



ARCUS

NEILSTON GREENER GRID PARK

LAND OFF GLENIFFER ROAD, PAISLEY

APPENDIX 1: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

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Statkraft



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1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) undertaken to support the planning application ('the Application'), submitted to Renfrewshire Council ('the Council') by Arcus Consultancy Services Ltd ('Arcus'), on behalf of Statkraft UK Ltd ('the Applicant') for the development of a Greener Grid Park ('the Development') at Land off Gleniffer Road (B775) neighbouring the existing Neilston Substation ('the Site').

The LVA has been undertaken by a Chartered Landscape Architect in accordance with good practice guidance, and is informed by local landscape character assessments, site survey, and other relevant guidance as specified.

2 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

2.1 The Development

The Development is located on agricultural grazing land, west of the B775 road, and the Neilston Substation, Renfrewshire.

The Development, as illustrated on the Planning Drawing 2: Site Layout Plan, comprises of the following components:

- Battery storage units;
- Energy management building containing energy management modules, coolers, and e-houses;
- Fire wall;
- Electrical infrastructure including inverters, transformers, grid connection, switchgear and underground cabling;
- Temporary compound area;
- Control room;
- New site entrance;
- On site access track and parking area;
- Security perimeter fencing;
- Security columns; and
- Native hedgerow and tree planting.

The battery storage units would be 2.6 m in height, while the energy management structure would be 10 m in height, and fire wall 14 m in height. Security columns around the perimeter would be 6 m height and fencing 3.4m in height.

A visibility splay at the entrance to the B775 has been identified (shown on Appendix 4: Landscape Planting Plan), with no vegetation within the 4.5 x 215 m visibility splay area.

The area within the site boundary totals approximately 14 hectares ('ha'). A Site Layout Plan is appended to this Application as Planning Drawing 2.

The construction period of the Development will last approximately 18-24 months.

2.2 LVA Methodology & Relevant Guidelines

The methodology for the LVA is included in Annex A.1 and is based on current best practice guidance, namely:

- Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013, Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition ('GLVIA3');
- The Landscape Institute (2013), GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13¹;

¹ The Landscape Institute (2015) GLVIA3 – Statements of Clarification [Online] Available at: <https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/glvia3-clarifications/> (Last accessed 01.11.20)

- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 2019, The Landscape Institute²;
- SNH and The Countryside Agency (2002) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for Scotland and England³; and
- SNH and the Countryside Agency (2002) Topic Paper 6: Techniques and Criteria for Judging Capacity and Sensitivity.

2.3 Limitations of the Assessment

The assessment of residential properties includes a number of properties accessed from private farm tracks / roads and due to the limitations of access they have been evaluated from the nearest public road, or footpath, with the aid of aerial photographs. In these cases, the assessment should therefore be regarded as an informed estimate of the likely visual effects.

2.4 Landscape and Visual Assessment Methodology

The two components of LVA referred to throughout the report are based on the following definitions:

- 'Assessment of landscape effects: assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right'⁴; and
- 'Assessment of visual effects: assessing effects on specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people.'⁵

Development may have a direct (physical) effect on the landscape in which it is located as well as an indirect or perceived effect from landscape character areas surrounding it. The potential landscape effects, occurring during the construction of the Development, and operational stages of the battery storage may therefore include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Changes to landscape elements: the addition of new elements or the removal of vegetation, and buildings and other characteristic elements of the landscape character type;
- Changes to landscape qualities: degradation, erosion, or reinforcement of landscape elements and patterns, and perceptual characteristics, particularly those that form key characteristic elements of landscape character types;
- Changes to landscape character: landscape and character may be affected through the effect on characteristic elements (including perceptual characteristics), landscape patterns and attributes and the cumulative addition of new features, the magnitude and presence of which is sufficient to alter a notable part of the overall landscape character type of a particular area; and
- Cumulative landscape effects: where more than one development may lead to a potential landscape effect.

Visual effects are concerned wholly with the effect of development on visual receptors and general visual amenity. Visual effects are identified for different receptors (people) who would experience the view such as at their places of residence, during recreational activities, at work, or when travelling through the area. Visual effects may include the following:

² The Landscape Institute, *Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19*, 17th September 2019 (Last accessed 01.11.20)

³ SNH and The Countryside Agency (2002). *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for Scotland and England*. (Last accessed 01.11.20)

⁴ Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013, *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, 3rd Edition, Routledge, London. Paragraph. 2.21, page 21. (Last accessed 08.06.20)

⁵ Ibid. page 21.

- Visual effect: change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This may include changes to the quality of the view, ability of the visual receptor to appreciate the view, or changes to the characteristic elements within the view. These changes can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction); and
- Cumulative visual effects: the cumulative or incremental visibility of similar types of development may combine to have a cumulative visual effect.

A detailed description of the methodology used has been provided in Annex A.1 – LVA Assessment, ZTV, Photography and Photomontage Methodology.

2.5 Cumulative Assessment

The operational Neilston Substation operate by National Grid has been assessed as part of the baseline of the LVA. No other additional developments have been included within the LVA.

2.6 Information Sources

A number of different sources of information are also used to help understand the site and its surrounding context as follows:

- Renfrewshire Council Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted August 2014⁶;
- Renfrewshire LDP New Supplementary Guidance, adopted November 2014⁷;
- Draft Renfrewshire Core Paths Plan (Map 7 Gleniffer Braes & South Paisley), Renfrewshire Council, October 2020⁸;
- Renfrewshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2018 – 2022⁹;
- NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment¹⁰;
- OS mapping at 1:50,000, 1:25,000 and 1:10,000;
- Aerial Photography;
- Web GIS data bases;
- Google Earth, Street View and Maps; and
- Arcus suite of Figures.

2.7 Scoping Responses and Consultations

A Screening Request was submitted to Renfrewshire Council (RC) on 4th October 2020, and the screening opinion concluded the application did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), therefore no scoping application was required, and no formal consultee responses were received.

2.8 Study Area

The LVA Study Area is illustrated in Figure 1.1, it covers an area of 2 km radius from the Development, and encompasses the operational Neilston Substation, overhead power lines and pylons connected to the substation, open agricultural grazing and arable land, Paisley Golf Club, and commercial coniferous woodland. The southern edge of the settlement of

⁶ Renfrewshire Local Development Plan, Renfrewshire Council. Available on line at: <http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/2478/Renfrewshire-Local-Development-Plan>. (Last accessed 23.11.20)

⁷ New Development Supplementary Planning Guidance, Renfrewshire Council. Available on line at: http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/media/1549/Adopted-LDP-New-Development-Supplementary-Guidance---Adopted-November-2014/pdf/LDP_SupplementaryGuidance2014_13.pdf?m=1458234873297 (Last accessed 23.11.20)

⁸ Draft Renfrewshire Council Core Path Plan, 2020, Renfrewshire Council. Available on line at: <http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/CorePaths> (Last accessed 23.11.20)

⁹ Renfrewshire Biodiversity Action Plan 2018 – 2022, Renfrewshire Council. Available on line at: http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/media/6303/Renfrewshire-Biodiversity-Action-Plan-2018-2022/pdf/Biodiversity_Action_Plan_FINAL.pdf?m=1527000856037 (Last accessed 23.11.20)

¹⁰ <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions> (Last accessed 23.11.20)

Foxbar, Paisley, is located within the study area, and other properties are scattered, farm properties within the study area.

The Gleniffer Braes Country Park borders the Site to the north-west, northeast and south-west, within the study area.

A bare earth Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was produced, which confirmed that visibility of the Development within the wider landscape was limited to 2 km radius south and south-west of the Development, and hill top locations east of Sergeantlaw (refer to Figure 1.8).

2.9 Field Study

Following the desk-based assessment, fieldwork was undertaken on the 9th September 2020.

The key activities during baseline fieldwork were:

- To augment and verify the published descriptions of landscape character with fieldwork observations;
- To undertake an assessment of the quality or condition of baseline landscape and visual resources;
- To identify any significant features and elements in the landscape such as vegetation or built form that would screen the Development and thereby verify or refine the ZTV;
- To visit each viewpoint location identified during the desk study and screening report, and to microsite each viewpoint location in accordance with good practice guidance and obtain accurate coordinates;
- To undertake viewpoint photography at each viewpoint location; and
- To identify landscape features and elements that may be altered or removed as a result of the Development.

The baseline fieldwork also allowed the study area to be refined and therefore the focus of the assessment stage of the LVA.

Fieldwork during the assessment stage included an assessment of effects on the following receptors:

- Landscape resources including landscape character, landscape sensitivity, landscape features and landscape elements;
- Residential and recreational receptors;
- Roads; and
- Core paths and other footpaths / cycleways.

2.10 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Following identification of the landscape components which define landscape character such as topography, vegetation, built form, infrastructure and land use, the LVA has been informed by a ZTV to help identify the potential landscape and visual receptors. ZTVs are computer generated from a digital terrain model of the 5 km study area, and 2 km detailed study area. They illustrate the theoretical visibility of the Development throughout the study area based on the average eye height (1.7 m) of an adult person.

ZTVs do have some limitations which need to be considered when looking at the theoretical visibility illustrated. Firstly, they do not take account of all screening elements such as buildings, vegetation which can substantially reduce visibility. Notwithstanding their limitations, ZTVs are currently the best tool for predicting the likely visibility of the Development and used to inform viewpoint selection and to refine the scope of the LVA.

2.11 Viewpoints

The selected viewpoints illustrate the landscape context, and views from the local public road network, and to represent the local landscape character.

Viewpoints were selected by analysis of the ZTVs and confirmed through a site visit (refer to Figure 1.9 – 1.13, Annex A.2). Following methodology established in GLVIA3, the viewpoints were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Viewpoints should be representative of the likely impacts;
- Viewpoints should show a range of different types of views;
- Viewpoints should be representative of a range of different receptor groups;
- Viewpoints should be representative of a range of distances and directions; and
- Viewpoints should be representative of the varying image of the Development within the landscape.

A summary of the illustrated viewpoints is provided in Table 2.1 below. All viewpoints are located in the public realm, and focus on the indicative location of the Development. Site photography was undertaken during periods of fine weather and clear visibility, with a little localised cloud. Refer to Figures 1.9 – 1.13 for the baseline landscape photographs, and photomontages of the Development from Viewpoints 1 - 5.

Table 2.1: LVA Selected Viewpoints

Viewpoint Number	Viewpoint Name	Reason for selection	Distance to the proposed Development (km)
1	B775 (North)	Viewpoint to illustrate the landscape context and views from the local B775 road. The viewpoint is representative of views available for local road users north west of the Development, and from Core Path GB/24 where it crosses the B775.	60 m
2	B775 (South)	Viewpoint to illustrate the landscape context and views from the local B775 road near the entrance to the site. The viewpoint is representative of views available for local road users south of the Development.	On the boundary
3	Unclassified Road, South West	Viewpoint to illustrate the landscape context and views from an unclassified road. The viewpoint is representative of views available for local road users south west of the Development.	1.64 km
4	Caplaw Road	Viewpoint to illustrate the landscape context and views from Caplaw Road, near East Caplaw Farm. The viewpoint is representative of views available for local road users south of the Development.	1.02 km
5	Unclassified Road, South	Viewpoint to illustrate the landscape context and views from an unclassified road. The viewpoint is representative of views available for local road users south east of the Development.	730 m

3 LANDSCAPE LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

This assessment has taken into account the current legislation, policy and guidance relevant to the LVA. The national planning policy framework policies of relevance to the Development are discussed within the Planning Statement.

3.1 Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (Adopted September 2014)

The Development is located within the administrative boundary of Renfrewshire Council (refer to Figure 1.1, Annex A.2).

Formally adopted in 2014, the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan (the 'LDP') sets out strategic spatial priorities and policies for Renfrewshire, supported by the New Development Supplementary Planning Guidance. Policies have been reviewed and the following apply to the Development.

3.1.1 LDP Policy I6: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments

Policy I6 states that:

Renewable and low carbon energy developments will be supported in principle where they are appropriate in terms of location, siting and design having regard to any individual or cumulative significant effects on:

- Local environment, landscape character, built, natural or cultural heritage;
- Amenity of existing or allocated uses;
- Visual amenity;
- Outdoor sport and recreation interest; and
- The safe and efficient use of the airport, flight activity, navigation, flight paths and Ministry of Defence surveillance system.

3.1.2 LDP Policy: ENV 1 – Green Belt:

Although not a landscape-related designation, the potential effects of development on areas designated as Green Belt needs to be considered in relation to the '*protecting and enhancing the landscape setting of an area*'.

This is discussed further in Sections 7 and 8 of the LVA.

*"Areas within the green belt can be used for a variety of uses and can integrate and align well with the objectives of the green network and connectivity to open spaces. A large majority of the land within Renfrewshire's boundary is rural and therefore land designated as green belt in the proposal maps is the most extensive area. The aim of the green belt is not to restrict appropriate development. It is the role of the LDP spatial strategy to direct development and the use of land to locations that will support sustainable growth, development and regeneration."*¹¹

The acceptability of proposals located within or having an impact on the Green Belt, will be considered using the following ENV 1 Green Belt policy criteria,

*"The green belt in Renfrewshire aims to identify appropriate locations to support planned growth, where required, as well as maintaining the identity of settlements, protecting and enhancing the landscape setting of an area and protecting and promoting access opportunities to open space. Appropriate development within the green belt will be considered acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it is compatible with the provisions of the New Development SG. Support will be given to developments that are able to demonstrate diversification within green belt and rural areas which promote new employment opportunities and / or community benefits."*¹²

¹¹ Ibid, page 30

¹² Ibid, page 31

3.1.3 LDP Policy: ENV2 - Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

The acceptability of proposals located within or having an impact on the natural heritage, will be considered using the following ENV 2 Natural Heritage policy criteria,

"To accord with the Local Development Plan, developments must not have an adverse effect on the integrity of sites protected for their natural conservation interest or which have the potential to protect and enhance designated sites and the wider biodiversity and geodiversity of the area. Where appropriate, the Council will seek to improve these resources. All proposals will be assessed in terms of the cumulative impact of development based on the precautionary principle considering the effect on the following:

- *Natura 2000 and Ramsar Sites;*
- *Protected Species;*
- *SSSIs;*
- *LNRs, SINCs and wildlife corridors;*
- *Biodiversity;*
- *Trees - Ancient and semi- natural woodland, TPOs and*
- *Conservation Areas.*

Developments and change of uses affecting those outlined above will be assessed against criteria set out in the New Development SG.¹³

3.2 New Development Supplementary Guidance (Adopted November 2014)

The acceptability of proposals will be considered using the following New Development Supplementary Guidance criteria:

3.2.1 Renewable & Low Carbon Technologies

"The Council is supportive of an increase in the proportion of electricity produced from renewable sources, but will require proposals for development to meet the following criteria:

- *There is no significant impact on the amenity of nearby residents, in terms of statutory air quality objectives, noise or other nuisances;*
- *Significant visual intrusion within the landscape in terms of scale, location, design, etc. has been minimised; and*
- *The individual or cumulative impact of the proposed development along with any other existing and approved similar developments will not lead to an unacceptable impact on the environment, amenity, community or recreational interest.¹⁴*

3.2.2 Environment Development Criteria

"Development proposals will require to ensure:

- *Green belts are preserved and development does not significantly undermine their core role and function by individual or cumulative impacts;*
- *Development has due regard to the importance of international, national and local designated sites and demonstrate that they do not have an adverse effect on the integrity of any sites protected as a Natura 2000 site;*
- *Landscaping and planting is to be integral to the development of a site, providing an attractive setting and an appropriate relationship to the surrounding area; and*
- *Proposals will protect and enhance biodiversity, and/or make a contribution to the green network or landscape character.¹⁵*

¹³ Ibid, page 31

¹⁴ Ibid, page 25

¹⁵ Ibid, page 34

3.2.3 Green Belt

The New Development Supplementary Guidance identifies renewable energy as an acceptable form of development within the green belt.

"Developments should demonstrate that the proposal supports diversification, promoting sustainable economic growth as well as having no significant adverse impact on the character of the green belt.

- *All developments within the green belt require to be assessed against the following criteria: There should be no loss of prime quality agricultural land or land of lesser quality that is locally important in line with SPP;*
- *The local landscape character will be maintained and enhanced;*
- *Development layout, design and siting should respect and incorporate important landscape features such as traditional field enclosures, water courses and features, woodlands and skylines;*
- *It can be demonstrated that there is careful consideration of the design, scale and grouping of any buildings;*
- *Appropriate landscaping proposals have been incorporated; and*
- *There is no significant detrimental effect on identified nature conservation interests, including species and habitats.*¹⁶

3.2.4 Biodiversity

"Biodiversity is a key part in helping to achieve the transition to a low carbon economy as well as adapting to climate change.... To maximise the benefits for a diverse natural environment which contribute to sustainable economic growth, the following criteria will require to be considered:

- *Development should not significantly affect existing species, habitats and ecosystems; and*
- *Design and layout of sites encourages species dispersal through improving connectivity and habitat availability.*¹⁷

3.3 Landscape Planning Designations

This section, which should be read in conjunction with Figure 1.4 (Annex A.2) and identifies landscape planning policies, designations and constraints relevant to this LVA. Table 3.1 summarises the constraints within the 2 km study area.

Table 3.1: Landscape Designations and Protected Heritage Assets

Landscape Designations & Protected Heritage Assets	Present Within Site	Present within Study Area (2 km radius)
National Scenic Areas	None	None
Regional Scenic Areas	None	None
Wild Land Areas	None	None
Green Belt	Yes	Yes
Conservation Areas	None	None
Scheduled Monuments	None	None

¹⁶ Ibid, page 37

¹⁷ Ibid, page 38

Landscape Designations & Protected Heritage Assets	Present Within Site	Present within Study Area (2 km radius)
Listed Buildings	None	Yes
Gardens and Designed Landscapes	None	None

4 BASELINE CONDITIONS

The following section describes the existing environment in terms of landscape character and visual amenity, the baseline against which the impacts of the Development will be assessed, including sensitivity of landscape, seascape or visual receptors:

- Landscape Character;
- Landscape Designations; and
- Visual Receptors.

Assessment is also supported by field observations to confirm the key features and characteristics pertinent to the 2 km study area.

4.1 Landscape Character Types

The landscape character is considered at a national/regional setting defined within the NatureScot National Landscape Character Assessment¹⁸.

At a regional level there are two Landscape Character Types (LCTs) within the 2 km Study Area (refer to Figure 1.5a, Annex A.2):

- Rugged Upland Farmland LCT 202; and
- Inner Loch.

There are no local landscape character types identified within Renfrewshire LDP or New Development SG, therefore this assessment has used the NatureScot Landscape Character Assessment, and site survey, for the landscape assessment of the Development.

4.1.1 Rugged Upland Farmland

The key characteristics of the Rugged Upland Farmland LCT 202 include:

- Rugged landform comprising rocky bluffs and shallow troughs;
- Reservoirs in flooded troughs;
- Dominance of pastoral farming;
- Frequent tree cover often emphasising landform, for example concentrated on bluffs and outcrops; and
- Settlement limited to farms and villages¹⁹.

This LCT is found in Kilmalcolm, Johnstone and Neilston, occurring in Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire local authority areas. Woodland cover is a dominant feature within the landscape, alongside improved pasture for sheep grazing. Settlements occur in more sheltered areas, and Neilston is sparsely populated, with the absence of villages, and scattered farm properties.

¹⁸ NatureScot (2019) Scottish Landscape Character Types. Available on line at <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions> (Last accessed 20.11.20)

¹⁹ NatureScot (2019) Scottish Landscape Character Types – Rugged Upland Farmland. Available on line at: <https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/LCA/LCT%20202%20-%20Rugged%20Upland%20Farmland%20-%20Final%20pdf.pdf> (Last accessed 24.11.20)

The LCT does not contain many settlements within the Study Area, however, there are man-made influences across the study area, including electricity infrastructure, including Neilston Substation and overhead lines and pylons, and communications masts around Gleniffer Braes, alongside commercial forestry within the LCT, located in proximity to the Site.

The LCT description also highlights that views are contained, to the south and east there are longer views, where features such as Gleniffer Braes are prominent in views from the south.

4.2 Landscape Character of the Site Area

This land surrounding the Development is rural in nature, comprising of open, rugged farmland, and commercial forestry together with Neilston Substation located opposite the site, on the B775 road.

The Site is located at approximately 200 m above ordnance datum (AOD) and is situated on agricultural land which is used for grazing. The land has a gentle incline to the north of the Site.

The nearest settlements to the Development are the fringe settlements of Paisley at Foxbar, located 1 km north, and Glenburn, located approximately 2 km north east. The closest residential properties are Sergeantlaw located approximately 0.3 km south east of the Site, and individual farm properties at Caplaw Farm 1.1 km south west of the Site.

The landscape character of the Site:

- **Landform & Scale** – the landscape is simple in form and medium in scale;
- **Land cover** – the landscape of the Site and surrounding area comprises of simple land cover of rugged farmland, used for rough grazing, and coniferous, commercial forestry, and woodland and open grassland of the Gleniffer Braes Country Park to the north;
- **Settlement / Man Made Influences** – whilst there are scattered residential properties within the study area, the immediate surroundings of the site are very lightly settled. The Site and local landscape are dominated by the operational Neilston Substation and associated overhead lines and pylons. Commercial coniferous forestry is also characteristic of the rugged upland landscape. Communications masts are situated on low hills at Sergeantlaw, immediately to the east of the Development, and Thornliemuir 1 km east of the Development;
- **Movement** – the Site itself is settled in appearance, with a coniferous shelter belt and grassland for grazing. However, busy traffic on the B775 road on the western boundary of the Site exerts a strong influence of movement in the landscape;
- **Skylines & Key Views** – the Site is situated in a rolling landscape, with expansive skyline views to the east and west and south. However, views to the north are restricted by tree cover, and the topography which falls in level north of the site;
- **Inter-visibility** – the Site is located on the south facing slope of a small hill, east of the Neilston Substation. The local topography restricts views across the wider landscape to the north and north east. However, the open aspect to the south, along the B775 road, offers direct views of the Development;
- **Perceptual Aspects** – the Site is open in character, with open views to the south across the rugged upland farmland landscape. The B775 road is a minor, but busy, road. The surrounding area is quiet, but with traffic noise evident along the B775 corridor.

4.3 Landscape Designation - Gleniffer Braes Country Park

The Site is located within an undesignated landscape. However, the Gleniffer Braes Country Park is located on the west, north and northeast boundaries of the Site.

The operational Neilston Substation, is located within the Gleniffer Braes Country Park.

Refer to Figure 1.4, Annex A.2.

4.4 Green Belt

The Site is located within the green belt area of Renfrewshire Council, and neighbouring the Greenbelt of East Renfrewshire Council. Together, both Council green belt designations cover the Study Area.

The operational Neilston Substation, is located within Green Belt.

Refer to Figure 1.4, Annex A.2.

4.5 Listed Buildings

There is one listed building 0.9 km north east of the Development, Gleniffer Road Macdonald's Fountain (Category B LB39005).

However, the listed building is situated outwith the ZTV, with no anticipated views, and therefore has not been considered any further within this assessment.

Refer to Figures 1.4 and 1.8, Annex A.2.

4.6 Visual Receptors

The visual assessment draws from the ZTV, site visits and viewpoint analysis and assesses the potential visual effects on views and visual amenity likely to be experienced by receptors (people) within the landscape as follows:

- Views from residential properties;
- Views experienced while travelling through the landscape (recreational and local road users, walkers, horse riders, cyclists for example); and
- Views from tourist and recreational destinations.

The visual assessment focuses on those receptor areas where significant effects are most likely, as detailed in the sections below.

Visual effects would be experienced by the people who live and work in the area, along with those enjoying recreational activities in this area or simply passing through. Whilst it is people who are the actual receptors of visual effects, it is the places they may occupy, and from which the Development may be seen, that are listed below.

The following three main receptor types have been identified within the Study Area:

- Core paths and recreational receptors²⁰;
- Residential properties, encompassing individual and groups of properties; and
- Transport Route users, users of the existing road network, within the Study Area.

4.6.1 Core Paths and Recreational Receptors

Whilst the potential visual effects on tourists, or those engaging in recreation activities, may be brief in nature by passing through the area by vehicle, or on horse, foot or bike, their sensitivity to landscape and visual change is high because their purpose/activity is to enjoy the landscape and surroundings.

The visual assessment considers views from recreational receptors within 2 km of the Development. Nearby recreational receptors within the study area include:

- Core Path GB/24 within the Gleniffer Braes Country Park, 70 m north of the Development at the closest point;

²⁰ Renfrewshire Core Paths Plan, Renfrewshire Council. Available on line at: <http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3046/Renfrewshires-Core-Paths-Plan> (Last accessed 23.11.20)

- Core Path GB/17 within the Gleniffer Braes Country Park, 70 m north of the Development at the closest point; and
- Core Path GB/15 within the Gleniffer Braes Country Park, 650 m north east of the Development at the closest point.

There are no Core Paths south of the Development, nor any regionally promoted cycle or walking routes within 2 km radius of the Development.

Paisley Golf Club is located 1 – 2 km east of the Development. Whilst the ZTV indicates scattered visibility on higher ground within the golf course, tree cover within the golf course, or along the local road network would screen / filter views to the west. The topography of the golf course, is highest at the south western corner and falling to the north east. At the highest elevations of the course, and closest to the Development, the ZTV indicates no visibility. Therefore, views from the Paisley Golf Club has not been considered any further in this assessment.

Refer to Figures 1.6 and 1.8, Annex A.2.

4.6.2 Residential Properties & Settlements

Residential properties are considered as being of high sensitivity due to the importance that individuals place on the view from their homes.

The visual assessment considers views from individual residential properties within 2 km of the Development (Figure 17, Annex B). From a desk-based assessment and site visit, twelve properties were identified within a 2 km radius of the Development.

The nearest settlements Foxbar and Glenburn, both of which are located outwith the ZTV. A site investigation confirmed that there would be no views of the Development from these settlements, therefore settlements have been scoped out of this assessment.

Refer to Figures 1.7 and 1.8, Annex A.2.

4.6.3 Transport Routes

It is important to take account of how the Development would be experienced from the surrounding road network. The visual assessment considers the potential visual effects likely to be experienced by people travelling through the landscape on main roads and the local road network. Views would vary depending on proximity to the road, the mode of transport, the angle of view, and intervening landscape features.

Within the study area there are the following routes:

- B roads – the B775 road borders the Site directly to the west. This is a well used local road which runs from Paisley in the north, and follows a route south, in parallel with the A736; and
- Local un-classified roads within the study area are limited to those areas connecting farm properties and isolated residential properties within the Study Area.

Refer to Figures 1.7 and 1.8, Annex A.2.

4.7 Receptors Scoped Out of the LVA

Further to the information presented above, the following landscape and visual receptors have been scoped out of this assessment:

- Gleniffer Road Macdonald's Fountain Listed Building;
- Settlements;
- Paisley Golf Club;
- Core paths GB/23, GB/25, GB/26 GB/22, GB/18, GB/13, GB/14, GB/20 and GB/21, GB/28, JOHN/10, SP/14, SP/15, SP/17, SP/18, SP/14, SP/38, and SP/39. All these core

paths are located to the north of the site, and are either outwith the ZTV or views of the Development from the core paths are screened by tree cover and vegetation within the Gleniffer Braes Country Park.

4.8 Night Time Baseline

In general, the study area is devoid of light pollution given the landscape's lack of built development and lack of street lighting on the rural local road network. Sources of light pollution are limited to residential properties. The proposed Development would be unlit, excepting for motion sensor security lighting, therefore no further assessment has been made within the LVA on the impact of the lighting of the Development.

4.9 Future Baseline

It is not anticipated that the baseline conditions as described above would be different to those encountered today, due to the dominant land use of the area being rough grazing moorland, and the location of Neilston Substation opposite the Site.

5 ZTV ANALYSIS

5.1 General Visibility

Given the rolling upland moorland plateau topography, to the south and west, and falling topography to the east, south east and north, the ZTV illustrates restricted visibility of the Development within 2 km radius of the Site.

Predicted visibility in the area is anticipated immediately surrounding the Site, within a 'quadrant', 2 km radius to the west and south, and along the B775 corridor.

Predicted visibility to the north of the Site is reduced by coniferous plantations, before the landform drops in to the Glasgow conurbation. Likewise, as the landform slopes with a more gently gradient to the north east, visibility to the north east is reduced. The rising topography of the Site, rising to the east, also restricts visibility of the Development to the east and north east.

Views from higher ground to the south are available from the north facing slopes between 1 – 2 km distance, and across the low lying, open farmland south of the site up to 1 km distance.

Refer to Figure 1.8, Annex A.2.

5.2 Weather Conditions

In reality, changing weather patterns and local climatic conditions would influence the visibility of the Development in terms of the extent of view, the colour and contrast of the buildings, and components of the Greener Grid Park, and thus the perceived visual impact. There would be periods of low visibility (i.e. fog, precipitation, low cloud, and bright sunny conditions that are accompanied by haze) as well as periods of high visibility in clear weather.

6 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY EFFECTS

In order to understand the likely effects of the Development, it is first necessary to understand the construction processes involved, and the components of the Development which would be present during the operational life of the Development.

The likely effects that would arise as a result of the Development can be attributed to either the short-term construction works or the long-term presence of the Development. Site Layout Plan, Planning Drawing 2 shows an illustrative plan of the Development.

6.1 Effects of Construction

6.1.1 Landscape Effects During Construction

The construction phase would result in localised and direct landscape effects on the Rugged Upland Farmland LCT and the landscape elements within the Site itself. Table 6.1 below provides a list of the construction activities to be undertaken together with an appraisal of the level and type of effect predicted.

Construction activities could result in temporary landscape and visual effects during the construction period, specifically:

- Effects on landscape character, based on a current and future baseline, from construction and plant activities within 2 km radius; and
- Effects on visual amenity of surrounding visual receptors based on a current and future baseline, from construction and plant activities within a 2 km radius.

Table 6.1 Landscape Effects during Construction

Construction Activity and Assessment	Landscape Assessment		
	Sensitivity	Magnitude	Level of Effect
<p><u>Temporary Construction Compound</u></p> <p>A temporary construction compound would be situated within the Site. Given the limited area affected, the magnitude of change would be small and the temporary landscape effect would be Negligible - Minor, temporary (reversible), direct, and negative.</p>	Low	Small	Negligible - Minor temporary, reversible and direct adverse landscape effect
<p><u>BESS Compound</u></p> <p>The BESS development would occupy an area of rough grazing farmland.</p> <p>The magnitude of change would increase from zero to medium, and the landscape effect of the construction activity would be, temporary (reversible), direct, and negative.</p>	Low	Medium	Minor temporary, reversible and direct adverse landscape effect

Taking all the factors above together, the low sensitivity of the landscape of the Site, and the predicted small - medium magnitude of change, results in an overall effect during construction, predicted to be **Negligible to Minor**, short term (reversible), direct, and adverse landscape effects within the Site during the construction process.

6.1.2 Visual Effects During Construction

The visual effects of the Development during the construction period would be most noticeable from 'close-range views' of the Greener Grid Park construction, including the creation of layout areas, temporary compound, energy management equipment and control building and construction vehicles using the site access track and entrance.

The Site is visually enclosed by the shelter belt tree cover to the north and rising topography within the Site, to the east. There would be clear and open views of the Development from the B775 road to the south west, and open farmland to the west and south and south east.

The sensitivity of visual receptors is medium (road users), and high (residential and recreational receptors). The magnitude of visual change would vary over the course of the construction phase in line with the extent of infrastructure present on site. The magnitude would therefore be negligible to small initially, with the level of temporary visual effect during construction increasing to medium in relation to the progressive increase in extent of construction, resulting in **Moderate to Moderate - Major**, temporary (reversible),

direct, and adverse visual effects from the local road network and residential properties up to 2 km distance.

However, the level of visual effect towards the end of construction would not exceed that assessed for the operational period where the site would be fully constructed and exerting maximum visual influence.

6.2 Effects of Operation

Compared to the construction phase, the Development would gain a more 'settled' appearance during the operational period when construction activity ceases.

The Development would be visible over a limited area with very limited potential for indirect effects on the surrounding landscape, and surrounding visual receptors.

For consideration of residential effects, refer to Section 8.

7 EMBEDDED MITIGATION

For locations and details of proposed embedded mitigation such as quantities and species please refer to the Landscape Masterplan (Figure 1.14, Annex A.2). Landscape mitigation embedded within the design of the Development, includes the following:

- 0.9 km of native species hedgerow with hedgerow trees informally spaced along the eastern and western boundaries, excepting those areas with overhead power lines, where there has been a 6 m buffer applied. A hedgerow has been proposed along the roadside western boundary, maintaining the visibility splay for the entrance junction to the Site;
- An area of 0.42 ha of native woodland shelter belt planting which would include a mix of the lower growing species and some taller tree species, which connects with the area of tree and shrub planting within the SNCI, south of the Site; and
- An area of 0.69 ha of native grass and wildflower mix beneath the hedgerows and along verges within the Site.

8 ASSESSMENT OF RESIDUAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

8.1 Assessment of Effects on Landscape Character

An appraisal of the baseline landscape character has been undertaken in order to determine the sensitivity of the landscape and its capacity to accommodate the Development.

The landscape character is considered at two levels:

- National/regional setting, in relation to the NatureScot (formerly SNH) National Landscape Character Assessment; and
- Local setting, based on field observations to confirm the key features and characteristics pertinent to the study area and the application site.

8.1.1 Local Landscape Character Types (LCTs)

Assessment for the effects on landscape character, sensitivity and value is a combination of a review of the conclusions presented in the NatureScot landscape character assessment, and professional judgement from field observations.

At a local level, the study area falls within the Rugged Upland Farmland LCT.

8.1.1.1 Rugged Upland Farmland LCT 202

This is the 'host' landscape character type for the Development.

There is an overall positive landscape quality, within an agricultural moorland / forested landscape, which includes the Neilston Substation on the B775 opposite the Site. Overall, the LCT is considered to be of a low - medium landscape quality.

There is a high capacity for the LCT to accommodate the Development, which would not detract from the overall existing landscape quality, features and characteristics of the LCT. This results in a low susceptibility to the Development because the landscape would be able to accommodate it without undue adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape, and other manmade landscape features associated with the Neilston Substation, including overhead lines and pylons, and communications masts around Gleniffer Braes.

The landscape is typically open in character, with areas of shelter belt plantation woodland. There are a number of vertical elements within this LCT, including pylons and communications masts within, and neighbouring, the Site, which contribute to a more developed landscape character.

There would be little, or no, undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or achievement of relevant planning policies / strategies given the Neilston Substation within the LCT, and associated power and communications infrastructure within this LCT. The landscape would be able to accommodate the Development, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape.

The landscape sensitivity of the LCT is low – medium, and a low - medium sensitivity and low value as an undesignated landscape. The magnitude of change arising from the BESS within the LCT would be negligible within the LCT as a whole, on completion of the construction works, and any resulting direct and indirect landscape effects within the LCT would be **Negligible**, adverse and localised within the Rugged Upland Farmland LCT.

8.1.2 Landscape Character of the Site

The landscape character of the site has been assessed as having:

- **Landscape value** – the area within the study area an undesignated landscape, therefore, the landscape of the site is considered to be of a low landscape value;
- **Landscape quality** – the rough grazing moorland landscape of the Site is considered to be of a low landscape quality. There are limited landscape features of quality, hedgerows and stone wall field boundaries are denuded;
- **Capacity to change** – the surrounding rugged upland farmland landscape, and the visually open nature of the site to the west, south and south east, results in a low susceptibility to the Development. The landscape would be able to accommodate the Development without undue adverse effects, taking account of the existing character and quality of the landscape, the presence of the operational Neilston Substation, and other manmade landscape features; and
- **Landscape sensitivity** – the Site is within an undesignated landscape, therefore, the landscape of the site is considered to be of a low landscape sensitivity.

The magnitude of effect arising from the Development within the Site would be large where there would be the addition of a variety of man made, built elements within the Site.

The landscape sensitivity of the Site is low. The magnitude of change arising from the Development within the LCT would be large on completion of the construction works, and any resulting landscape effects within the LCT would be **Minor - Moderate**, and adverse.

Native hedgerow, native hedgerow trees, and native woodland planting are included as embedded mitigation in the scheme design. The implementation of these proposals would bring about a positive landscape effect, by introducing new landscape elements, and

improving the biodiversity value of the site (refer to Landscape Masterplan, Figure 1.14, Annex A.2).

8.1.3 Gleniffer Braes Country Park

The Site is located on the boundary of the Gleniffer Braes Country Park, which borders the site to the south, west and north. The Neilston Substation already exerts a strong influence on the local landscape character, and the Gleniffer Braes Country Park specifically the southern areas of the Country Park, which are at a higher elevation.

The siting of the Development, alongside the existing Neilston Substation is integral to the site selection, in order to reduce the requirement for lengthy cable connections, and align with the substation in keeping with the landscape character of the area.

The landscape sensitivity of the Country Park is medium, and the magnitude of change arising from the Development alongside the Country Park would be small, with the change affecting a small part of the Country Park, as the Development would occupy a small geographical extent, e.g., at the level of the immediate setting of the site, reducing to negligible with increasing distance from the site, as the Development is screened from views within the Country Park.

This would result in a **Moderate**, indirect and adverse landscape effect on the Gleniffer Braes Country Park within the immediate setting of the Site, reducing to **Negligible** with increased distance from the Development.

8.1.4 Renfrewshire Green Belt

Green Belts are a planning designation of national importance, their primary purpose being to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Preserving the 'openness' of Green Belts is therefore a key test for any development located within it.

The appropriateness of a Greener Grid Park development associated within the Green Belt is discussed in more detail in the Planning Statement which accompanies the planning application. But in terms of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), paras 49 - 52, directs local development plans to provide further advice in this respect. Para 52 of the SPP identifies essential infrastructure, such as electricity grid connections, as being a type of development which would be appropriate in a green belt.²¹

The Renfrewshire LDP confirms that 'appropriate development' within the green belt is considered acceptable where it can be demonstrated that the Site is compatible with the provisions of the New Development Supplementary Guidance. The New Development Supplementary Guidance identifies renewable energy as an acceptable form of development within the green belt, and this is further supported in the Pre-Application Response from Renfrewshire Council²² for this development which confirmed that:

"The principle of the development would be acceptable with respect to the relevant green belt policies that cover the site. It is noted that essential infrastructure, including electricity equipment, is an acceptable form of development in the green belt."

In addition, the New Development Supplementary Guidance confirms that,

"Developments should demonstrate that the proposal supports diversification, promoting sustainable economic growth as well as having no significant adverse impact on the character of the green belt."²³

²¹ Scottish Planning Policy, para 52. Available on line at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-planning-policy/pages/4/>
(Last accessed 23.11.20)

²² Email correspondence dated 16.01.20

²³ Ibid, page 37

The operational Neilston Substation already exerts a strong influence on the local landscape character, and the Site itself. The siting of the Development, alongside the existing Neilston Substation is integral to the site selection, in order to reduce the requirement for lengthy cable connections, and align with the substation in keeping with the landscape character of the area.

Furthermore, landscape planting proposals embedded in the design of the scheme, accord with the objectives of the New Development SG (as detailed in Section 3.2.3). The design of the scheme has considered the following:

- The taller built elements are to the north of the site, with the backdrop of the shelter belt of conifer trees, to reduce the visual effects within the green belt; and
- The scheme design maintains boundary stone walls where possible, and new native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting along the boundaries, to connect to and extend the tree & shrubs on the south western boundary, and new hedgerows on west and eastern boundaries to improve connectivity with the shelter belt woodland to the north of the Site.

In considering the potential effects of the Development on these more distant views in particular, there is predicted to be minimal change in the landscape character of the site and surrounding area. Overall, therefore, the Development is judged to have no adverse effect on the Green Belt due to the influence of the Neilston Substation, and associated infrastructure, on the local landscape character.

9 ASSESSMENT OF RESIDUAL VISUAL EFFECTS

Visual effects are concerned wholly with the effect of the Development on views, and the general visual amenity as experienced by people.

Visual effects are assessed by considering the sensitivity of the receptor (people) against the proposed magnitude of change to determine a level of visual effect. The acceptability of this effect largely relates to the activity and the experience of the viewer and the visual composition, character, context, and the overall ability of the landscape in that view to accommodate the Development in design terms. Visual effects are assessed in relation to the agreed viewpoints, properties and settlements, tourist and recreational destinations including tourist routes as well as main transport routes.

9.1 Viewpoint Assessment

An appraisal of visual effects was undertaken from five viewpoints, which were selected using the ZTV and available views from the closest visual receptors, at varying distances and orientations from the site.

The viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 1.8 (Annex A.2). Photographs of the existing landscape are shown in Viewpoints 1 – 5, Figures 1.9 to 1.14 (Annex A.2).

Viewpoint selection and micro-siting of each viewpoint location accord with technical guidance²⁴.

9.1.1 Viewpoint 1 – B775 (north)

9.1.1.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, the B775 road which is situated directly west of the Site. It is also located at the crossing point for Core Paths GB/24 to GB/17 on the southern boundary of the Gleniffer Braes Country Park.

²⁴ Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 2019, The Landscape Institute.

The shelter belt trees on the northern boundary of the Site are visible to the left of the view, rough grazing farmland of the Site extends in the middle distance east of the B775 road, and perimeter tree planting of Neilston Substation west of the B775 road.

Refer to Figure 1.9, Annex A.2.

9.1.1.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity, and recreational users of the core path network, which would be of a high sensitivity.

9.1.1.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the foreground, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road, however viewed within the context of the operational Neilston Substation, and for a very short section of the core path route as it crosses the road, and for a short section of the B775 road as it passes directly past the Site.

9.1.1.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Moderate – Major** (for road users) **to Major** (for recreational users of the core path network), long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location.

Once the perimeter hedgerow planting is established (see Appendix 4: Landscape Planting Plan), the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to small, and the visual effects would be **Minor to Moderate**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.1.2 Viewpoint 2 – B775 (south)

9.1.2.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, the B775 road which is situated directly west of the Site.

The rough grazing moorland extends in the foreground, with the Site, and the shelter belt plantation, on higher ground to the north of the Site.

Refer to Figure 1.10, Annex A.2.

9.1.2.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity.

9.1.2.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the foreground, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road, however viewed within the context of the operational Neilston Substation.

9.1.2.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Moderate - Major**, long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location.

Once the perimeter hedgerow planting is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be **Moderate**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.1.3 Viewpoint 3 – Unclassified Road (south west)

9.1.3.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, an unclassified road which is situated 1.64 km south west of the Site.

The rough grazing moorland extends in the view, with the Neilston Substation visible on higher ground to the west of the Site, the pylons and overhead lines connecting to the Substation, and communications masts to the east of the Site at Sergeant Law. The nearest residential property to the Site, Sergeantlaw Farm, is visible in the 'dip' east of the Site and Thornliemuir to the east. The shelter belt tree planting, north of the Site, is visible on the horizon. Local tree cover, both deciduous trees around properties, and shelter belt planting are visible, and High Bardrain Wood visible in the lower ground in the centre of the view.

Refer to Figure 1.11, Annex A.2.

9.1.3.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity.

9.1.3.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the middle distance, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road, however viewed within the context of the Neilston Substation. The embedded mitigation of native tree and shrub planting would help integrate the development within the landscape, reducing visibility across the local landscape.

9.1.3.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Minor**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

Once the perimeter tree planting on the southern boundary, and eastern boundary, is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be **Negligible**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.1.4 Viewpoint 4 – Caplaw Road, B775 Junction

9.1.4.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, an unclassified road which is situated 1.02 km south west of the Site.

The rough grazing moorland of the site is in the distance, and arable / grassland in the foreground extends in the view, with the Neilston Substation visible on higher ground to the west of the Site, the pylons and overhead lines connecting to the Substation, and communications masts to the east of the Site at Sergeant Law. The shelter belt tree planting, north of the Site, is visible on the horizon.

Refer to Figure 1.12, Annex A.2.

9.1.4.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity. This viewpoint is also representative of the views from the driveway to the nearby East Caplaw Farm (residents would be of a high sensitivity).

9.1.4.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the middle distance, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be medium, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road. However, the Development would be viewed within the context of the Neilston Substation. The embedded mitigation of native tree and shrub planting along the southern boundary of the Site would help integrate the development within the landscape, reducing visibility across the local landscape, from views to the south of the Site.

9.1.4.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Moderate**, long-term (reversible), and adverse for local road users. For residents of East Caplaw Farm the visual effects would be Moderate – Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse when accessing and exiting the property.

Once the tree planting on the southern boundary is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to small, and the visual effects would be **Minor to Moderate** long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.1.5 Viewpoint 5 – Unclassified Road (South East)

9.1.5.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, an unclassified road which is situated 700 m south east of the Site.

The rough grazing moorland of the site is in the middle distance, with the Neilston Substation visible on higher ground to the west of the Site, the pylons and overhead lines connecting to the Substation, and communications masts to the east of the Site at Sergeant Law. The shelter belt tree planting, north of the Site, is visible on the horizon.

The nearest residential property to the Site, Sergeantlaw Farm, is visible east of the Site.

Refer to Figure 1.13, Annex A.2.

9.1.5.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity.

9.1.5.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the middle distance, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be medium, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road. However, the Development would be viewed within the context of the Neilston Substation. The embedded mitigation of native tree and shrub planting along the southern and eastern boundaries of the Site would help integrate the development within the landscape, reducing visibility from views to the south east and east of the Site.

9.1.5.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Moderate**, long-term (reversible), and adverse for local road users.

Once the tree planting on the southern boundary is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to small, and the visual effects would be **Minor**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.2 Visual Effects on Views from Residential Properties

Visual assessment of residential properties within the study area (2 km) has been undertaken. All residential properties are considered to be of high sensitivity in accordance with the GLVIA3.

The effect of the Development on residents, requires particular attention because they may experience the Development from different locations, at different times of the day, usually for longer periods of time and in different seasons. Occupants of residential properties are judged to be of 'high' sensitivity as they are static receptors whose enjoyment of their property is likely to be affected by the quality of views and visual amenity experienced there.

Whilst individual or specific observations are made below concerning views or potential views from properties in the direction of the Development, a 'summation' is offered based on an opinion 'in the round' i.e. taking all relevant factors into account as access to properties is unlikely and often screened by boundary vegetation or fencing. Therefore, this analysis may include potential views from the property itself as well as from the surrounding amenity ground, the access/egress points, and the immediately adjacent highway.

12 properties have been assessed within 2 km via a combination of a site visit to the closest public location in the vicinity of that property (usually the highway), desk-based assessment, the production of wireframes and the use of aerial and digital mapping.

Whilst it is accepted that a number of properties will experience a change to a view or views, considering the grouping and composition of the Development it is not considered that any of these properties would suffer unduly from negative visual effects such as visual over-dominance, over-bearance, or blocking of light, which collectively may affect the overall visual amenity, and associated living standards arising from the Development as an individual development, and also cumulatively with the Neilston Substation.

Table 8.1: Visual Effects on Residential Properties

Property	Description of Effect
R1 Craigmuir	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.8 km</p> <p>Description: Garden vegetation screens views from the property to the east. There is an open driveway to the property, with filtered views to the operational Neilston Substation, overhead lines and pylons as the land rises to the north east.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the limited views from the access track to the property, and lack of views from the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be negligible.</p> <p>Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be <i>negligible</i>. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.</p>
R2 Bent Farm	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.4 km</p> <p>Description: Access to this property is via a gated driveway. A shelter belt to the north and east of the property would screen views from the property itself, however, there may be views from the driveway. There may be views of the Development, and the operational Neilston Substation, overhead lines and pylons as the land rises to the north east.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the limited views from the access track to the property, and lack of views from the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be negligible.</p> <p>Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be <i>negligible</i>. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.</p>
R3 Brownieside	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.85 km</p>

Property	Description of Effect
	<p>Description: There are two properties in this location. There are views of the Neilston Substation, from the open south east facing front gardens and driveway. Shelter belt and woodland tree cover north east of the property also screens views to the north east.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the tree cover around Bent Bridge, there are no views of the Development anticipated.</p> <p>Level of Effect: No change.</p>
R4 Lapwing Lodge	<p>This is an outdoor centre. The property was closed, no entry. All buildings are located within in the woodland. No views available.</p>
R5 East Caplaw Farm (refer to Viewpoint 4 on Caplaw Lane, Figure 1.12)	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.18 km</p> <p>Description: Access to this property is via an open driveway. This is a steadings conversion, and outbuildings would screen views from the property itself, however, there may be views from the driveway. There may be views of the Development, and the operational Neilston Substation, overhead lines and pylons as the land rises to the north east.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the open views from the access track to the property, and lack of views from the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be medium.</p> <p>Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be <i>Moderate - Major</i>. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse. It is anticipated that the visual effects would reduce over time as the boundary tree planting matures, screening views from the south and east.</p>
R6 Caplaw Farm	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.12 km</p> <p>Description: A bungalow property with garden trees to the north and west, and farm buildings to the north west of the property. The property is well screened by tree cover from the road, but has an open aspect to the north.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the open views from the rear of the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be medium.</p> <p>Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be <i>Moderate - Major</i>. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse. It is anticipated that the visual effects would reduce over time as the boundary tree planting matures, screening views from the south and east.</p>
R7 Middleton	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.16 km</p> <p>Description: This property is well screened by roadside and garden tree cover. The property faces eastwards, but no views from the property or driveway are anticipated.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the tree cover around the property, there are no views of the Development anticipated.</p> <p>Level of Effect: No change.</p>
R8 Mossneuk Farm (refer to Viewpoint 5, Figure 1.13, 180 m north of property at the junction of Sergeantaw Road and Caplaw Road)	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.08 km</p> <p>Description: There are two properties at this location. A large two storey property and a bungalow property with garden trees to the north and west. Both properties are well screened by tree cover from the road. Possible oblique views of the development from first floor windows or the larger property. The bungalow has boundary vegetation which screens views. For both properties, there would be views of the Development from the access / exit of the driveway.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the screened views from the properties, and views from the access / exit of the driveway only, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small.</p> <p>Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be <i>Moderate</i>. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse. It is anticipated that the visual effects would reduce over time as the boundary tree planting matures, screening views from the south and east.</p>

Property	Description of Effect
R9 Greenfield Muir	<p>Distance to the Development: 1.49 km</p> <p>Description: Access to this property is via the farmyard. There may be views of the Development from the east facing elevation of the property only. Other buildings within the farm would screen views to the north and south. There may be views of the operational Neilston Substation, overhead lines and pylons as the land rises to the north west.</p> <p>Magnitude of Change: Given the limited views from the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be negligible.</p> <p>Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be <i>negligible</i>. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.</p>
R 10 Sergeantlaw	This property is out with the ZTV and no views of the Development are anticipated.
R11 Thornliemuir	This property is out with the ZTV and no views of the Development are anticipated.
R12 Capellie Farm	This property is out with the ZTV and no views of the Development are anticipated.

9.3 Visual Effects on Views from Core Path Network

This section considers the views from the Core Path GB/24 (north west of the B775) and GB/17 (east of the B775), both within the Gleniffer Braes Country Park.

The junction of the two core paths is the B775, situated 60m north of the Site boundary. To the west the Core Path GB/24 follows a route within woodland where views are screened, and GB/17 to the east follows a route north of the shelter belt and a north / north east direction down towards the Country Park area, with the development to the south behind the shelter belt, screened from view.

Viewpoint 1 (Figure 1.9, Annex A.2), illustrates the view from the Core Paths on the northern boundary of the Site. The shelter belt is visible to the left of the view, rough grazing farmland of the Site extends in the middle distance east of the B775 road, and perimeter tree planting of Neilston Substation west of the B775 road.

9.3.1.1 Sensitivity

Recreational users of the core path network would be of a high sensitivity.

9.3.1.2 Magnitude of Change

There is an open view of the Development, in the foreground, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road. However, the Development would be viewed within the context of the operational Neilston Substation, and for a very short section of the core path route as it crosses the road only. The predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small.

9.3.1.3 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Moderate**, long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location.

Once the perimeter hedgerow planting is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to small, and the visual effects would be **Negligible**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.4 Visual Effects on Views from the B775 road

This section considers the views from the B775 road, which borders the Site to the west. The views from the B775 would be experienced transiently.

The shelter belt trees on the northern boundary of the Site are visible to the left of the view, rough grazing farmland of the Site extends in the middle distance east of the B775 road, and perimeter tree planting of Neilston Substation west of the B775 road.

The B775 was driven in both directions to assess the potential effects on the route. The Development would be viewed obliquely and directly, but viewed in the context of the operational Neilston Substation, and associated infrastructure.

Refer to Figure 1.9, Annex A.2.

9.4.1.1 Sensitivity

Recreational users of the local road network would be of a medium sensitivity.

9.4.1.2 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the foreground, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, where the Development is clearly visible from the local road, however viewed within the context of the operational Neilston Substation, and for a short (380 m) section of the road, as it passes directly past the Site.

9.4.1.3 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be **Moderate - Major**, long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location.

Once the perimeter hedgerow planting is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to small, and the visual effects would be **Minor**, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.5 Visual Effects on Views within the Green Belt

The visual analysis that has been carried out as part of this LVA, has examined a number of views towards the Site at distances up to 2 km from the Development. Of these, the more distant views (0.5 - 2.0 km) provide greater landscape context within the green belt.

In these more distant views, which are located on open ground to the south east, south west, south, the Site is currently visually open, with the existing Neilston Substation, and associated conifer trees, visible within the wider landscape.

In considering the potential effects of the Development on these more distant views in particular, there is predicted to be minimal change in the outlook. Overall, therefore, the Development is judged to have no adverse effect on the Green Belt due to the influence of the Neilston Substation, and associated infrastructure, on the local landscape character.

10 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

10.1 Summary of Predicted Landscape Effects

The Development would comprise of battery storage facility, energy management equipment and associated site infrastructure.

The Development is situated within the Rugged Upland Farmland LCT. As such the Development is well sited within the landscape, set with a backdrop of the rising topography and coniferous tree cover, which help 'absorb' the proposed Greener Grid Park within the landscape. The Development is located within a sheltered, but expansive, working rural landscape, and in proximity to the operational Neilston Substation.

Within the study area the landscape is experienced from the local road network, scattered residential properties from which some experience open views across the broad, open landscape to the west and east and south, as the land rises and restricts views north.

Therefore, it is considered that within the context of the operational Neilston Substation in proximity to the site, the characteristics of the farmland landscape, and medium scale of the receiving landscape, with a high capacity to accommodate a Greener Grid Park development, the landscape would have the capacity to accommodate the Development.

10.2 Summary of Predicted Visual Effects

The visual appraisal indicates that views of the Development, from the surrounding areas, would include a range ***Negligible to Major***. This is due to:

- The location takes advantage of the gentle sloping topography, with rising land to the north of the development. The siting and design of the Development allows for visual effects to be concentrated within a 2km radius, within this lightly settled landscape;
- There would be ***Moderate – Major*** and ***Major*** visual effects from the Development on viewpoints in proximity to the proposed development with clear and open views across the rough grazed moorland of the site, and near the site entrance, from the B775 road;
- There would be ***Negligible – Moderate – major*** visual effects from the Development from residential properties within 2 km radius of the Development. Of the 12 properties assessed, 8 would have no view, or a negligible visual effect, and a further 4 properties would experience a ***Moderate – major*** visual effect within 1 – 1.2 km south and south east of the Development;
- There would be very limited visual effects arising from the Development for those recreational receptors using the core paths within 2 km of the Development. Where there are predicted view from Core Paths GB/24 & GB/17, the visual effects would be ***Moderate***, and reducing to ***Negligible***; and
- There would be a range of visual effects on the road users of the B775 ranging from ***Moderate - Major*** reducing to ***Minor***. This variation is as a result of the embedded mitigation planting which, once matures, will filter views of the Development within the landscape.

10.3 Conclusion

The Development would not exceed the capacity of the Rugged Upland Farmland landscape, nor would it become the dominant characteristic of the landscape. Development is relative to the scale and character of the receiving landscape, and the demonstrated capacity of the landscape to accommodate development alongside the operational Neilston Substation.