

Proposed Solar PV Development

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Appendix 7.3 Landscape Sensitivity

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APPENDIX 7.3: LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT

1. This appendix provides a detailed review of value and susceptibility criteria to inform the landscape sensitivity judgements within the LVIA. The sensitivity of the host landscape character areas are assessed below. Landscape sensitivity is not absolute and can only be defined in relation to each development and its location. To assess the sensitivity of a particular landscape it is good practice to consider the value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the particular form of change likely to result from the Proposed Development. Assessment text relates to sensitivity of the landscape receptor as a whole, to the development of the type proposed, with additional comments regarding the Site Area where relevant. In the main this has been taken from the Darlington Landscape Character Assessment (quotes shown in italics) as well as site observations. The table below is based on guidance provided within LI TGN 02/21 - specifically table 1 within that document.

Host Landscape: 6 Great Stainton Farmland

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or landscape designations	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	<i>“The woodlands in the centre-east of this landscape character area provide shelter and habitats for various species, while broad verges and small becks may act as pathways for species travelling between habitats. Newton Ketton Meadow is a small SSSI in the centre of the area, and there is a local wildlife site at Carr House Pond.”</i>	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Some listed buildings a non-scheduled archaeology. <i>“The course of a Roman road runs through the area.”</i>	Community
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	Generally in good condition with some areas where hedges have been replaced by fences and/or field sizes are larger – notably within and nearby to Panel Areas A and B, south of Braffteron and around Hauxley Farm. Limited modern development except for power lines, some larger modern barns and Moor House wind farm.	Regional

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	No specific cultural associations noted.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/or with an important relationship to a settlement.	The prominent hilltop position of Great Stainton and its church spire form a landmark. <i>“Irregular patterns of small fields remain around villages, giving a sense of time depth.”</i>	Regional
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	There is a good network of rights of way through the area, which has few roads.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particularly visual.	An attractive rural landscape contrasting with the urban areas nearby.	Regional

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	<i>"The area is generally quiet with few roads passing through, and there are many opportunities to access this rural landscape."</i> Local roads can be busy during peak hours.	Community
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	No specific function.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Community
Susceptibility				
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	<i>"... large in scale on elevated ridges, but much smaller in scale in visually contained areas. Many human-scale features including trees and farmsteads, and small villages."</i>	High/medium
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	<i>"A more rolling terrain than elsewhere in the Borough, and relatively elevated, with rounded hills and enclosed valleys, though with few strongly distinctive landforms."</i>	High/medium
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	Mixed – as noted above.	Medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	Areas of simple or regular landcover or linear or sweeping lines and patterns	Some larger rectilinear fields, with irregular patterns from becks woodlands and smaller fields around settlement.	Medium
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings	Established, traditional or historic built character	Villages and farms have traditional built character. Modern barns, Moor House wind farm and power lines are larger scale and contemporary.	Medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
	infrastructure, settlements			
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>“elevated areas are widely visible, particularly from the flatter ground to the south and east ... and the rising ground provides containment to the Bishopton Vale ... Skerne Valley is framed by this landscape, which is also seen from locations in County Durham.”</i>	High/ medium
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	<i>“Skylines in this area are formed by the rounded hills and ridges of higher ground, often with trees, though these are not particularly distinctive for the most part.”</i>	Medium
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				High/ medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium

Host Landscape: 7 Bishopton Vale

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Value attached to Landscapes				
Designated scenic quality	No specific designation	National or regional designation	No national or landscape designations	Community
Natural Heritage	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	Low presence of ecological or geological / geomorphological interest.	<i>“In terms of semi-natural habitats, there are series of small water-bodies in the lower, broader part of the vale in the centre and east of the area, though these are not protected by designation.”</i>	Community
Cultural Heritage	Low presence of archaeology or historical interests	High presence of archaeology or historical interests	Castle Hill at Bishopton is a Schedules Monument. Bishopton and Sadberge have Conservation Areas and there are a number of listed buildings.	Regional

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Landscape condition/ quality	Landscape in a poor state of repair with incongruous elements	Landscape fully intact in good condition with limited incongruous elements	<i>“The Bishopton Vale is rural but for the most part has an intensive, man-modified character arising from historical drainage and relatively few trees or hedges.”</i>	Community
Cultural associations	No strong associations with notable people, events or the arts.	Strong cultural associations with notable people, events or the arts, which contribute to perceptions of natural beauty.	No specific cultural associations noted.	Community
Distinctiveness	Commonplace elements and features, or the landscape itself. Lacking distinctive and strongly expressed character and with no important relationship to a settlement.	Presence of rare elements or features or rarity of the landscape itself. Landscape with a distinctive and clearly expressed character and/ot with an important relationship to a settlement.	<i>“Time depth is most evident in the motte and extensive earthworks around Bishopton. Elsewhere there are fewer distinctive landscape features, though there is a series of ponds along the Newbiggin Beck.”</i>	Regional/ community
Amenity and recreation	Limited amenity/recreational function where experience of the landscape is important	Well used for recreation where experience of the landscape is important; or forms part of a view that is important to a recreational experience. May contain National Trails or other long distance routes.	There is a good network of Public Right of Way (PRoW) and few roads.	Community
Perceptual (Scenic)	Landscape with no particular scenic / visual appeal.	Landscape with strong appeal to the senses, particularly visual.	Intensive man-made character as noted above, power lines are noticeable crossing the open landscape. Traditional villages have an attractive historic character as recognised by Conservation Areas.	Community
Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquility)	Busy with evidence of human activity, well-lit.	Remote, peaceful or with a sense of wildness. Dark skies.	Rural and relatively quiet due to limited road access, but not wild.	Community

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
Function	No important blue/green infrastructure function or important relationship with national landscape designation.	Landscape with important blue/green infrastructure function or strong relationship that is important to a national landscape designation.	No specific function.	Community
Overall Judgement of Value				Community
Susceptibility				
Scale	Landscapes where scale of development is similar to or smaller than scale of receiving landscape	Landscapes where scale of development is larger than scale of receiving landscape	<i>“Very large scale landscape across most of the vale, comprising large arable fields with limited enclosure. Areas of pasture in the north-east and fields around villages tend to be smaller in scale and have more trees as well as human-scale traditional buildings and houses”</i>	Medium/ low
Landform	Smooth regular flowing, or uniform landscapes	Dramatic and rugged landscapes	<i>“A generally flat or very gently undulating landscape with limited topographic variety, except around the Bishopton Beck.”</i>	Low
Openness/enclosure	Enclosed and sheltered landscapes	Open and exposed landscapes	<i>“...contained by rising ground to the north and south. The vale becomes broader and more open to the east of the area.” Large arable fields and “no significant woodland plantations in this area, but occasional clumps of ash trees do occur, with riparian scrub along watercourses.”</i>	High/ medium
Land cover, complexity and patterns	Complex, intimate or mosaic cover or complex or irregular patterns	Areas of simple or regular landcover or linear or sweeping lines and patterns	Typically rectilinear field patterns becoming more complex around villages.	Medium/low
Built Environment	Contemporary masts, pylons, industrial elements, buildings infrastructure, settlements	Established, traditional or historic built character	Villages have a traditional character, the countryside around has large scale modern agriculture and power lines.	Low
Views intervisibility	Visually contained and have limited inward or outward views	Extensive views within or of the area with distant horizons.	<i>“The area is overlooked from higher ground to south, around Sadberge, and north from the Great Stainton area. There are long views along the vale and across the flat landscape towards</i>	High/ medium

Factors affecting sensitivity	Lower Sensitivity to Solar Development	Higher Sensitivity to Solar Development	Explanation	Judgement
			<i>Stockton and Tees and Hartlepool, and to the edge of the North York Moors to the south.</i>	
Landscapes that form settings, skylines, backdrops, focal points	Low lying landscapes without distinctive landform or horizon	Areas with strong features, focal points that define the setting or skyline	<i>"This landscape does not contribute to skyline character. Skylines are indistinct or obscured by scattered trees."</i>	Low
Overall Judgement of Susceptibility				Medium
Overall Judgement of Sensitivity				Medium/ low