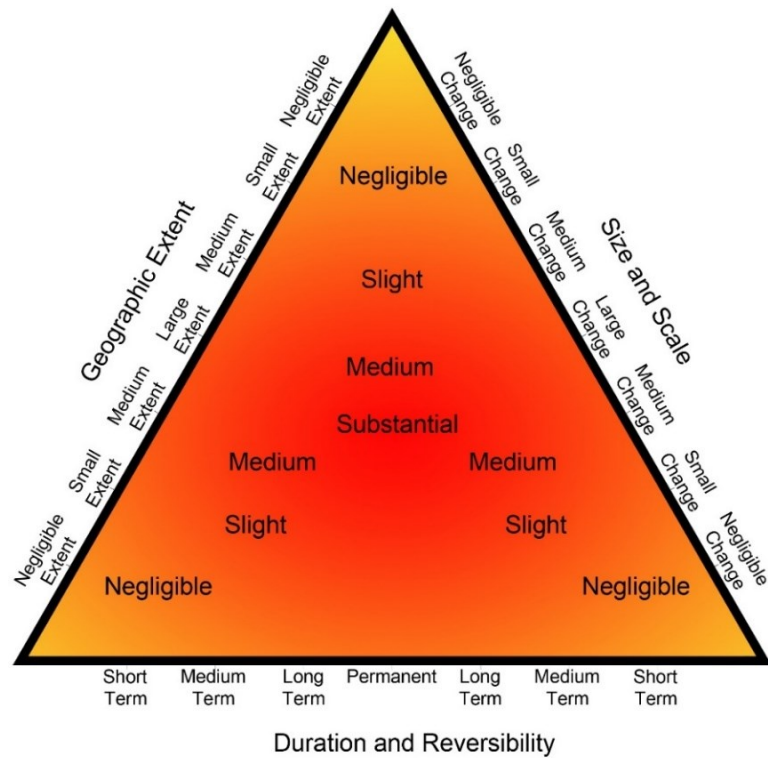
Table A-13
Duration and Reversibility

Category	Description
Permanent/ Irreversible	Change that will last for over 25 years and is deemed permanent or irreversible.
Long term reversible	Change that will endure for between 10 and 25 years and is potentially, or theoretically reversible.
Medium term reversible	Change that will last for up to 10 years and is wholly or partially reversible.
Temporary/ Short term reversible	Change that will last from 0 to 5 years and is reversible - includes construction effects.

Deciding on Overall Magnitude of Visual Change

- 1.48 The relationships between the three factors that contribute to assessment of the magnitude of visual effects are illustrated graphically, as a guide, in Figure A-5 below. Various combinations are possible, and the overall magnitude of each effect is made using professional judgement rather than by formulaic application of the relationships in the diagram. Figure A-5: Determining the Magnitude of Visual Change.

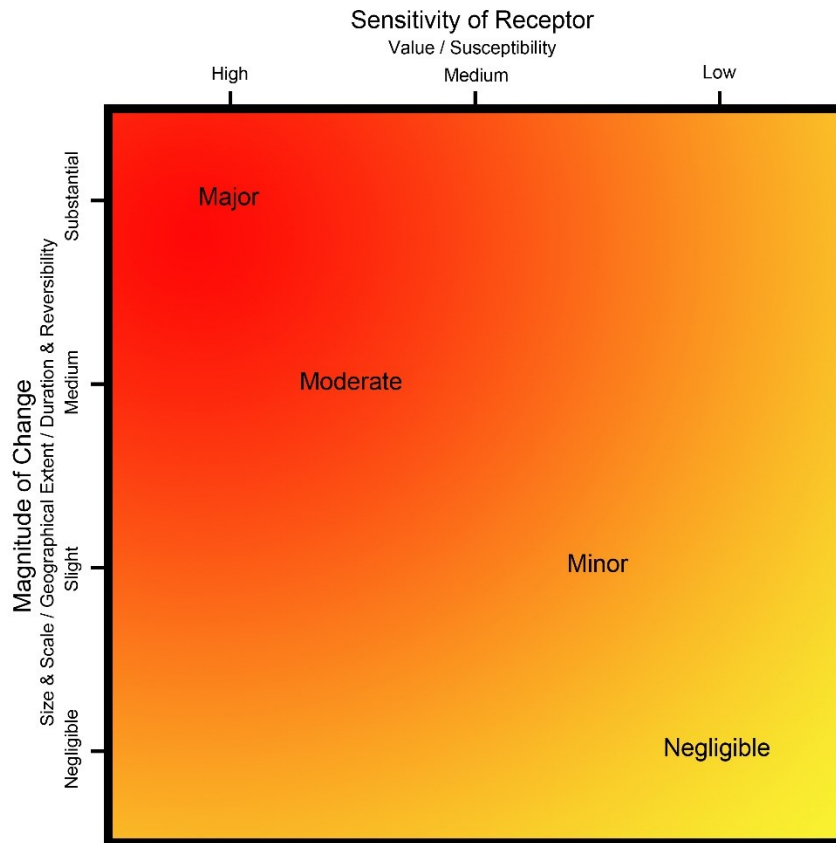
Figure A-5
Determining the magnitude of visual change



Assessment of Visual Effects and Significance

- 1.49 The assessment of visual effects, and whether these are significant or not significant, is defined in terms of the relationship between the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the change. The diagram below (Figure A-6) summarises the nature of the relationship but it is not formulaic and only indicates broad levels of effect. Judgements are made about each visual effect using this diagram as a guide.

Figure A-6
Assessment of Visual Effects and Overall Significance



INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This assessment is used to inform the anticipated landscape effects on the various types of landscape receptor present within the Study Area.
- 1.2 The assessment should be read in conjunction with the chapter 7 figure. Landscape designations provide evidence of landscape value and representative levels of value are defined in Appendix 7A Table A.1 with reference to the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹, hereafter referred to as “GLVIA3”. Value is one component of sensitivity the other component being susceptibility as detailed in Appendix 7A. A combination of sensitivity and the identified magnitude of change are used to predict the overall level of landscape effect caused by the proposed development.
- 1.3 The use of Landscape Character Assessments as the baseline for assessing potential landscape changes is now an accepted method within the LVIA as identified in GLVIA3.
- 1.4 Paragraph 5.26 *‘The fact that an area of landscape is not designated either nationally or locally does not mean that it does not have any value. ...The European Landscape Convention promotes the need to take account of all landscapes, with less emphasis on the special and more recognition that ordinary landscapes also have their value, supported by the landscape character approach.’*
- 1.5 Landscape assessment is based largely on landscape character with landscape designations providing guidance on assigning levels of value to the identified landscape character areas as well as their own innate value. The character of the landscape and its components are evident in the viewpoint photography as illustrated on Figure 9.
- 1.6 Landscape susceptibility is defined in paragraph 5.40 of GLVIA3 as follows:

‘This means the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.’
- 1.7 Where landscapes are not designated and where no other local authority guidance on value is available, an assessment is made by reference to criteria in the Table B-1. This is based on Table 1 of Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/21². These factors are not fixed and should be

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; 3rd Edition (2013)

² Technical Guidance Note 2/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designation, Landscape Institute (2021)

APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

reviewed on a case by case basis. When assessing landscape value of a site it is important to consider not only the Site itself but also its context.

- 1.8 Table B-1 identifies the factors which have been considered in defining the susceptibility and value of the proposed access.

Table B-1
Evaluation of Factors in the consideration of the Landscape
Value of the Site and its Immediate Context

Factor	Site
Natural Heritage	The Site is located within an existing arable field edged by native hedgerows and trees to part of its boundaries. It lies on the eastern slopes of Ashton Downs which, in the context of its surroundings, is a distinctive elevated landform. Land falls in a west east direction, enabling long distance views from higher ground. Other than the prominent nature of the landform, the Site is not considered to be a “valued landscape” for the purposes of NPPF 174”.
Cultural Heritage	The Site and its immediate context have no clear visible evidence of cultural heritage interest which contributes positively to the appreciation of the landscape, or a dimension of time depth. Whilst there are Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas within the Study Area, these are beyond 500m of the Site.
Landscape Condition	The Site comprises an arable crop. Boundary vegetation appears to be in variable condition. The Site’s eastern boundary consists of a managed hedgerow whilst elsewhere hedgerows are unmanaged. Hedgerows to the north and south of the Site are overgrown evidenced by the presence of several trees with little understorey growth and the western hedgerow is overgrown and gappy.
Associations	No associations in literature, art or other media.
Distinctiveness	The landscape is distinctive reflected by the nature of the landform and extensive waterbodies created by sand and gravel extraction which due to peripheral vegetation has resulted in a strong sense of enclosure. This, overlaid by the road network, which is almost grid like, creates a strong overall landscape pattern.
Recreational	There are no PRoW or permissive routes through the Site, though a footpath (AKEY 4) runs along the Site’s western boundary linking to South Cerney further north to Ashton Keynes in the south.

APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Factor	Site
Perceptual (Scenic)	The Site is typical of the surrounding landscape further north and north-west, being partially enclosed by hedgerows. Human influences are present in its immediate context namely Ashton Road to the east and Aggregate Industries to the south-east which reduce the overall scenic quality surrounding the Site.
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)	The Site's tranquillity is influenced by the noise and movement of vehicles using Ashton Road to the east, increasing further west. CPRE 'England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies map indicates that the Site is 0.5 to 8 nano watts / cm ² /sr and in the middle band in terms of levels of darkness. Levels of brightness increase in a west east direction towards and beyond South Cerney.
Functional	Although the Site is rural and forms part of a distinctive landform it does not have a strong physical or visual connection with national landscape designation of the Cotswolds AONB to the north or a link to its special qualities.

- 1.9 The Site is considered to be of Community to Local Authority landscape value.
- 1.10 Figure 7 illustrates the various landscape and landscape related designations present in the adjacent landscape.
- 1.11 Given the large scale of National Character Areas and the relatively small area the proposed development occupies, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on their landscape character and are not assessed.
- 1.12 A number of landscape character areas/types have been scoped out of the assessment; these are listed in Table B-3 below, along with details of the reasoning behind their omission.

Table B-2
Landscape Character Areas Scoped out of the Assessment

Receptor	Reason
National Character Area Profiles (NCAP)	
NCAP 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales	Given the large scale of the NCA and the context, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on its landscape character.
NCAP 107 Cotswolds	Given the large scale of the NCA and the context, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects on its landscape character.
Landscape Designations	
Cotswolds AONB considering its setting and special qualities	The Cotswolds AONB lies beyond 5 km of the Site. There would be no direct loss of any landscape elements or features which contribute to the special qualities of



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Receptor	Reason
	the AONB. Equally there is no or limited intervisibility with the Site as reflected on the ZTV and verified on Site.
Cotswold Water Park	
LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1B The Ampney Lowlands)	This LCT is 4.67 km to the north-east of the Site at its nearest point. There would be no direct loss of any landscape elements or features from within this character area. Any potential influence on the landscape character of this area by the Proposed Development would be very limited from these distances. There is no visibility identified on the ZTV.
LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowlands (LCA 11B Minety Rolling Clay Lowlands)	This LCT is 4.83 km to the south and south-east of the Site at its nearest point. There would be no direct loss of any landscape elements or features from within this character area. Any potential influence on the landscape character of this area by the Proposed Development would be very limited from these distances. There is no visibility identified on the ZTV.
LCT 12 Open Clay Vale (LCA 12A Thames Open Clay Vale)	This LCT is 4.4 km to the south-west of the Site at its nearest point. There would be no direct loss of any landscape elements or features from within this character area. Any potential influence on the landscape character of this area by the Proposed Development would be very limited from these distances. There is no visibility identified on the ZTV.



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Table B-3
Assessment of Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
Cotswold Water Park				
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland)	Local Authority	Medium	Medium	The Site lies within the centre of LCA 3A which is described as “an existing settled landscape of small mainly stone built village settlement with a dynamic and evolving wetland landscape” There are “small scale, regularly enclosed pasture fields with horse and sheep grazing separated by low, well maintained and regularly trimmed hedgerows dominant valley bottoms” with “occasional medium scale arable fields aligning the shallow slopes and occasional local hillocks that rise above the floodplains”. Key characteristics of the Study Area and Site align with these descriptions, the Site forming part of the “medium scale arable fields” and “occasional hillocks”. The LCA includes part of the Kemble and Ewen SLA, several heritage assets and areas important for nature conservation including SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites. The extent of visibility is largely concentrated to higher ground and land to the north / north-west. The LCA would have some ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape which are considered to be of Local Authority value), with a Medium overall susceptibility and sensitivity.



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Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands)	Community / Local Authority	Low	Low - Medium	LCA 1A lies to the northwest of the Site and beyond a 2km radius. The landscape is described as having a “gently sloping mainly south easterly grain”, “productive mixed arable and grazed fields” with a “predominance of large-scale arable fields resulting in a simple, uniform landscape in places”, typical of the LCA within the Study Area. Some of the LCA falls within the Cotswolds Water Park and there are heritage and nature conservation assets. The extent of visibility is largely concentrated to higher ground and land to the north / north-west. The LCA makes reference to “ <i>Broad panoramas and distant views to the chalk escarpment of the Marlborough Downs from more open and elevated areas.</i> ” The LCA would have some ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape which are considered to be of Community / Local Authority value), with a Low overall susceptibility and Low to Medium sensitivity.
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)	Community / Local Authority	Medium	Medium	The LCA 2A lies within a 2km radius of the Site to the northwest and west. The LCA is described as a “ <i>medium to large scale landscape with a very gently undulating landform that can give the impression of being flat.</i> ” There is a “ <i>general sense of openness and expansiveness with long distance views to the south</i> ” and “ <i>Vertical features also gain visual prominence in the open landscape and the eye is often drawn to a number of high voltage pylons.</i> ” The LCA falls within the Cotswolds Water Park and there are heritage assets. The extent of visibility, though generally high, is concentrated on slightly higher ground. Reference is made in the LCA to “ <i>The general sense of openness and expansiveness with long distance views to the south.</i> ” The LCA adds that “ <i>Vertical features also gain visual prominence in the open landscape and the eye is often drawn to a number of high voltage pylons.</i> ” Given the orientation of the Site relative to the LCA,



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Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
				the LCA would have some ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape which are considered to be of Community / Local Authority value), with a Medium overall susceptibility and sensitivity.
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands)	Community / Local Authority	Medium	Medium	LCA 2B lies to the northeast of the Site beyond its 2 km radius. The landscape is a “ <i>very gently undulating and open, expansive landscape</i> ” with “ <i>distant views to the Thames River Basin Lowland to the south</i> ”. Fields are “medium scale arable” with smaller pasture fields along watercourses. The LCA lies within the Cotswolds Water Park and there are heritage assets. The extent of visibility is moderate and associated with slightly higher ground on a disused airfield. Reference is made in the LCA to “ <i>The low height of the hedgerows between fields allows extensive views across the Driffield Lowlands and scattered mature hedgerow trees punctuating the landscape gain visual prominence in the perceived flat landscape.</i> ” The LCA would have some ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape which are considered to be of Community / Local Authority value), with a Medium overall susceptibility and sensitivity.
LCT 3 Ricer Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland)	Community -Local Authority	Low	Low - Medium	The LCA 3B lies to the east of the Site and beyond its 2 km radius. The landscape is described as a “ <i>low lying and predominantly flat landscape</i> ”, dominated by arable farming. The LCA lies within the Cotswolds Water Park. The extent of visibility covers a high proportion of the LCA with distant views. As referred to in the LCA the large field sizes combined “ <i>with the distant expansive views</i> ” create the impression of a simple and open landscape. The LCA is generally able to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and



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Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
				quality of the landscape) it has a low overall susceptibility and a Low to Medium sensitivity.
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland)	Community Local Authority	Low	Low - Medium	The LCA 3D extends to the south / southwest of the Site, beyond a 2 km radius of the Site boundary and LCA 3A. The landscape is described as <i>“low lying area of predominately pasture farmland”</i> with <i>“small to medium sized fields”</i> ; <i>the latter sometimes irregular</i> ; a <i>“quiet pastoral landscape”</i> lying to the south and southwest of the Site and beyond LCA 3A. The LCA lies within the Cotswolds Water Park and includes a few heritage assets and nature conservation sites. Whilst the extent of visibility across the landscape is limited to higher ground it covers a high proportion of the LCA. The LCA is generally able to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape) and has a low overall susceptibility.
LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland)	Community - Local Authority	Low	Medium	The LCA 4A lies to the south-east of the Site and falls just within the Study Area. The LCA is described as forming <i>“a transition between the flatter, wetter landscapes with some open water ditches and waterside willows, through to a more pastoral landscape of mixed pasture and arable with mature hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees.”</i> Field sizes are variable and there are <i>“wide views across Thames Clay vale to the north”</i> . The LCA lies within the Cotswolds Water Park with a few heritage assets. Whilst the extent of visibility across the landscape is limited to higher ground it covers a high proportion of the LCA. The LCA would have some ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and



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Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
				quality of the landscape which are considered to be of Community to Local Authority value), with a low overall susceptibility and Medium sensitivity.
Gloucestershire LCA				
LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands	Local Authority	Medium to High	Medium / High	LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands lies to the north and west beyond a 2 km radius of the Site and extends up to and outside the 5 km Study Area boundary. The LCT is described as a “ <i>gently sloping, undulating lowland</i> ” with a “ <i>predominance of medium to large scale arable fields and smaller scape improved pastures</i> ” with “ <i>occasional woodland copses and shelterbelts</i> ”. The LCT includes a few heritage assets and the Kemble and Ewen SLA. It would have limited ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape) and has a Medium / High overall susceptibility and sensitivity.
Wiltshire LCA				
LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)	Community	Low	Low	This LCT just clips into the 5 km Study Area and forms a very small proportion of the Study Area lying to the southwest of the Site. The LCT is described as “ <i>predominantly rolling mixed pastoral and arable farmland, in a pattern of large fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees</i> ”. The LCT includes a few heritage assets and lies outside of the Cotswolds Water Park. The extent of visibility covers slightly less than half of the LCT within the Study Area would be theoretically visible this would be from slightly higher ground within the Study Area. The LCT would be able to accommodate the Proposed



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Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
				Development without transformational adverse effects (taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape) and has a low overall susceptibility and sensitivity.
Special Landscape Area				
Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area	Local Authority	Medium to High	Medium / High	Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area which includes a few heritage assets lies circa 2.2 km to the northwest / west of the Site. The landscape is described as “ <i>Unspoilt sweeping open valleys</i> ”, with a “well treed dismantled railway and disused Thames and Severn Canal which form strong lines and enclosure across the landscape” and high levels of tranquillity “ <i>away from the main roads.</i> ” The SLA would have limited ability to accommodate the Proposed Development without transformational adverse effects on its landscape character.
Site Elements/Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects				
Landform gently sloping which connects visually to wider landscape to the east	Local Authority	Medium	Medium	The Site is one of only a few high points in the Study Area and recognisable in the landscape forming the eastern slopes of Ashton Downs. It is one of the “occasional hillocks” referred to in the Cotswold Water Park Landscape Character Assessment. This landscape feature is of Local Authority value and moderately susceptible to the Proposed Development.



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Landscape Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity	Notes
Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries and crossing the Site	Community	Medium	Medium	The hedgerows and hedgerow trees forming the Site boundaries are characteristic of the local area. Whilst references in the published Landscape Character Assessment (3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland) imply that all boundary features are <i>"low, well maintained and regularly trimmed"</i> such references can only be applicable to the Site's eastern hedgerow. Remaining hedgerows are either overgrown or over mature with only hedgerow trees remaining (to the north and south of the Site). This aspect has some ability to accommodate the Proposed Development (taking into account the existing character and quality of the landscape) and has a medium sensitivity.
Change in land use and rural character	Community	Medium	Medium	There would be a noticeable change in land use and rural character on Site. The Site reflects a rural character linking with the landscape to the north and north-west. It lies within the Cotswolds Water Park and whilst this is not a landscape designation the policy does seek to strengthen and engender a sense of place. The receptor would be moderately susceptible to accommodate a change without transformational adverse effects in the wider landscape.
Open / enclosed	Community	Medium	Medium	There would be a partial interruption to open views from elevated ground
Tranquil	Local Authority to Community	Medium	Medium to Low	The Site is already influenced by nearby detractors including noise and movement of vehicles along Ashton Road and Aggregate Industries. Tranquillity levels diminish in west east direction across the Site.



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Table A-3
Assessment of Magnitude of Landscape Change – Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
Cotswolds Water Park						
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland)	Construction	Small	Small to Medium	Short-term temporary	Slight to Medium	The ZTV indicated there is a theoretically high potential for intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the remaining LCA with the highest concentration approximately 1 km of the Site extending to the north and west as well as to the south either across areas of open water, where views of the development may be apparent (unobscured by vegetation), or from slightly higher ground. Informed by site visits only high level construction activities may be discernible from small areas of the LCA. Construction activities would be discernible including the movement of vehicles especially on higher ground and the gradual changes in landuse / landform with the temporary introduction of a few new features, such as materials storages areas, construction compound, parking areas etc and creation of a new access point off Ashton Road. The temporary presence and movement of cranes at a lower level would also be noticeable. Activities would result in the loss of some characteristic features (existing hedgerow boundaries, agricultural land use, open views and rural character as well as impacts on tranquillity though the extent of loss relative to the LCA overall is small).



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Medium	Long-term permanent	Medium	Once constructed the Proposed Development would introduce new features into the landscape of the LCA. These would include the digester tankers, and particularly the domed membrane visible at a higher elevation, as well as lower level structures, the most noticeable being the silage clamps and covered lagoons on the higher western slopes of the Site. Whilst the Proposed Development would appear prominent in the immediate landscape, visual connections to other LCT/s LCAs would not be interrupted by the development and a layering of vegetation would screen lower elevations of the Proposed Development further afield.
	Operation (Year 15)	Small	Small to Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight to Medium	Following the establishment and growth of new mitigation and existing planting it is anticipated that there would a change in effects. Intervisibility of structures at a lower elevation would reduce though partial intervisibility associated with the digester tanks (domed membranes) at a higher level, and the silage clamps, would remain diminishing with distance away from the Site and through the maturing of the proposed landscape strategy.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small	Short-term temporary	Negligible to Slight	The ZTV shows that only a small proportion of the Proposed Development would be theoretically visible and this would be from higher ground to the south-western edge of the LCA. Only high level activities would be discernible - the physical presence and temporary movement of cranes against the skyline would be partially visible over a small area of the LCA in excess of 2 km from the Site. There would be very limited potential for changes to the landscape character and its aesthetic and perceptual factors.
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Slight	Upon operation, there would be limited intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA, thereby restricting the potential for changes to the landscape character and it's aesthetic and perceptual factors. From small areas of the LCA taller structures e.g. digester tanks (domed membranes) may be partially visible, though they are sited on the lower slopes of the Site. Lower structures would not be perceptible.
	Operation (Year 15)	Negligible to Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Negligible to Slight	The maturing of the proposed landscape strategy would have a discernible change on the level of intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix would partially screen upper-level structures including the digester tankers and associated domes.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight	Whilst the ZTV indicates that there is a theoretically high potential for intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA, with the siting of the digester tankers on lower ground it is likely that only the temporary presence and movement of cranes would also be discernible above existing vegetation running along the PRow to the west of the Site.
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Medium	Short-term temporary	Slight to Medium	Once the Proposed Development is operational, intervisibility between the Proposed Development and LCA would be low. Lower-level structures such as the chicken shed, separation buildings and welfare offices would not discernible. Upper elevations of the gas flare to the southeast corner of the Site and the digester tankers, both sited at a lower level may be discernible above offsite vegetation edging the northern and western boundary of the Site impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the LCA. The use of a sympathetic colour range would help to merge Proposed Development into its surroundings alongside mitigation planting.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Small	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight	Once mitigation planting matures there would be a change in effect. Native hedgerow tree planting and native woodland tree and shrub planting on higher ground alongside the management off offsite hedgerows would contribute to visual screening the some of the upper elevations of the domed membranes of the digester tankers and gas flare.
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight	Whilst the ZTV indicates that there is a theoretically high potential for intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA, with the siting of the digester tankers on lower ground it is likely that only the temporary presence and movement of cranes would be discernible either above existing vegetation in the foreground or seen against a rising landform from this angle.
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Medium	Short-term temporary	Slight to Medium	New features would be introduced into the landscape seen in its outward views and visible against a backdrop of rising ground forming part of the hillside on which the Site sits. Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA would be limited to silage clamps, covered lagoons on higher slopes and the domed membranes of the digester tankers at a higher elevation impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the LCA.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Small	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight	The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme and existing vegetation would generate a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix particularly along the northern edge of the Site would screen the silage clamps, covered lagoons and upper elevations of the domed membranes of the digester tankers from this orientation.
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small	Short-term temporary	Negligible to Slight	The ZTV indicates that only a small proportion of the LCA would be theoretically visible and this is from higher ground, south of Dukes Brake and Vines Brake. The construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements from within the LCA but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features within its outward views, at certain locations. This would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and over 3 km away. Any potential influence on the landscape character of the area by the Proposed Development would be limited from these distances.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Slight	Upon operation, the Proposed Development would introduce new features into the landscape, seen in its outward views and, visible against a backdrop of rising ground forming part of the hillside on which the Site sits. Intervisibility from small areas of the LCA would be limited to silage clamps / covered lagoons on higher slopes and the domed membranes of the digester tankers at a higher elevation impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the LCA. Lower structures would not be perceptible.
	Operation (Year 15)	Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Slight	From this orientation the maturing of the proposed landscape strategy would have no discernible change on the level of intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA, with larger structures (namely the domed membranes associated with the digester tankers), covered lagoons and arc clamps remaining partially visible from the east.
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small to Medium	Short-term temporary	Slight	The ZTV illustrates that the theoretical visibility of the Proposed Development is widespread covering roughly half of the LCA with a greater prevalence from higher ground. However, field surveys confirm that the intervisibility would be lower due to intervening vegetation. As such the construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements from within the LCA but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features within its outward views, at



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
						certain locations. This would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and over 3 km away. Any potential influence on the landscape character, including aesthetic and perceptual elements of the area, by the Proposed Development would be limited from these distances.
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Small to Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight to Medium	New features would be introduced into the landscape seen in its outward views and be visible against a backdrop of rising land forming part of the Site and existing boundary vegetation on higher ground. Intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA would be limited to the silage clamps / covered lagoons on higher slopes and the domed membranes of the digester tankers at a higher elevation impacting on the aesthetic and perceptual qualities of the LCA.
	Operation (Year 15)	Small	Small to Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight	The maturing of the proposed landscape scheme would result in a change to the intervisibility of the Proposed Development within the LCA. Planting in the form of trees and native tree / shrub / woodland edge mix would screen lower and upper-level structures including the digester tankers and associated domed membranes.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small	Short-term temporary	Negligible to Slight	The extent of the ZTV shows that roughly a third of the LCA within the Study Area would be theoretically visible from higher ground. The construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements including aesthetic and perceptual features from within the LCA but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features within its outward views, at certain locations. This would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and over 3 km away. Any potential influence on the landscape character of the area by the Proposed Development would be limited from these distances.
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Slight	Upon operation, there would be limited intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCA, thereby restricting the potential for changes to the landscape character and it's aesthetic and perceptual qualities. From small areas of the LCA taller structures e.g. digester tanks (domed membranes) may be partially visible, though they are sited on the lower slopes of the Site. Lower structures would not be perceptible.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Negligible to Slight	From this orientation the maturing of the proposed landscape strategy would result in a slight discernible change on the level of intervisibility of the Proposed Development particularly in the western half of the LCA, with larger structures (namely the domed membranes associated with the digester tankers) remaining partially perceptible to the east.
Gloucestershire LCA						
LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small	Short-term temporary	Negligible to Slight	The construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements from within the LCT but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features within its outward views, at certain locations. This would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and over 3 km away. Any potential influence on the landscape character of the area by the Proposed Development would be limited from these distances. The ZTV shows that only a small proportion of the LCT would be theoretically visible and this would be from slightly higher ground within the Study Area.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 0)	Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Slight	Upon operation, there would be limited intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCT, thereby restricting the potential for changes to the landscape character and its aesthetic and perceptual qualities. From small areas of the LCT taller structures, e.g. digester tanks (domed membranes) may be partially visible. Lower structures would not be perceptible.
	Operation (Year 15)	Negligible to Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Negligible to Slight	It is expected that by Year 15 the proposed landscape strategy would have matured with hedgerow, tree and shrub planting resulting in a further reduction in the visibility of the Proposed Development. There may still be very limited visibility from this LCT identified on the ZTV associated with the upper elevations of the digester tankers (domed membranes). Overall, there would remain very limited potential for changes to the landscape character and it's aesthetic and perceptual qualities.
Wiltshire LCA						



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small / Medium	Short-term temporary	Negligible to Slight	The construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements from within the LCT but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features, within its outward views, at certain locations. This would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and over 4 km away. Any potential influence on the landscape character of the area by the Proposed Development would be limited from these distances. There is also very limited visibility from this LCT identified on the ZTV.
	Operation (Year 0)	Negligible to Small	Small /medium	Long-term permanent	Slight	Upon operation, there would be limited intervisibility between the Proposed Development and the LCT, thereby restricting the potential for changes to the landscape character and its aesthetic and perceptual factors. The Proposed Development would potentially introduce limited partial intervisibility between a wider area of the LCT and the taller structure, e.g. digester tanks (domed membranes). Lower structures would not be perceptible.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Negligible to Small	Small /medium	Long-term permanent	Negligible to Slight	It is expected that by Year 15 the proposed landscape strategy would have matured with hedgerow, tree and shrub planting resulting in a further reduction in the visibility of the Proposed Development. There may still be very limited visibility from this LCT identified on the ZTV associated with the upper elevations of the digester tankers. Overall, there would remain very limited potential for changes to the landscape character and it's aesthetic and perceptual factors.
<i>Kemble and Ewen SLA</i>						
Kemble and Ewen SLA	Construction	Negligible to Small	Small	Short-term temporary	Negligible to Slight	The construction of the Proposed Development would not result in the loss of any characteristic landscape elements from within the SLA but may temporarily introduce new urbanising features in its outward views. Where visible this would be restricted to high level activities only, such as temporary crane movements against the skyline and would be over 2 km away. There would be very limited potential for changes to the landscape character and its key qualities.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 0)	Negligible to Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Slight	Once the Proposed Development is operational intervisibility between the Proposed Development and Kemble and Ewen SLA would be low. Lower-level structures such as the chicken shed, separation buildings and welfare offices would not be discernible. Upper elevations of the gas flare to the southeast corner of the Site and the digester tankers, sited at a lower level would be discernible. The use of a sympathetic colour range would help to merge Proposed Development into its surroundings alongside mitigation planting. There may be negative impacts on the SLA's aesthetic and perceptual qualities which refers to <i>"unspoilt sweeping open valleys"</i> and <i>"tranquillity"</i>. The Site sits on the edge of a prominent hill surrounded by relatively low land. Intervisibility is minimised by existing vegetation on higher ground edging the Site's western boundary. In terms of impacts on night skies as discussed before the area within which the Site sits is relatively bright and night glow is within operational limits.



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Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Negligible to Small	Small	Long-term permanent	Negligible to Slight	Once mitigation planting matures there would be a change in effect. Native hedgerow tree planting and native woodland tree and shrub planting on higher ground would contribute to visual screening of some of the upper elevations of the domed membranes of the digester tankers and gas flare.
Site Elements/Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects						
Landform	Construction	Medium	Medium	Short-term temporary	Medium	The construction activities would introduce localised earthworks and interrupt the visual connection with the wider landscape. Embankments associated with the arc clamps and covered lagoons would appear incongruous in relation to the surrounding sloping landform.
	Operation (Year 0)	Medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Medium	Once construction works are complete the Proposed Development introduce new built features into part of the site including a series of walls / retaining walls, plateaus and earth banks which would be incongruous features and interrupt the visual connection with the wider landscape. Banks would be seeded.



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Medium	Notwithstanding the establishment and growth of the trees and shrub planting at Year 15 to provide a screening to the modified landform, in conjunction with the retained grassland around the buffers. There would be no further changes to landform.
Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries	Construction	Medium	Medium	Long-term Permanent	Medium	The construction of the Proposed Development would result in the loss of one tree, an east west hedgerow cutting through the Site and a small section of the eastern hedgerow. The loss of such vegetation would accommodate the covered lagoons alongside the site entranceway and visibility splays. Additional tree, hedgerow and woodland planting characteristic of the local landscape would be introduced to provide long term screening.
	Operation (Year 0)	Medium	Medium	Long-term Permanent	Medium	On operation of the Proposed Development, whilst no further vegetation would be lost, new mitigation tree and hedgerow planting to the new boundaries of the Site would be too juvenile to provide a substantial boundary.
	Operation (Year 15)	Small / medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight / Medium	Tree and hedgerow planting to the new boundaries of the Site would have matured and provide additional native boundaries and new woodland characteristic of the Site and its setting. This would include measures to manage off site planting.
	Construction	Medium / Large	Large	Long -term temporary	Medium / Substantial	There would be noticeable change in land use and rural character within the Site.



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
Change in land use and rural character	Operation (Year 0)	Medium / Large	Large	Long-term permanent	Medium / Substantial	There would be no further changes in land use and rural character following completion and on operation. The magnitude of change would remain unchanged.
	Operation (Year 15)	Large	Large	Long-term permanent	Medium / Substantial	There would be no further changes in land use and rural character following completion and on operation. The magnitude of change would remain unchanged.
Openness / Enclosure	Construction	Small to Medium	Medium	Short-term temporary	Slight to Medium	The sense of openness varies across the Site and as consequence of surrounding vegetation and elevation. From higher ground to the west there is a strong sense of openness and connectivity with surrounding landscapes, whereas from lower levels the sense of openness diminishes with boundary vegetation to the east being more intact. Whilst most boundary vegetation would remain (including all off site boundary planting) the introduction of new landforms, structures and plant would start increase the sense of enclosure across the whole Site.



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 0)	Medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Medium	Upon operation and on completion, the Proposed Development would create a more complex arrangement of elements and features across the Site, with enclosure achieved through the creation of new landforms -retaining walls / embankments and buildings / structures. Additional tree and shrub planting would also be carried out to extend and enhance the existing boundaries, whilst forming new areas of enclosure and division, as part of the peripheral landscaping scheme. Such planting at this stage would, however, be immature.
	Operation (Year 15)	Medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Medium	Following the establishment and growth of the tree and shrub planting, at Year 15 it is anticipated that there would be the creation of an enclosing woodland with mature copses and hedgerows. Mitigation and off-site planting would alter the sense of openness to enclosure further particularly from higher ground to the west.
Tranquillity	Construction	Small	Medium	Short-term temporary	Slight to Medium	Construction activities would result in a reduction in tranquillity across the Site, the context of which is already influenced by nearby detractors such as Ashton Road and Aggregate Industries. Works may particularly influence the tranquillity of the western side of the Site where these local detractors are screened.
	Operation (Year 0)	Small to Medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight to Medium	There would be no further changes in tranquillity following completion and on operation. The magnitude of change would remain unchanged.



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale	Geographic Extent	Duration/ Reversibility	Magnitude	Notes
	Operation (Year 15)	Small to Medium	Medium	Long-term permanent	Slight to Medium	There would be no further changes in tranquillity following completion and on operation. The magnitude of change would remain unchanged.



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Table B-4 - Assessment of Landscape Impact - Landscape Receptors

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Landscape Effect	Nature of Effect
Cotswolds Water Park					
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland)	Construction	Medium	Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Medium	Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands)	Construction	Low to Medium	Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)	Construction	Medium	Slight	Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands (LCA 2B Driffield Lowland)	Construction	Medium	Slight	Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Construction	Low to Medium	Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Landscape Effect	Nature of Effect
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland)	Operation (Year 15)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vales (LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland)	Construction	Low to Medium	Slight	Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
LCT 4 Rolling Clay Farmland (LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland)	Construction	Medium	Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
Gloucestershire LCA					
LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowlands	Construction	Medium to High	Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
Wiltshire LCA					
	Construction	Low	Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Landscape Effect	Nature of Effect
LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)	Operation (Year 15)		Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
Kemble and Ewen SLA					
SLA	Construction	Medium to High	Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight	Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Negligible to Slight	Negligible to Minor	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
Site Elements/Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects					
Gently sloping landform which connects visually in the wider landscape	Construction	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Medium	Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Medium	Moderate	No change
Intact vegetation forming the Site boundaries	Construction	Medium	Medium	Moderate	Adverse, long -term and permanent
	Operation (Year 0)		Medium	Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Positive, Long-term and permanent
Land use and rural character	Construction	Medium	Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	Adverse, long-term and permanent



APPENDIX 7B - ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

Landscape Receptors	Assessment Stage	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Landscape Effect	Nature of Effect
	Operation (Year 0)		Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	No change
	Operation (Year 15)		Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	No change
Openness /enclosure	Construction	Medium	Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Medium	Moderate	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Medium	Moderate	Neutral, Long-term and permanent
Tranquillity	Construction	Medium to Low	Slight to Medium	Minor	Adverse, Short-term and temporary
	Operation (Year 0)		Slight to Medium	Moderate to Minor (across the site)	Adverse, Long-term and permanent
	Operation (Year 15)		Medium	Moderate to Minor (across the site)	No change

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following tables set out the assessment of the visual effects on viewers present at the location of the chosen representative viewpoints. This assessment is used to inform the anticipated visual effects on the various types of viewers likely to be present throughout the Study Area.
- 1.2 The sensitivity of visual receptors to the Proposed Development is comprised of two factors, firstly the value of views to viewers, and secondly the susceptibility of viewers to the type of development in question. Full details of how these factors are defined are included in Appendix 7A.
- 1.3 The magnitude of visual effects is a combination three factors; the scale and size of change; the extent of the change; and the duration or timescale of the change. Full details of how these factors are again defined in Appendix 7A.
- 1.4 Tables included in Appendix 7A illustrate how these factors may be combined. However, these tables are only indicative, and the various factors are combined using professional judgement.
- 1.5 These tables should be read in conjunction with the section on Visual Effects in the main report, which provides a more detailed examination of the importance of effects and their potential significance. The viewpoint photographs, and where included visualisations, provide a useful reference in terms of the context of views and magnitude of potential change, and should also be consulted.
- 1.6 Table C-1 describes the viewpoint locations, C-2 presents the sensitivity of the visual receptors at each viewpoint, whilst Table C-3 considers the visual effects.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

Table C-1
Viewpoint Locations

No	Viewpoint Name	Description	Distance to Site* (km)	Coordinates (British National Grid (BNG))		Elevation (m AOD)
				Easting	Northing	
1	View from PRoW BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) off School Lane on the western edge of South Cerney	A view from a well-used PRoW on the north-western edge of South Cerney overlooking a gently sloping landscape with rough grassland in the foreground edged by a mature tree. There is a strong belt of trees edging the River Churn (a Local Wildlife Site) and beyond trees on slightly higher ground in the distance which either divide fields or line the edge of Ashton Road. The layering effect of these trees largely screens the Site from view, with only filtered views of the most elevated land associated with the Site, partially visible through the trees. There are very partial filtered views of properties through the trees in the middle distance.	1.18	404541	197402	105
2	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the edge of South Cerney	View from a PRoW on the western edge of South Cerney. The view is of farmland in the foreground edged by well-maintained native hedgerows. Beyond, rising ground to the right of the photo is discernible through trees bounding the edge of Ashton Road. The Site is obscured from this viewpoint by intervening trees but sits behind Ashton Road.	0.39	404279	196640	90
3	View from PRoW AKEY24 / (footpath) / AKEY40 (Bridleway) on the edge of Cotswolds Water Park Wireline	A view from a well-used PRoW on the southern edge of part of the Cotswolds Water Park overlooking open water and beyond Whitefriars Sailing Club which sits on a promontory. Immediately behind the Sailing Club and a further expanse of water is Aggregate Industries North End Works with the Site lying to the right. Neither the Works nor the Site are visible due to the density of woodland edging the Water Park.	1.1	405161	19552	89

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Description	Distance to Site* (km)	Coordinates (British National Grid (BNG))		Elevation (m AOD)
				Easting	Northing	
4	View from PRoW AKEY6 (footpath) on the edge of a waterbody just north of the Thames Path and west of Manor House Winter Wireline	Views from a well-used PRoW looking across part of the Cotswolds Water Park towards the Site. Small, well treed, islands break up the large expanse of water forming the foreground. Mature mixed species trees and shrubs bound the northern edge of the water between which lie pockets of rough semi-improved grassland. The Site is not discernible beyond intervening vegetation to the north of the waterbody.	1.74	403786	194254	86
5	View from PRoW BPK10 (Poole Keynes Footpath 10) and the River Thames or Isis Trail Autumn and Winter Wireline	The view from the PRoW is one of fields of pasture divided by well-maintained hedgerows and occasional mature hedgerow trees. The ground rises gently to the north with the edge of Somerton Keynes, including All Saints Church tower, discernible in the view. The Site is obscured from this viewpoint by intervening vegetation and topography including Ashton Down.	2.73	401116	195865	92
6	View from a minor road (also Sustrans National Cycle Route 45 and the Thames & Severn Way) linking Ewen and Chesterton edging Cirencester	View from a minor road which forms part of the Sustrans National Cycle Route. In the foreground are large fields, either in arable use or set aside for pasture, divided by native hedgerows. In the middle- and long-distance small pockets of native woodland break up the skyline. Pylons in the foreground are a visual detractor. The Site is obscured from this viewpoint by intervening vegetation and Ashton Down.	3.55	401261	198679	108
7	View from a track around the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI, north-west of Ashton Down - Autumn and Winter Wireline	View from a track to the east of Shorncote Reedbeds / Cotswolds Water Park (SSSI). The view is one of rough grassland with occasional areas of scrub and trees edging the waterbodies in the foreground. Beyond rising ground forming part of Ashton Down, land is managed for arable use. On the skyline tree canopies are visible, the trees edging either side of a PRoW bordering the western edge of the Site which is not discernible in the view.	0.38	403604	196547	83

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Description	Distance to Site* (km)	Coordinates (British National Grid (BNG))		Elevation (m AOD)
				Easting	Northing	
8	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the north-western edge of the Site Autumn and Winter Wireline	Views from a PRoW, at a slightly elevated position on the eastern slopes of Ashton Down, looking over mainly arable farmland with mature hedgerows and hedgerow trees, woodland blocks and tree canopies on the skyline. Aggregate Industries North End Works is a visual detractor to the right of centre in the view. The Site lies immediately in the foreground, framed by a well -maintained hedgerow and hedgerow trees along Ashton Road (which forms the eastern edge of the Site) and a more fragmented and overgrown hawthorn hedgerow which would cross through the centre of the Site in an east west direction.	0.06	403912	196303	99
9	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the south-western edge of the Site Autumn and Winter Wireline	Views from a PRoW, at a slightly elevated position on the eastern slopes of Ashton Downs, looking across mainly arable farmland with woodland blocks and tree canopies on the distant skyline. The Site lies just beyond the first fragmented field boundary consisting largely of mature native trees. The second field boundary; a hawthorn hedge with one ash tree would be lost because of the Proposed Development.	0.05	403831	195964	102

*Approximate distance to nearest Application Boundary

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

Table C-2
Analysis of Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

No	Viewpoint Name	Potential Receptors	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity	Notes
1	View from PRow BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) off School Lane on the western edge of South Cerney	Recreational users of PRow	Medium	High	Medium to High	The viewpoint is taken from a well-used footpath and lies within the functional boundary of the Cotswolds Water Park, a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place and north-east of a Local Wildlife Site.
		Residents on the north-western edge of South Cerney		High	Medium to High	Recreational users of the PRow would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development. Equally adjacent residential receptors would have a high susceptibility to the Proposed Development.
2	View from PRow AKEY4 on the edge of South Cerney	Recreational users of PRow	Medium	High	Medium to High	The viewpoint lies within the functional boundary of the Cotswolds Water Park, a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place. Users of the PRow would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Potential Receptors	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity	Notes
3	View from PRoW AKEY24 / (footpath) / AKEY40 (Bridleway) on the edge of Cotswolds Water Park	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium	High	Medium to High	The viewpoint is taken from a well-used footpath and lies within the functional boundary of the Cotswolds Water Park, a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place. There are no other designations, references to high-quality landscape or known cultural associations.
		Users of Cotswolds Water Park	Medium	High	Medium to High	Recreational users of the PRoW and water body including those swimming and using boats / canoes would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development.
4	View from PRoW AKEY6 (footpath) on the edge of a waterbody just north of the Thames Path and west of Manor House	PRoW users and recreational users including cyclists and those engaged in water activities	Medium	High	Medium to High	The viewpoint is taken from a well-used footpath and lies just on the western edge of the Ashton Keynes Conservation Area, within Cotswold Water Park SSSI and Cotswolds Water Park Functional Boundary; a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place.

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Potential Receptors	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity	Notes
		Adjacent residential properties referred to as Manor House (though it should be noted that this appears to be derelict)	Medium	High	Medium to High	It also lies close to a recreational route which is promoted on various sources (National Trail and OS Explorer maps). Users of the PRoW and water body including those swimming and using boats / canoes would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development.
5	View from PRoW BPK10 (Poole Keynes Footpath 10) and the River Thames or Isis Trail	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium to High	High	Medium to High	The viewpoint lies on a recreational route which is promoted on various sources (National Trail and OS Explorer maps) and within the Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area. The viewpoint also sits within the Cotswolds Water Park Functional Boundary; a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place. Users of the PRoW would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development.
6		Recreational users (cyclists and walkers)	Medium to High	High	Medium to High	

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Potential Receptors	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity	Notes
	View from a minor road (also Sustrans National Cycle Route 45 and the Thames & Severn Way) linking Ewen and Chesterton edging Cirencester	Recreational users Road users	Medium to High Medium to High	High Low	Medium to High Low to Medium	Viewpoint forms part of both a recreational cycle route and walking route which is promoted on various sources (Sustrans and OS Explorer maps). The viewpoint location lies just on the edge of the Cotswolds Water Park Functional Boundary; a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place and land slightly further west lies within the Kemble and Ewen Special Landscape Area. Recreational users of the NCR / Thames & Severn Way would be engaging in outdoor recreation with a high susceptibility to the Proposed Development. For other travellers along the road, the view is incidental to their journey and susceptibility would be low.
7	View from a track around the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI, north-west of Ashton Down	Recreational users of the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI	Medium to High	High	Medium to High	The viewpoint lies just on the edge of a Local Wildlife Site and the Cotswold Water Park SSSI and within the Cotswolds Water Park Functional Boundary; a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place. Users of the track and visitors to the nature conservation site would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Potential Receptors	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity	Notes
8	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the north-western edge of the Site	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium	High	Medium to High	Viewpoint forms part of a well-used footpath and lies within the Cotswolds Water Park Functional Boundary; a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place. Users of the route would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development
9	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the south-western edge of the Site	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium	High	Medium to High	Viewpoint forms part of a well-used footpath and lies within the Cotswolds Water Park Functional Boundary; a policy which seeks to strengthen local landscape character and engender a sense of place. Users of the route would be engaging in outdoor recreation where their attention is likely to be focused on the landscape and therefore have high susceptibility to the Proposed Development

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

Table C-3
Analysis of Magnitude of Visual Change

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
1	View from PRow BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) off School Lane on the western edge of South Cerney	Construction	Negligible to Small	Medium	Temporary, short term reversible	Slight	The Site lies 1.18 km away. Due to the intervening vegetation only the taller construction activities may be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks), with a barely discernible effect on the views of users of this route overall.
		Operation (Year 0)	Negligible to Small	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Slight	Upon operation, the upper elevations of the tankers (the domed membranes) may be visible and sit slightly above the skyline,. Remaining structures would be screened by intervening vegetation. The depth of field would alter slightly however the presence of the domed membranes would only form a small part of the overall composition of the view. The lighting of the Proposed Development would be seen in the wider context of the area and not anticipated to be a discernible change.
		Operation (Year 15)	Negligible to Small	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Slight	It is expected that existing intervening vegetation would continue to obscure most of the Proposed Development apart from the domed membranes. Mitigation planting from this location would not alter the magnitude of change experienced at Year 0

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
2	View from PRow AKEY4 on the edge of South Cerney	Construction	Small	Medium	Temporary, short term reversible	Slight to Medium	The Site lies 0.39 km away. Due to the intervening vegetation only the taller construction activities would be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks), with a slight discernible effect on the views of users of this route overall.
		Operation (Year 0)	Small to Medium	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Medium	Upon operation, the upper elevations of the tankers (the domed membranes) would be visible and sit above the skyline. Remaining structures would be screened by intervening vegetation. The depth of field would alter slightly however the presence of the domed membranes would only form a small part of the overall composition of the view. The lighting of the Proposed Development would be seen in the wider context of the area and not anticipated to be a discernible change.
		Operation (Year 15)	Small to Medium	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Medium	It is expected that existing intervening vegetation would continue to obscure most of the Proposed Development apart from the domed membranes. Mitigation planting from this location would not alter the magnitude of change experienced at Year 0.
3	View from PRow AKEY24 / (footpath) / AKEY40	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Temporary, short term reversible	Negligible	The Site is located 1.1 km away from the viewpoint. The Site is obscured by the intervening vegetation and topography given it sits on the eastern slopes of Ashton Down. Only high-level construction activities may be perceptible.

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
	(Bridleway) on the edge of Cotswolds Water Park	Operation (Year 0)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	Upon operation, the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
		Operation (Year 15)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	It is expected that by Year 15 the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
4	View from PROW AKEY6 (footpath) on the edge of a waterbody just north of the	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Temporary, short term reversible	Negligible	The Site is located 1.74 km away from the viewpoint. The Site is obscured by the intervening vegetation and topography given it sits on the eastern slopes of Ashton Down. Only high-level construction activities may be perceptible.

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
	Thames Path and west of Manor House	Operation (Year 0)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	Upon operation, the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
		Operation (Year 15)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	It is expected that by Year 15 the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
5	View from PRow BPK10 (Poole Keynes Footpath 10) and the River Thames or Isis Trail	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Temporary, short term reversible	Negligible	The Site is located 2.73 km away from the viewpoint. The Site is obscured by the intervening vegetation and topography given it sits on the eastern slopes of Ashton Down. Only high level construction activities may be perceptible.
		Operation (Year 0)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	Upon operation, the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
		Operation (Year 15)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	It is expected that by Year 15 the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
6	View from a minor road (also Sustrans National Cycle Route 45 and the Thames & Severn Way) linking Ewen and Chesterton edging Cirencester	Construction	None	None	Temporary, short term reversible	No change	The Site is located 3.5 km away from the viewpoint, offset from the direction of travel. The Site would be obscured by the intervening vegetation and topography given it sits on the eastern slopes of Ashton Down. Construction activities are not anticipated to be visible and there would be no change to the view.
		Operation (Year 0)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	Upon operation, the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
		Operation (Year 15)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	No change	It is expected that by Year 15 the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
7	View from a track around the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI, north-west of Ashton Down -	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Temporary, short term reversible	Negligible	The Site is located 0.38 km away from the viewpoint and receptors would experience a direct view across to the western slopes of Ashton Down though the Site, itself would not be visible. Only the upper elevations of taller construction activities may be visible (e.g. cranes used during the construction of the digester tanks) due to the position of the digester tankers on the lower slopes of the landform. This would generate a barely discernible change on the view overall.
		Operation (Year 0)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	None	Upon operation, the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views.
		Operation (Year 15)	None	None	Permanent, long term irreversible	None	It is expected that by Year 15 the Proposed Development would continue to be screened and there would be no change to the views
8	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the north-western edge of the Site	Construction	Large	Medium	Temporary, short term reversible	Medium to Substantial	The Site lies adjacent to this viewpoint. Most construction activities would be visible (including construction of the digester tanks, chicken shed / straw building and arc clamps). The cranes, which would break the skyline) would be discernible in the view. Whilst it is assumed construction works would only take place during daylight hours, construction vehicle movements with associated lighting would be perceptible.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
		Operation (Year 0)	Large	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Medium to Substantial	Upon operation, there would be a noticeable change in the view, resulting from the addition of built elements. The chicken shed and straw building would be visible alongside the arc clamps and associated elevations as well as the digester tankers at a lower level. Vehicle movements with associated lighting would be perceptible. Whilst the taller digester tanks would be at a lower level than the chicken shed, straw building and arc clamps, the domed membranes of the tanks would break the skyline. The composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers would be altered. A new native hedgerow with hedgerow tree planting and offsite hedgerow planting would be introduced to define the boundary of the Site in conjunction with the proposed tree and shrub planting blocks to the rear. Planting would be immature and at a lower level to receptors and therefore serve no screening function at Year 0. It should be noted that a full open view of the Site would be over a short length of the route and between two hedgerows.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
		Operation (Year 15)	Medium	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Medium (or Slight to Medium depending on location where new offsite hedgerow planting has not been implemented)	It is expected that by Year 15 the landscape scheme would have matured, with additional enclosure from the proposed hedgerow, offsite hedgerow, hedgerow trees, trees and shrub planting. This would result in a further reduction in the visibility of the built elements and assimilation of the Proposed Development into the wider landscape. Given the relative elevation of receptors to the Proposed Development, whilst the chicken shed, straw building and arc clamps would be largely screened, the upper elevations of the digester tankers, namely the domed membranes would remain apparent.
9	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the south-western edge of the Site	Construction	Large	Medium	Temporary, short term reversible	Medium to Substantial	The Site is close to this viewpoint. Most of the construction activities would be visible (including construction of the digester tanks, the arc clamps, covered lagoons and associated reprofiling of the landform, the gas flue and separator building). The cranes, which would break the skyline) would be discernible in the view. Whilst it is assumed construction works would only take place during daylight hours, construction vehicle movements with associated lighting would be perceptible.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
		Operation (Year 0)	Large	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Medium to Substantial	Upon operation, there would be a noticeable change in the view, resulting from the addition of built elements. The covered lagoons, arc clamps, generator building would be visible alongside the upper elevations of the digester tankers. Vehicle movements with associated lighting would be perceptible. The domed membranes of the digester tanks whilst at a lower level than other structures would break the skyline in certain locations. The composition of the view and the visual amenity it offers would be altered. New native tree and shrub planting and offsite hedgerow planting would be introduced to define the western boundary of the Site. Planting would be immature and therefore serve no screening function at Year 0. It should be noted that there partial and open views of the Site be over a short length of the route and between two hedgerows.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Assessment Stage	Size and Scale of Change	Geographical Extent	Duration and Reversibility	Magnitude of Change	Notes
		Operation (Year 15)	Medium	Medium	Permanent, long term irreversible	Medium (or Slight to Medium depending on location where new offsite hedgerow planting has not been implemented)	It is expected that by Year 15 the landscape scheme would have matured, with additional enclosure from the trees and shrub planting and offsite hedgerow planting. This would result in a further reduction in the visibility of the built elements and assimilation of the Proposed Development into the wider landscape. Given height of the digester tankers, the upper elevations, namely the domed membranes would still remain apparent.

Note: The nature of the recorded changes, including whether adverse, neutral, or positive are recorded in the main LVIA text.

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

Table C-4
Assessment of Visual Effects and Significance

No	Viewpoint Name	Receptor	Sensitivity	Assessment Stage	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects	Nature of Effect
1	View from PRoW BSC3 (South Cerney Footpath 3) off School Lane on the western edge of South Cerney	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium to High	Construction	Slight	Minor to Moderate	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	Slight	Minor to Moderate	
				Operation (Year 15)	Slight	Minor to Moderate	
		Residents on the north-western edge of South Cerney	Medium to High	Construction	Slight	Minor to Moderate	
				Operation (Year 0)	Slight	Minor to Moderate	
				Operation (Year 15)	Slight	Minor to Moderate	

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Receptor	Sensitivity	Assessment Stage	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects	Nature of Effect
2	View from PRow AKEY4 on the edge of South Cerney	Recreational users of PRow	Medium to High	Construction	Slight to Medium	Minor to Moderate	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	Medium	Moderate	
				Operation (Year 15)	Medium	Moderate	
3	View from PRow AKEY24 / (footpath) / AKEY40 (Bridleway) on the edge of Cotswolds Water Park	Recreational users of PRow	Medium to High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	Neutral
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	Neutral
		Users of Cotswolds Water Park	Medium to High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Receptor	Sensitivity	Assessment Stage	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects	Nature of Effect
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	Neutral
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	
4	View from PRoW AKEY6 (footpath) on the edge of a waterbody just north of the Thames Path and west of Manor House	Recreational users of PRoW / promoted recreational route Recreational users of waterbody including swimmers and canoeists	Medium to High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	Neutral
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	Neutral
		Residents of adjacent residential property referred to as Manor House (though it should be noted that this appears to be derelict)	Medium to High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	Neutral
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	Neutral
5	View from PRoW BPK10 (Poole Keynes Footpath 10)	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium to High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Receptor	Sensitivity	Assessment Stage	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects	Nature of Effect
	and the River Thames or Isis Trail			Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	Neutral
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	Neutral
6	View from a minor road (also Sustrans National Cycle Route 45 and the Thames & Severn Way) linking Ewen and Chesterton edging Cirencester	Recreational users (cyclists and walkers)	Medium to High	Construction	No change	No change	No change
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	
		Road users	Low to Medium	Construction	No change	No change	
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	

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ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Receptor	Sensitivity	Assessment Stage	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects	Nature of Effect
7	View from a track around the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI, north-west of Ashton Down -	Recreational users of the Cotswolds Water Park SSSI	Medium to High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	No change	No change	Neutral
				Operation (Year 15)	No change	No change	Neutral
8	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the north-western edge of the Site	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium to High	Construction	Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	
				Operation (Year 15)	Medium or Slight to Medium	Moderate or Minor to Moderate depending on location	

APPENDIX 7C

ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL VISUAL EFFECTS

No	Viewpoint Name	Receptor	Sensitivity	Assessment Stage	Magnitude of Change	Visual Effects	Nature of Effect
9	View from PRoW AKEY4 on the south-western edge of the Site	Recreational users of PRoW	Medium to High	Construction	Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	Adverse
				Operation (Year 0)	Medium to Substantial	Moderate to Major	
				Operation (Year 15)	Medium or Slight to Medium	Moderate or Minor to Moderate depending on location	

Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas (extracts from Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005, Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, January 2006 and Cotswold Water Park Landscape Character Assessment 2009)

Landscape Character –County

- 1.1 At a county level the Site is covered by Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005 and falls within LCT 12 Open Clay Vale, LCA 12a Thames Open Clay Vale. Remaining land within Wiltshire is either covered by LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowland (LCA 11b Minety Rolling Clay Lowland) or LCT 16 Limestone Lowlands (LCA 16 A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands). Land to the north lies either within LCT Dip Slope Lowland or LCT 25 River Basin Lowland as described in the Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessment, January 2006.

Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment, 2005

LCT 11 Rolling Clay Lowland (LCA 11B Minety Rolling Clay Lowland)

- 1.2 A small section of LCT 11 falls into the Study Area to the south and southeast.

Character Area Description:

- 1.3 LCA 11 b: *“The Minety Rolling Clay Lowland lies to the north of the county largely surrounded by other low lying land including areas of Open Clay Vale to north and south. The Minety Rolling Clay Lowland is more wooded and sparsely settled than the others in the type, showing the strong influence of its historic land use as part of the Royal Hunting Forest of Braydon. Substantial blocks of woodland dominate the central part of the area, including some where traditional maintenance methods are still in place as at Ravensroost Wood SSSI and a remnant of wood pasture at Somerford Common. Fields are medium to large, mainly pastoral with a strong hedgerow network in good condition with many mature oak hedgerow trees. The central area is crossed by straight minor roads with sparse dwellings scattered along them and at crossroads. To east and west the pattern is more like the rest of the type with small nucleated villages such as Cloatley, Minety and Charlton with its historic parkland, linked by winding roads. Buildings tend to be of stone at the west of the area such as at Charlton, with brick and render more frequent to the east reflecting the change from Limestone to Clay geology.”*
- 1.4 Key characteristics are described as follows:
- *“Gently rolling lowland based on Clay.*
 - *Mixed arable and pastoral land use with pasture concentrated around the water courses.*
 - *Variable field pattern with network of full hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*

- *Presence of streams marked by lines of willows and crossed by modest bridges.*
- *Woodland blocks including some ancient woodland and wet woodland of high ecological value plus scattered mature trees.*
- *Small number of meadows of neutral and unimproved grassland.*
- *Scattered settlement of towns, small villages and farmsteads, many using vernacular materials of brick, half timber, stone, tiles and thatch.*
- *Roads largely minor and rural with a few trunk roads and sections of motorway.*
- *Views vary from semi-enclosed by intact hedgerows, riparian vegetation and woodland blocks to more open with views to the rising scarps of the chalk uplands.*
- *A largely peaceful, rural landscape.”*

1.5 Positive landscape features of significance

- *“Largely rural, tranquil landscape.*
- *Strong pattern of hedgerows and mature hedgerow trees.*
- *Many streams with rich riparian vegetation.*
- *Woodland blocks of high ecological value.*
- *Small scattered villages of traditional pattern and vernacular materials.*
- *Views to Chalk scarps and Limestone ridge.”*

1.6 Inherent landscape sensitivities:

- *“Rural tranquillity.*
- *Hedgerow pattern.*
- *Watercourses and streamside willows and other riparian vegetation.*
- *Isolated remnant hay meadows.*
- *Woodlands of ecological value.*
- *Views to the scarp slopes of the adjacent chalk downlands.*
- *Settlement pattern of nucleated villages with variety of vernacular building materials.”*

1.7 In terms of condition, the LCT is described as good, with moderate strength of landscape character, with measures to conserve and restore / strengthen.

LCT 12 Open Clay Vale (LCA 12A Thames Open Clay Vale (includes the Site))

Character Area Description:

- 1.8 Area 12A: *“Thames Open Clay Vale is a low lying area centred on the River Thames and its floodplain. It is a largely tranquil, rural landscape, predominantly level, with vertical elements of lines of willow and other wetland trees. The agricultural use of the area combines arable and wet pasture, with open water ditches as well as hedgerows defining boundaries. Field patterns vary from small and irregular to larger, geometric fields often in arable use on dryer or drained gravel areas. A major feature of the area is the large extent of open water resulting from gravel extraction and afterwards put to leisure use as the Cotswold Water Park. The many water bodies with their varied vegetation are of national significance as scarce marl waters (Cotswold Water Park SSSI). There are also a number of hay meadows of high ecological interest. The presence of water is felt throughout this area in the rivers, tributaries, drainage ditches with frequent lines of willows and other wetland vegetation. Settlement is sparse in the Thames Open Clay Vale with a few small settlements such as the village of Ashton Keynes and the town of Cricklade, but mainly scattered isolated farmsteads. Vernacular building materials are brick and stone. Although the Roman Ermine Way, now the busy trunk road of the A419, runs through the area, most of the roads are minor rural routes with small bridges crossing the waterways and ditches.”*
- 1.9 Key characteristics are described as follows:
- *“Level land form with wide open skies and views to ridges and downs.*
 - *Pastoral land use with some arable.*
 - *Large scale geometric fields with hedgerows or open drainage channels defining boundaries.*
 - *Presence of rivers, tributaries, drainage channels and open water bodies.*
 - *Watercourses lined with riparian vegetation with prominent lines of willows (some pollarded).*
 - *Floristically rich hay meadows.*
 - *Settlement pattern varies from large towns and small scattered villages to sparse farmsteads.*
 - *Buildings in varied materials of brick, render and stone.*
 - *Crossed by major transport corridors, and a network of minor roads linking settlements.*
 - *Historic use for transport evident in canals.”*
- 1.10 In terms of condition, the LCT is described as moderate, with moderate strength of landscape character, with measures to conserve and improve.
- 1.11 Positive features include:
- *“Wide open skies and views to ridges and downs.*

- *Rich variety of rivers, tributaries, drainage channels and open water bodies, including scarce marl water habitats.*
- *Watercourses lined with riparian vegetation with prominent lines of willows (some pollarded).*
- *Hay meadows with unimproved grassland of ecological interest.*
- *Villages and farmsteads with vernacular mix of local stone and brick.*
- *Visible archaeology in Roman roads, pattern of medieval villages, long established grazing meadows, and the Kennet and Avon Canal corridor."*

1.12 Inherent landscape sensitivities:

- *"Rural tranquillity.*
- *Hedgerow pattern.*
- *Water bodies and water ways of varied character and ecological value.*
- *Streamside willows and other riparian vegetation.*
- *Remnant hay meadows.*
- *Wide open views.*
- *Settlement pattern of nucleated villages with variety of vernacular building materials."*

LCT 16 Limestone Lowland (LCA 16 A Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands)

1.13 A small section of LCT 16 falls into the Study Area, to the southwest.

Character Area Description:

1.14 LCA 16 A: *"Malmesbury-Corsham Limestone Lowlands is the only area within of the Limestone Lowlands Landscape Type. It covers a large area of northwest Wiltshire occurring between areas of limestone valleys and higher limestone wold to the west (outside the county) and clay to the east. The area is predominantly rolling mixed pastoral and arable farmland, in a pattern of large fields bounded by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. The hedgerows vary in condition with some gappy and low flailed hedges in evidence for example around Grittleton.*

Changes in the underlying geology and land use cause subtle localised variations throughout the area within an overall graduation from higher ground founded on limestone to the west to lower ground on clay to the east. On the higher and steeper ground of the Forest Marble Limestone to the west, and particularly to the south of Corsham, hedgerows are less prominent with dry stone walls dividing the fields. With less visual obstruction, there are panoramic and

distant views the farmland as it falls away gently to the east. There are also some more open areas around Biddestone and to the north of the area. Here a comparative scarcity of tree cover creates a greater sense of exposure. Shallow valleys along the numerous springs and brooks in the area have a more intimate and enclosed feeling. The most prominent of these is along the River Avon where the locally steep valley sides give a sense of containment, and the rich vegetation including willows line the river bank. There are also areas of estate and historic parkland, often associated with large houses. Areas of open pastoral land with numerous standard trees can be found throughout the area, some contain more designed element such as the large avenue near Monkton Farleigh.

A key element in the area is the distinctive limestone villages and towns, connected by a network of winding rural lanes and straight Roman roads. Some brick built dwellings and farmhouses appear to the east of the area reflecting the changing geology. Traditional buildings are frequently centred around village greens and ponds or form a more linear settlement forming a main street along one of the rural roads."

1.15 Key characteristics are described as follows:

- *"Gently undulating lowland farmland over underlying geology of predominantly mudstone and limestone with some pockets of clay.*
- *A peaceful and rural landscape with subtle variations in character relating to the varied geology, topography and water courses.*
- *Mix of permanent pasture and arable farmland.*
- *Strong network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees.*
- *Dry stone walls field boundaries in some areas and around settlements.*
- *Field pattern predominantly large geometric field typical of eighteenth and nineteenth century enclosure with small scale irregular fields of medieval pattern close to close to settlement.*
- *More open areas of higher ground to the west offer panoramic views over the type, elsewhere occasional woodland blocks, copses and frequent hedgerow trees give a greater sense of enclosure, with intermittent views.*
- *Numerous rivers forming shallow valleys, with the watercourses sometimes lined with willows.*
- *Settlements in the form of historic market towns, villages and scattered farmsteads distributed throughout the type linked by network of rural roads.*
- *Traditional buildings of local limestone buildings an outstanding feature.*
- *Presence of historic parkland and estates marked by stone estate walls, grand entrances and parkland trees and avenues."*

- 1.16 In terms of condition, the LCT is described as good, with moderate strength of landscape character, with measures to conserve and restore / strengthen.
- 1.17 Positive landscape features of significance
- *“Peaceful rural landscape.*
 - *Panoramic views from higher ground.*
 - *Strong network of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and occasional woodland copses.*
 - *Dry stone walls.*
 - *Remaining areas with medieval field pattern.*
 - *Historic parklands.*
 - *Remaining areas of ancient woodland, chalk grassland and other areas of ecological diversity.*
 - *Distinctive traditional limestone villages.*
 - *Network of rural road.”*
- 1.18 Inherent landscape sensitivities:
- *“The peaceful rural nature of the area.*
 - *Areas of ecological importance including ancient woodland and chalk grassland.*
 - *The setting, containment and scale of the limestone villages.*
 - *The remaining medieval field patterns and dry stone walls around and close to settlement.*
 - *Historic parkland.”*

Gloucestershire Landscape Character Assessments for The Severn Vale; Upper Thames Valley; Vale of Moreton; Vale of Evesham Fringe (LDA 2006)

LCT 24 Dip Slope Lowland

- 1.19 LCT 24 lies to the north of the Study Area and beyond LCT 24.
- 1.20 Key characteristics are as follows:
- *“Broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly south easterly fall;*
 - *Lowland landform gently dissected by infrequent small streams flowing towards the River Thames and its principal tributaries, and often inconspicuous within the landscape;*

- *Well-managed productive landscape with a general predominance of medium to large scale arable fields and smaller scale improved pastures;*
- *Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with mixed arable farming;*
- *Boundaries comprise a network of hedgerows of varying quality, together with stone walls and post and wire fencing;*
- *Occasional woodland copses and shelterbelts, mainly geometric in form; and*
- *Settlement pattern of intermittent linear and nucleated villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads.”*

Landscape Character – Local

- 1.21 At a District level the Site falls within the Cotswold Water Park Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) which was commissioned by Wiltshire Council and produced by LDA Design in 2009. The LCA covers most of the Study Area with the Site lying within LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vale; LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland.

Cotswold Water Park – Integrated Landscape Character Assessment, LDA Design – August 2009

- 1.22 The Cotswold Water Park LCA covers most of the Study Area, with the Site lying within LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vale (LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland). Remaining LCAs (working in a clockwise direction) are as follows:
- *North: LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland (LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands and 1B The Ampney Lowlands) lie to the north.*
 - *North-east LCT 2 Combrash Limestone Lowland (LCA 2B Driffields Lowlands).*
 - *East: LCA 3B Down Ampney and Mewsey Clay Vale Farmland lies to the east.*
 - *South: LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland lies to the south*
 - *West and North-West: To the west and north-west lies LCT 2 Combrash Limestone Lowland (LCA 2a Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands)*

- 1.23 The following section summarises the key characteristics of each relevant LCT and associated LCA:

LCT 3 River Basin Clay Vale

- 1.24 Key characteristics are described as follows:
- *“Low lying, flat to very gently undulating floodplain landscape underlain by extensive deposits of alluvial clay and silt, and sand and gravel that mask the solid geology;*
 - *Isolated hillocks associated with exposures of the Oxford Clay form locally significant features;*

- *Strong presence of water reflected in rivers, streams, ditches and extensive network of restored sand and gravel extraction sites;*
- *Lush wet meadows and wide floodplain pastures, with watercourses often lined with riparian vegetation, including frequent lines of pollarded willows;*
- *Mosaic of wetland and riparian habitats, together with water based recreational uses associated with lakes created through the restoration of gravel extraction sites;*
- *Combination of pastoral land, often in smaller scale fields and closely associated with watercourses and larger scale fields under arable cultivation;*
- *Pattern of nucleated and linear settlements dispersed throughout the landscape, including occasional small towns and large villages, hamlets and scattered farmsteads and dwellings, with vernacular buildings constructed in stone and brick;*
- *Modern waterside developments comprising holiday or second homes with distinctive architectural style and often located in association with restored lake areas;*
- *Scattered pattern of woodland plantations and copses together with vegetation closely associated with river courses and standing areas of water, which in places results in a sense of enclosure and more intimate landscape; and*
- *Limited major roads and a wider network of minor roads providing access to the floodplain landscape."*

1.25 **LCA 3A South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetland (which includes the Site):** is "derived from the combination of an existing settled landscape of small mainly stone built village settlement with a dynamic and evolving wetland landscape." The large-scale sand and gravel extraction and the post extraction created lakes are a dominant influence on the LCA. It is noted that the "visual influence of the lakes is limited as a result of regenerating scrub vegetation and areas of woodland" resulting in a "small to medium scale landscape which feels enclosed, despite the sequence of wetlands and lakes."

1.26 The LCA has a network of minor roads which align with the lakes, "broadly running north-south and east-west and the lakes and the road network combine to make a strong overall landscape pattern, with the smooth surfaces of the water bodies contrasting strongly with the texture of the surrounding trees and vegetation." Several waterbodies are of very important nature conservation value. Beyond the waterbodies landuse is "small scale, regularly enclosed pasture fields with horse and sheep grazing separated by low, well maintained and regularly trimmed hedgerows dominant valley bottoms" with "occasional medium scale arable fields aligning the shallow slopes and occasional local hillocks that rise above the floodplains". Holiday and second homes contradict the local vernacular of surrounding villages.

1.27 **LCA 3B Down Amney and Meysey Clay Vale Farmland:** is a "low lying and predominantly flat landscape" with occasional undulations. "Arable agriculture tends to predominate as a land use and field sizes are generally larger in scale." Whilst there are no extensive areas of woodland the deciduous woodlands of Dukes Brake and Vines Brake are notable feature located to the north of Latton and

within the study area. The LCA goes on to state that the “*large scale field pattern*” combined “with the distant expansive views” creates the impression of a simple and open landscape. Aside from Down Amenity and Latton; “*a compact village*” the remaining landscape is “*very sparsely settled, limited to a few isolated farms.*” By comparison with the western and eastern sectors, “*this area has experienced much less gravel extraction and the landscape character is therefore more influenced by agricultural intensification than restoration to lakes.*”

- 1.28 **LCA 3D Swill and Derry Brook Clay Vale Farmland:** is a low-lying area of predominantly permanent pasture farmland to the south of the South Cerney and Ashton Keynes Settled Wetlands. The area appears flat, though there is a gentle fall to the River Thames. It is drained by two watercourses with numerous ditches “*together with many small ponds, providing evidence of the high water table.*” The farmland “*has not been significantly affected by gravel extraction operations. The quiet, pastoral landscape character is derived from the pattern of pasture fields, riparian vegetation with pollarded willows, and a largely intact network of hawthorn hedgerows with intermittent, mainly oak and some ash hedgerow trees. Along the watercourses, and particularly the Swill Brook, there are also areas of riparian ash and willow / alder carr woodland.*” The LCA adds that there are no villages “*and settlement is confined to a dispersed pattern of farms, and clusters of dwellings that form a series of hamlets..... Field pattern is characterised by generally small to medium sized fields. Smaller fields, sometimes irregular in form, are particularly evident around the hamlets.*”
- 1.29 The Clattinger Farm Nature Reserve, located in the north-western section of the Character Area to the north of Swill Brook is designated as a “*SSSI and a candidate SAC, it is considered to be the finest remaining example of enclosed lowland grassland in the country and an important remnant of a traditional hay meadow.*”
- 1.30 In terms of the LCT overall, positive landscape features of significance include:
- “*Low lying, flat to very gently undulating floodplain with isolated hillocks;*
 - *Wide open skies and intermittent distant views to ridges and chalk escarpment;*
 - *Mosaic of wetland and riparian habitats with rivers, streams, drainage channels and extensive network of lakes, including scarce marl water habitats;*
 - *Lush wet meadows and wide floodplain pastures, with watercourses often lined with riparian vegetation interspersed with arable land with intermittent hedgerow enclosure;*
 - *Woodlands surrounding lakes and within agricultural land, and associated with river courses;*
 - *High biodiversity value of wetland habitats, species rich hay meadows and unimproved grassland;*
 - *Conspicuous presence of water based recreational uses associated with lakes and associated modern waterside developments with distinctive architectural styles;*
 - *Dispersed pattern of rural settlements and farmsteads with many dwellings constructed in local vernacular;*
 - *Limited major roads and a wider network of rural roads providing access to the floodplain landscape;*

- *Visible archaeology in Roman roads, pattern of Saxon and medieval towns and villages, field patterns and remnant ridge and furrow, long established grazing meadows, and former canal and railway routes.*

1.31 The LCT's Condition Statement states that overall, the *"agricultural areas are of a Medium condition. Nevertheless some of the more remote agricultural areas, detached from the principal areas of gravel extraction activity and wetlands, and where areas of unimproved meadow grassland and wet meadows still remain, are in a Good condition."* *"The areas focused around the extensive areas of lakes and associated marginal land, and interspersed with areas of gravel extraction, also present a range of conditions. The rich wetland habitats of high biodiversity value are generally in a Good condition. In contrast, the more intensively used recreational facilities can vary from Good and well resolved, to Poor condition where the new facilities often present an immature and poorly detailed setting. The areas of juvenile and semi-mature landscapes that have been established in the post restoration stages of the gravel extraction sites also present a Medium to Poor condition, particularly in the early stages. Overall, the condition of the River Basin Clay Vale is considered to be Medium."*

1.32 Strength of character states that *"There are some highly rural, tranquil areas still remaining within the River Basin Clay Vale of the CWP through which flows a network of rivers and streams with their lush vegetation, and a dispersed pattern of small villages and farmsteads of local vernacular materials. Elsewhere, this unified and High strength of character is affected by the influence of the gravel extraction activities; the mosaic of wetlands and lakes of varying condition and enclosure; the numerous recreational facilities; and the busy transport corridors that cross the area. Together, these dominant influences have affected the overall strength of character which is considered to be Moderate."*

1.33 Inherent landscape sensitivities include the following:

- *"Rural tranquillity in the more remote areas;*
- *The varied character and ecological value of the mosaic of wetlands, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation, and floodplains meadows;*
- *Pattern of fields and diverse field boundaries, from ditches and channels to hedges and groups or lines of willow, poplar and alder.*
- *Remnant hay meadows and unimproved grasslands of high ecological value;*
- *Settlement pattern of dispersed mainly nucleated villages with historic cores of local vernacular buildings materials;*
- *Wide open views."*

1.34 Remaining descriptions of LCTs are as follows:

LCT 1 Dip Slope Limestone Lowland

Key characteristics are described as follows:

- *"Broad area of gently sloping, undulating lowland with a predominantly south-easterly fall;*
- *Lowland landform gently dissected by infrequent small streams flowing towards the River Thames and its principal tributaries, and often inconspicuous within the landscape;*

- *Well-managed productive landscape with a general predominance of medium to large scale arable fields and smaller scale improved pastures;*
- *Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with mixed arable farming;*
- *Boundaries comprise a network of hedgerows of varying quality, together with stone walls and post and wire fencing;*
- *Occasional woodland copses and shelterbelts, mainly geometric in form; and*
- *Settlement pattern of intermittent linear and nucleated villages, hamlets and isolated farmsteads."*

- 1.35 **LCA 1A Kemble Lowlands:** This LCA *"has a gently sloping mainly south-easterly grain",* with small tributary watercourses *"often marked by scattered trees and scrubby vegetation".* There is a *"consistent pattern of well managed, productive mixed arable and grazed pastoral fields extends across the area, with a predominance of large scale arable fields resulting in a simple, uniform landscape in places. Pastoral fields are scattered across the area".* Fields are *"enclosed either by low stone walls, or hedgerows of varying condition."* Whilst *"woodlands are not extensive, where they do occur they are generally small to medium in scale, geometric in form, and predominantly of broadleaved or mixed composition..... Woodlands within the surrounding landscape to the north and south also often punctuate the horizon and restrict long distance views."* The LCA retains *"a largely rural character, and beyond the largest settlement of Kemble, there is a pattern of scattered farmsteads and detached dwellings."*
- 1.36 **LCA 1B The Ampney Lowlands:** The LCA has a *"gently sloping, mainly south-easterly grain with subtle undulations, frequently marked by minor watercourses or dry valleys."* *"Large scale, well managed arable fields generally predominate",* interspersed with small scale pastoral fields There are a *"number of small disused quarries, known locally as delves".* Where *"hedgerows are present, wooden post and wire or post and rail fences reinforce the hedgerows where they have become gappy. Occasional mature trees are scattered along field boundaries";* often perceived as tree lines across the landscape and with small woodland copses create the local impression of a relatively well treed landscape."
- 1.37 Villages and hamlets, most linear in form are scattered across the Character Area, with a greater concentration to the west. Surrounding a number of farms are *"small rectangular woodland copses providing a sense of enclosure and shelter".* The western side of the LCA is *"a network of principal roads diverge on Cirencester, notably the A417, A417(T), and the A419."*
- 1.38 In terms of the LCT positive landscape features of significance are as follows:
- *"Peaceful rural landscape with subtle variations in character and enclosure;*
 - *Productive agricultural landscape of improved pasture and arable land with a well managed character;*
 - *Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with arable farming providing visual diversity;*
 - *Strong network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees interspersed with dry stone walls defining a mosaic of medium to large scale agricultural fields;*

- Intermittent woodland copses and rectilinear shelterbelts forming prominent features and local enclosure;
- Occasional areas of ancient woodland and remnants of calcareous and neutral grassland imparting a richness to the local landscape;
- Broad panoramas and distant views to the chalk escarpment of the Marlborough Downs from more open and elevated areas;
- Occasional historic houses and associated parklands and more formal planting within the wider landscape beyond the CWP;
- Dispersed pattern of limestone villages, hamlets and farmsteads displaying the distinctive Cotswolds local vernacular; and
- Network of quiet rural roads with little through traffic contributing to the remote character."

1.39 The LCT's condition statement describes the condition *"as generally **Good** with intact hedgerows and dry stone walls, and traditional villages of vernacular stone dwellings. In some areas, however, there is evidence of elements in **Poor** condition such as gappy and flailed hedgerows; and old stone walls, either in a dilapidated condition or obscured by outgrown hedgerows. In some villages there are inappropriate buildings that do not accord with the Cotswold vernacular or adversely affect the overall condition and character of the settlement. An increase in equestrian pastures located close to a number of the settlements, and the associated temporary fences, devalue the otherwise strong unity and condition of the setting of the villages, many of which are designated as Conservation Areas."*

1.40 The LCT's strength of character is described as: *"The traditional limestone settlements within the wider area of the Dip Slope Limestone Lowland Landscape Type create a strong and unified character. This is further reinforced by the presence of dry stone walls to both field and property boundaries. However, other elements such as the agricultural land use, landform and field boundaries vary subtly across the type and as a consequence make it less distinctive and cohesive. The strength of character overall is therefore judged as **Moderate**."*

1.41 Inherent Landscape Sensitivities include the following:

- "Peaceful, rural and remote nature of the area;
- The character and quality of the agricultural landscape;
- The traditional structure and visual unity and setting of the village settlements with many dwellings displaying characteristics that are typical of the local vernacular;
- The remaining network of dry stone walls particularly around and close to settlements;
- Areas of high ecological value including ancient woodland and unimproved grasslands;
- Evidence of past occupation including enclosure fields, areas of historic parkland, Roman road network, medieval settlement sites and prehistoric earthworks"

LCT 2 Cornbrash Limestone Lowlands

1.42 Key characteristics of relevance include:

- *“Very gently sloping landform with subtle undulations linked to small scale tributary valleys that cross the area;*
- *Network of tributary streams draining from the Dip-Slope Limestone Lowland towards the River Thames, their course often marked by scattered lines and groups of trees;*
- *Predominance of large scale arable fields bounded by a network of hedgerows of varying quality and occasional stone walls;*
- *Vertical elements such as hedgerow trees gain visual prominence;*
- *Fertile soils derived from the Cornbrash Formation bedrock;*
- *Dispersed settlement pattern of mainly linear or nucleated villages, hamlets and farmsteads;*
- *Occasional mainly geometric woodland copses, comprising broadleaf and coniferous plantations;*
- *Single principal road bounds or crosses the area together with a limited number of local, and generally straight rural roads; and*
- *Occasional wide views over productive farmland, limited only by farm copses and woodlands.”*

- 1.43 **LCA 2A Poole Keynes and Ewen Lowlands:** The LCA is a *“medium to large scale landscape with a very gently undulating landform that can give the impression of being flat”*. There is a *“general sense of openness and expansiveness with long distance views to the south, and glimpsed views of the Dip Slope Limestone Lowlands to the north. Vertical features also gain visual prominence in the open landscape and the eye is often drawn to a number of high voltage pylons.”*
- 1.44 Water features are quite limited. In the *“eastern section of the LCA arable cultivation is predominant with large scale regular fields, whilst in the western section there are a wider variety of land uses including scrubby pasture, semi-improved sheep pasture, tree plantations as well as arable cultivation, all in fields of varying sizes from small to large. Low to medium, well managed and regularly trimmed hedgerows form the common field boundary in the agricultural landscape, punctuated by occasional isolated mature hedgerow oak trees. The hedgerow network is becoming gappy in places with hedgerows commonly reinforced with post and wire, particularly in the western part. There is also evidence of field amalgamation, and some arable fields are unfenced adjacent to farm tracks in the eastern section.”*
- 1.45 There are *“scattered and predominantly deciduous woodland copses throughout the area. These copses combine with intermittent mature hedge trees to create a well wooded horizon in many areas. There is also evidence of new tree planting along minor roads and tracks leading to farms.”*
- 1.46 A network of minor roads provides access across the area. *“The linear and dispersed settlement of Ewen straddles the eastern and western sections of the LCA. Areas of parkland landscape and associated tree avenues on the outskirts of the settlement are a notable local feature.”* Beyond *“the settlements of Ewen and Poole Keynes, settlement is generally very limited in the wider landscape and generally consists of scattered farms, associated outbuildings and isolated dwellings, usually constructed from stone, and either lying adjacent to local roads or set back on tracks.”*

- 1.47 **LCA 2B Driffield Lowlands:** This LCA is a *“very gently undulating and open, expansive landscape”*. Although perceived as flat, there are occasional localised undulations. There are *“distant views to the north towards the Dip Slope Limestone Lowlands, and also to the Thames River Basin Lowland to the south”*. A number of watercourses *“drain the area and ditches are often found either aligning field boundaries or extending along local roads.”*
- 1.48 The predominant land uses are *“an extensive network of large to medium scale arable fields with smaller pasture fields commonly aligning watercourses or located adjacent to settlements.....Low, well maintained and regularly trimmed hedgerows predominate.....”*. In places *“hedgerows are quite overgrown, and where they are maintained at a low height, they have often become gappy and reinforced with post and wire. The low height of the hedgerows between fields allows extensive views across the Driffield Lowlands and scattered mature hedgerow trees punctuating the landscape gain visual prominence in the perceived flat landscape.”* Several *“woodland copses are scattered throughout the area so that views towards the horizon line are often dominated by distant woodland. Overgrown field boundaries increase the tree cover and sense of a wooded cover in some areas.”*
- 1.49 The principal roads within the LCA comprise the A417 and the A419(T). Noise *“generated by the traffic using these roads, and the visual impact of the lighting infrastructure, together have an intrusive effect within an otherwise rural landscape. Elsewhere, a network of minor roads extends across the landscape, several of which terminate at farms in dead-ends”*. Overall, *“the influence of settlement is very limited with only distant views to settlement edges visible from the wider landscape and views towards occasional isolated farms and dwellings, largely constructed from stone, punctuating the landscape.”* Other notable features *“include the South Cerney Army Station”*. Large rectangular aircraft hangars are prominent features in the landscape.
- 1.50 Positive landscape features of significance associated with this LCT are:
- *“Simple and quiet rural landscape with very subtle variations in landform;*
 - *Productive agricultural landscape of predominantly arable land with a well managed character;*
 - *Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with arable farming providing visual diversity;*
 - *Network of hedgerows with hedgerow trees delineating the mosaic of mainly large scale agricultural fields;*
 - *Occasional copses, and pattern of rectilinear shelterbelts and larger areas of woodland forming locally significant features and enclosure;*
 - *Intermittent wide views across arable fields and occasional distant views to the chalk escarpment of Marlborough Downs from open areas with more limited hedgerow cover;*
 - *Sparse settlement pattern contributing to the quiet and simple character with occasional dispersed limestone villages, compact hamlets and farmsteads and dwellings displaying the distinctive Cotswolds local vernacular; and*

- *Network of quiet rural roads with little through traffic contributing to the remote character.*

- 1.51 The LCT's condition statement describes the LCT as *"generally Good with intact hedgerows, and occasional dispersed villages or hamlets of mainly vernacular stone dwellings. In some areas, however, there is evidence of elements in Poor condition such as gappy and flailed hedgerows or conversely outgrown hedgerows. In some villages there are inappropriate buildings that do not accord with the Cotswold vernacular or adversely affect the overall condition and character of the settlement. Occasional equestrian pastures are evident on the perimeter of some settlements and the associated temporary fences devalue the otherwise strong unity and condition of the setting of the villages, some of which are designated as Conservation Areas."*
- 1.52 In terms of strength of character, the settlements, *"many of which display the traditional Cotswold vernacular, create a strong and unified character. However, other elements such as the agricultural land use, subdued landform and hedgerow field boundaries vary subtly across the type and as a consequence make it less distinctive and cohesive. The strength of character overall is therefore judged as **Moderate**."*
- 1.53 Inherent landscape sensitivities are as follows:
- *"Rural and remote nature of the area;*
 - *The character and quality of the agricultural landscape;*
 - *The traditional structure and visual unity and setting of the dispersed settlements with many dwellings displaying characteristics that are typical of the local vernacular;*
 - *Assemblages of historic landscape features that are evidence of progressive layers of past occupation notably enclosure fields, Roman road network, Saxon settlement and burial ground, and Iron Age earthworks; and*
 - *Remnant areas of high ecological value mainly comprising occasional areas of ancient woodland and dispersed unimproved grasslands."*

LCT 4 Rolling Clay Lowland Farmland

- 1.54 Key characteristics are as follows:
- *"Gently rolling lowland underlain by Oxford Clay or alluvial deposits;*
 - *Wetland features on the lower ground, including small streams, open water ditches and marked by lines of mature willows;*
 - *Mixed arable and pastoral land use, but with a predominance of pasture, and some ridge and furrow patterns evident;*
 - *Variable field pattern ranging from small and irregular, to medium sized and regular shaped enclosures with a network of continuous hedgerows and mature oak and ash hedgerow trees;*

- *Limited woodland cover but some ancient woodland and wet woodland of high ecological value in the wider area plus scattered mature trees;*
- *Small number of wetland and meadows of neutral and unimproved grassland, and of nature conservation interest;*
- *Dispersed settlement of villages and farmsteads, generally on locally higher ground, many using vernacular materials of stone and local brick, half timber, tiles and thatch;*
- *Roads largely confined to minor and rural;*
- *Views often contained by intact hedgerows, riparian vegetation and woodland blocks with intermittent more open views to the rising slopes of the Settled Limestone Ridge and across the Upper Thames floodplain; and*
- *A largely peaceful, rural landscape."*

1.55 **LCA 4A Chelworth Rolling Clay Lowland:** The LCA "forms a transition between the flatter, wetter landscapes with some open water ditches and waterside willows, through to a more pastoral landscape of mixed pasture and arable with mature hedgerows and hedgerow oak trees. Field sizes vary from small and irregular, especially in the east of the area and close to the River Key, to medium sized regular fields from later periods of enclosure. Whilst hedgerows in good condition are typical as field boundaries, some stone walls are also found, especially in the vicinity of settlements." Woodland is largely absent apart from "the large plantation at Red Lodge containing the house and farm, forms a significant visual backdrop to views in the western part of the area. While views are often constrained by the intervening hedges in the gently undulating ground, glimpses to the higher ground to the south forming the hills of Purton and Broad Blunsdon are evident, as well as wide views over the Thames Clay Vale to the north."

1.56 Settlement is dispersed throughout the area and often located on locally elevated ground, most "vernacular buildings are built of limestone from the Cotswolds, with brick and clay or stone roof tiles also in evidence."

1.57 Positive landscape features of significance associated with this LCT are as follows:

- *"A predominantly peaceful rural landscape with gently rolling landform and rising slopes to the south;*
- *Productive agricultural landscape of mixed arable and improved pasture with a well managed character;*
- *Seasonal variations in colour and texture associated with areas of arable farming providing visual diversity;*
- *Strong pattern of hedgerows and mature, mainly oak and ash hedgerow trees enclosing a mosaic of fields ranging from small scale irregular to medium sized enclosures;*

- *Network of streams and ditches with rich riparian vegetation including pollarded willows.*
- *Some areas of ancient woodland and wet woodland of high ecological value in the wider area*
- *Areas of neutral and unimproved neutral grassland imparting a richness to the local landscape;*
- *Intermittent views across the Thames floodplain and rising Limestone ridge to the south from more open and elevated areas;*
- *Dispersed pattern of settlements and farmsteads with a mix of traditional local vernacular representing both Cotswolds limestone and local brick influences; and*
- *Network of quiet rural roads with little through traffic contributing to the peaceful rural character.”*

1.58 The LCT’s condition statement explains that it is *“generally judged as Good. These are areas of mixed pastoral and arable farmland with mainly intact hedgerows, some woodlands and hay meadows of high ecological value and towns and villages of vernacular materials. There are a few elements in Poor condition such as gappy and flailed hedgerow and hedgerow trees that are over-mature with few replacement young trees. In some settlements there are inappropriate buildings that do not accord with the local vernacular or adversely affect the overall condition and character of the settlement. “*

1.59 In terms of strength of character, the LCT is *“generally a peaceful rural landscape with intact hedgerows, intermittent woodlands and areas of hay meadows and occasional towns and small villages and dispersed farmsteads of local vernacular materials. These contribute to an overall impression of a mature and established landscape. However, within the wider area to the south of the CWP the changing pattern of the land use of mixed arable and pastoral farming, equestrian uses, and the influence of urban fringe development and busier road corridors, and the resultant noise and light pollution, reduce the overall strength of character of the type to Moderate.”*

1.60 Inherent landscape sensitivities are as follows:

- *“The generally peaceful nature of the rural areas;*
- *The character and quality of the agricultural landscape including the hedgerow network and hedgerow trees;*
- *Watercourses and streamside willows and other riparian vegetation.*
- *The traditional structure and visual unity and setting of the dispersed settlements with many dwellings displaying characteristics that are typical of the local vernacular;*
- *Assemblages of historic landscape features that are evidence of progressive layers of past occupation notably medieval and enclosure fields, remnants of ridge and furrow, and the Saxon settlement of Cricklade; and*

- *Areas of high ecological value including species rich hay meadows and occasional areas of ancient woodland.”*