

Landscape and Visual Statement

Tea Leys Battery Storage

Island Green Power UK Ltd



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Pre – Application Consultation

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 Pre-application advice is sought from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) or the use of the land for a battery storage development.
- 1.1.2 This Landscape and Visual Statement has been prepared by Lanpro Services Ltd on behalf of Island Green Power UK Limited to review landscape and visual issues relevant for a proposed development of a battery storage facility and associated infrastructure, access and cable route on land at Tean Leys Farm, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (the Site).
- 1.1.3 The principal objective of this Statement is to begin to identify the landscape and visual considerations of the potential development site and to identify where opportunities for any potential likely landscape and visual effects could arise as a consequence of the proposed development and suggest a high-level approach to mitigation that may be required.
- 1.1.4 This Landscape and Visual Statement has been prepared, encompassing the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA) third edition (published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013), and 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment' (published by Natural England, 2014). In summary, the approach combines information and desktop reviews with on-site surveys and appraisal suitable for initial Pre – Application Consultation and discussion with Local Planning Authorities.
- 1.1.5 Lanpro Services Ltd. is a multi-disciplinary planning, environmental and design consultancy with over 15 years' experience of landscape, masterplanning, urban design, architecture, archaeology, heritage, ecology, planning, and environmental impact assessment. The company is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute.

1.2 Overview of Proposals

- 1.2.1 The proposed development will consist of a number of different elements, the specific detailed design is yet to be fixed but the following descriptions provide broad details. These details are indicative and are a starting point for pre-application discussion with the Council.

Battery Storage

- 1.2.2 The battery storage site is proposed to cover an area of 4.1 hectares. The height of the batteries will be at a maximum of 4 metres.
- 1.2.3 The Site perimeter will be made secure by the construction of a 2-metre-high security fence around the Site boundaries. These are typically constructed using wooden posts and wire mesh and resemble deer fencing found throughout the rural landscape. Additional planting will be introduced for screening purposes where necessary.
- 1.2.4 The installation of CCTV is likely to be required onsite for insurance purposes. The CCTV will be capable of viewing the battery storage only (without panning angles beyond).
- 1.2.5 No floodlighting will be used as the CCTV cameras detect movement and have night vision capability in accordance with insurer's requirements. These will allow for constant monitoring but will be positioned in such a way to prevent areas outside the site being monitored.
- 1.2.6 The CCTV camera poles will likely be constructed in galvanised steel. As much of the equipment as possible will be colour coordinated with the landscape. Where possible it will be green in colour or as required by the LPA

Cable Corridor

- 1.2.7 A below ground cable will be laid within the cable corridor to enable connection of the battery storage to the grid.

Site Access

- 1.2.8 The Site will be accessed from the existing access road to Tean Leys Farm to the east. A secondary access point is also proposed to provide an alternative access for emergency vehicles. A southern access route is also proposed to provide access for construction of the cable route and connection to the approved 132kv substation under application ref. SMD/2023/0594.
- 1.2.9 The main traffic generated by the development will be during the construction period which will be relatively short. A construction management plan can be prepared to provide routing and traffic generation details as part of any planning application.
- 1.2.10 At this stage, it is anticipated that deliveries into the site will be concentrated during the construction period which will cover a 12–16-week period.
- 1.2.11 Once operational, traffic movements to and from the site would be minimal, with only a maintenance team requiring access to the site periodically.
- 1.2.12 Where possible, the scheme utilizes existing farm access tracks for access.
- 1.2.13 Landscape mitigation includes provision of a new belt of native woodland and hedgerow planting (min 10m in depth) on the edge of the Site that would provide visual screening of the proposed infrastructure and additional ecological and habitat benefits.

Operations & Maintenance

- 1.2.14 Once the battery storage facility is operational, traffic generated by it will be limited to that associated with occasional maintenance work.
- 1.2.15 Movement within the Site will be by way of quad bike or small, farm utility vehicle. The Electricity Board will visit the Site from time to time to check the apparatus. No on-site staff will be required to operate the battery storage and no staff offices or maintenance buildings needed within or near to the site. Some permanent equipment for monitoring the site will be held in one of the transformer enclosures and/or grid connection cabinet. Whilst this would typically be accessed remotely, it would be available for occasional physical access during routine visits.
- 1.2.16 The land between each row of cells and on the fringes of the Site will be seeded with a wildflower mix in strategic locations.
- 1.2.17 Noise impact is limited to the construction phase of the development, there would be minor impacts generated by the vehicle movements across the site coupled with the installation of equipment.
- 1.2.18 Once operational, the inverters which accompany the scheme may generate additional background noise levels; however, noise will be mitigated as any operational plant is enclosed. The specification sheet of the inverters would be included within any subsequent application.

Decommissioning

- 1.2.19 The scheme has been designed to have the lightest possible impact on the land in terms of structural loading. At the end of its operational life the structure, including all ancillary equipment and cabling, would be carefully dismantled and removed from the site. Materials would be reused or taken to an appropriate location for recycling or disposal. The Site would be reinstated for full agricultural use.

1.3 Design Proposal

Batteries

1.3.1 The design principles of the batteries are:

- The battery storage will have a capacity of 70MW.

1.3.2 Maximum compound dimensions of 120m x 170m.

1.3.3 Battery containers would have a maximum length of 6m, maximum width of 3m and a maximum height of 4m. The maximum storage capacity of a single battery container would be 5MW.

- Palisade fencing around the compound with a maximum height of 3m.
- Internal access tracks with a width of 4m.
- The compound will have parking bays.
- CCTV will be installed.
- Lighting tbc.

Fencing and Security

1.3.4 The design of the fencing and security is likely to comprise:

- A deer type wire mesh and wooden post fencing with a maximum height of 2.5m.
- CCTV camera on poles with a maximum height of 3m.
- CCTV poles to be galvanized steel painted green or as per LPA requirement.

Associated Infrastructure

1.3.5 The development will require the installation of associated infrastructure required for the running of the battery storage site which comprises:

1.3.6 1no Substation and DNO substation – Maximum height of 3.95m.

2 Existing Situation

2.1 Context

2.1.1 The application Site covers an area of approximately 10.7 hectares including the battery storage site itself ('the Site') (4.1ha), the cable corridor (5.1ha) and the site accesses (1.5ha). The Site sits on a northeast / southwest axis and is broadly rectangular. It is located approximately 150m to the west of Tean Leys Farm and approximately 180m north of the A50.

2.1.2 The Site is located to the southwest of Lower Tean, which is identified as Smaller Village under Policy SS9 of the Local Plan. The Site is within the parish of Checkley.

2.1.3 The Site forms the larger part of an agricultural field and is located immediately to the west of Tean Leys Farm, a poultry and egg farm. The Site is bounded to the east and south by hedgerows with the north and west being formed by the remainder of the agricultural field. Approximately 180m to the south is the A50; to the north, west, and east are agricultural fields interspersed with copses, lone trees, and blocks of woodland.

- 2.1.4 There are a number of public rights of way (PROW) in the area surrounding the Site. The nearest is Checkley 12 which crosses the A50 to the southeast of the Site and runs through Tean Leys Farm. Checkley 12 Checkley 42 splits from Checkley 12 to the east of the Site. Checkley 14 runs northeast from Blythe House before merging with Checkley 12 just south of the A50. To the west Checkley 5 runs north roughly parallel with Checkley 12. Further north, Checkley 9 travels northwest connecting Checkley 12 with Checkley 5.
- 2.1.5 The Site, according to Environment Agency mapping, is in Flood Zone 1, the category at lowest risk of flooding, and has no material flood risk.
- 2.1.6 The Site does not contain any ecological designations but is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone. The nearest SSSI is Dimmings Dale & the Ranger approximately 4 miles northeast of the Site. The nearest Local Nature Reserve is Cecilly Brook approximately 3 miles north of the Site.
- 2.1.7 The Site also falls within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ).
- 2.1.8 The Site is currently in agricultural use as pasture and is classified as being Grade 4 agricultural land following an agricultural land survey undertaken by Land Research Associates.

2.2 Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 2.2.1 A brief summary of the published landscape character assessments in the context of the Site is detailed below.

National Character Area

- 2.2.2 Natural England's Character Map of England identifies the Site falls within National Landscape Area 68: Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands. This profile describes the area as "though divided by the River Dove's wide floodplain, is predominantly a rolling plateau that slopes from the southern edge of the Peak District to the valley of the River Trent in the south-west..."¹ The key characteristics are described as:
- *'A predominantly pastoral landscape of rolling countryside that is still largely rural and relatively tranquil, featuring distinctive field boundary patterns and characteristic hedgerows with hedgerow trees.*
 - *Grassland for livestock is the dominant land use although dairy and cereal farming are also important.*
 - *An overall wooded character derived from scattered ancient and semi-natural woods, parkland and boundary trees.*
 - *Predominantly hedgerow bounded, the field pattern varies from small to medium-sized fields to the north of the Dove; mostly large-scale and rectilinear on the broad river flood plains; strongly rectilinear in Needwood Forest; and smaller and more irregular to the west.*
 - *There are good surviving examples of water meadows feature along the three main river valleys.*
 - *Wood pasture and designed parklands, often with veteran trees, are found throughout the area. They are generally associated with landscape parks and country houses, such as Sandon, Sudbury and Kedleston.'*²

¹ National Character Area Profile: 68. Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands, Natural England, January 2013, Page 3.

² National Character Area Profile: 68. Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands, Natural England, January 2013, Page 6.

2.2.3 NCA 68 includes additional guidance is provided in relation to the management of the landscape under the section and the opportunities of relevance include the following measures:

- *‘Planting new hedgerows, hedgerow trees and associated grassland buffers strips, and managing hedgerows in traditional local Midlands style, to maintain and enhance landscape character and improve habitat connectivity, particularly where this can assist in regulating soil erosion.*
- *Restoring existing wood pasture and extending it where appropriate to enhance the overall network of woodland habitats.*
- *Restoring and creating species rich grassland and other habitats associated with wood pasture.*
- *Establishing a strong landscape framework as the context for existing major settlements and potential development areas within the and surrounding the National Character Area (NCA), and ensuring that their influence on the quality of the surrounding landscape is positive and that new green infrastructure is provided.’³*

2.2.4 Overall, NCA 68 sets out that in the west of the character area, woodland planting is recommended to screen the advancing conurbations and provide a strong framework. This is to be supplemented with the reinforcement and replacement of field boundary treatments where appropriate to create further structure within the landscape and to reinforce landscape pattern.

2.2.5 Equestrian driven development and landscape change has negatively impacted on the landscape through the removal of hedgerows and the introduction of shelter for horses, and where possible this should be reversed or counteracted. The NCA also notes that where possible native woodland planting could be introduced to connect isolated blocks of woodland, where appropriate.

Staffordshire Moorlands Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) 2008

2.2.6 The Staffordshire Moorlands LSCA identifies the Site within the Settled plateau farmland slopes. This character type is found in both the Potteries and Churnet Valley Joint Character Area, to the central west of the District south of Werrington and Cellarhead, and in the Needwood and Claylands Joint Character Area, in the south western corner of the District. The landscapes are rolling plateau with dispersed scattered hamlets and farmsteads. Ancient hedgerows line field boundaries with mature hedgerow trees creating a dense cover. A generally small scale landscape comprised of irregular fields. Oak and ash are predominate trees in this area, although lines of alder and willow are found along streams and rivers. New tree and shrub planting lines the A50 creating a green corridor through the area. Tall hedgerows are common across the countryside. Ancient hedgerows and trees limit views and create visual enclosure. Roadside hedges appear to be well maintained. The large scale feature of the A50 dual carriageway has in parts been cut into this small scale landscape limiting views out and creating a sense of enclosure.

2.2.7 Identified Key Characteristics are:

- *“Gentle undulating landform with flat open valleys*
- *Small scale ancient hedgerow field pattern*
- *Low lying wet fields with ponds and well vegetated streams*
- *Views limited by hedgerow pattern and dense tree cover*

³ National Character Area Profile: 68. Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands, Natural England, January 2013, Page 13-16.

- *Urban fringe farming with horseculture*
- *Incongruous A50 dual carriageway corridor and mainline railway”⁴*

2.2.8 Key Planning and Management Issues:

- *“Impact of conurbation; urban fringe farming and increase in horseculture*
- *Replacement of hedgerows by fencing.*
- *Busy roads and mainline railway*
- *Loss of some semi-natural vegetation (ancient woodland, hedgerows and semi-natural grasslands)”⁵*

2.2.9 Capabilities and sensitivities of the landscape to accommodate change:

- *“Planning for Landscape Change Supplementary Planning Guidance to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan, identifies this landscape character area as in the area to the north west of Blythe Bridge as a landscape requiring regeneration; and the remaining area including that part of the landscape character type within the Needwood Claylands as requiring landscape enhancement.”⁶*

2.2.10 Landscape Planning Guidelines include:

- *“In the area in the west of this landscape character type large scale woodland planting would screen and contain the edge of the conurbation reducing its visual influence. Plantations should be largely broadleaved and need to take account of the flatter landscape of the river valley. The re-establishment of hedgerows and/or small tree groups redefining small field enclosures will combine with the larger tree blocks to reduce the scale of the landscape.*
- *Reinforcing the existing vegetational structure of the area away from the urban fringe should consist of small scale planting of small field size, field corners and hedgerow trees.*
- *New native woodland planting should where possible be used to improve the distribution of and links to existing ancient woodlands, counteracting isolation of these woodlands.*
- *The colour of prefabricated agricultural buildings should be determined taking careful account of position, predominant tones of adjacent vegetation, local materials and sky, so as to minimise the visual impact of the development.”⁷*

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2014 – 2023 (adopted September 2020)

2.2.11 The Site is located in the Parish of Checkley within the administrative boundary of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Local Plan (SMDCLP) and the policies that are considered of particular landscape relevance to this proposal are:

- Policy DC1: Design Considerations
- Policy DC3: Landscape and Settlement Setting
- Policy C3: Green Infrastructure
- Policy NE1: Biodiversity and Geological Resources

⁴ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) 2008, Page 55.

⁵ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) 2008, Page 56.

⁶ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) 2008, Page 57.

⁷ Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (LSCA) 2008, Page 57.

- Policy NE2: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

- 2.2.12 Policy DC1: This policy notes that all development must be well designed and reinforce local distinctiveness. The supporting text for the policy locates good design within the wider matrix of sustainable development.
- 2.2.13 Policy DC3: This policy notes that all development must have regard for the landscape within which it is situated. In particular five specific criteria are referenced, these will be addressed in turn.
- '1) Resisting development which would lead to prominent intrusion into the countryside or have a significant adverse impact on the character or the setting of a settlement or important views into and out of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence';⁸*
- 2.2.14 This policy also notes that any landscape features that make a meaningful contribution to biodiversity should be supported. This policy notes that criterion 3) the use of screening can assist with the integration of a proposed development into the landscape. The extension and enhancement of boundary treatments and the provision of additional, planted, screening is also encouraged.
- '3) Supporting developments which conserve or enhance the biodiversity qualities of any natural or man-made features within the landscape, such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, walls, watercourses or ponds*
- 2) Supporting development which respects and enhances local landscape character and which reinforces and enhances the setting of the settlement as identified in the Landscape and Settlement Character evidence'⁹*
- 2.2.15 Policy C3: This policy notes that Green infrastructure must be considered under NE1 and C3. The Staffordshire Moorlands Strategic Green Infrastructure Network notes the development priorities for the area. The Site falls between GI corridor 9 (the Cecilly Brook Corridor) and 11 (the Blythe Bridge Corridor) which run northwest in parallel to each other and are broadly perpendicular to the A50, adjacent to the Site.
- 2.2.16 Whilst the Site is not within either corridor it is worth noting that the corridors should be treated as permeable and with guidance applicable to the wider area. Common themes relate to the restoration of habitat and improvements to the accessibility of green assets. In addition, vegetation along watercourses should be supported along with enhancements to PROWs and other pedestrian and cycle routes
- 2.2.17 Much of the wider guidance relates more directly residential development and the benefits of connecting development to multiuse green spaces. As noted, the Site's capacity to contribute to green infrastructure and habitats is limited to its ability to strengthen peripheral habitats – it not being appropriate for the development to offer enhancements to public accessibility.
- 2.2.18 Policy NE1: This policy states that the biodiversity and geological resources of the District and neighbouring areas will be conserved and enhanced by positive management and strict control of development.
- 2.2.19 Biodiversity enhancement has the potential to aid in addressing climate change by having more and better connected habitats, through providing valuable green infrastructure and helping reconnect people and nature, especially if local communities are encouraged to help establish or maintain new and existing habitats. The proposals deliver new native woodland

⁸ Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, September 2020, Page 110.

⁹ Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan, September 2020, Page 110.

and hedgerows, providing additional biodiversity and habitat provision and is therefore it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy NE1.

- 2.2.20 Policy NE2: this policy notes that trees, woodlands, and hedgerows should be protected, enhanced, and extended. The development does not entail the loss of any trees or hedgerows and will provide new planting increasing the diversity of species within surrounding area. Given the absence of adverse impacts to trees, woodland or hedgerows it is considered that the proposal accords with Policy NE2.

2.3 Statutory Designations

Scheduled Monuments

- 2.3.1 There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Site. The nearest ancient monument is Bowl Barrow 280m ESE of Hall Green House, List Entry Number: 1008540, approximately 900m to the northeast of the Site. Refer to Figure 7 Visual Receptors.

Listed Buildings

- 2.3.2 There are no listed buildings on Site nor are there any scheduled monuments. The nearest listed building, the Grade II listed Footbridge over the River Tean, List Entry Number: 1037936, located approximately 630m northeast of the Site. There are a number of other listed buildings within the wider area, including the Grade II listed Hall Green Farmhouse, List Entry Number: 1374700, located approximately 650m north of the Site. The nearest ancient monument is approximately 900m to the northeast and the nearest conservation area is 1.2km to the north of the Site. Refer to Figure 7 Visual Receptors.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- 2.3.3 The Site does not contain any ecological designations but is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone. The nearest SSSI is Dimmings Dale & the Ranger approximately 4 miles northeast of the Site, outside of the 2km Study Area. The nearest Local Nature Reserve is Cecilly Brook approximately 3 miles north of the Site, outside of the 2km Study Area.

Conservation Areas

- 2.3.4 The Site is not within a Conservation Area. The closest conservation area is Upper Tean within the settlement of Tean located approximately 1.2km to the north of the Site. Refer to Figure 7 Visual Receptors.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

- 2.3.5 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within or directly adjacent to the Site. There are a number of PRoW crossing the surrounding arable farmland. The nearest is Checkley 12 (SF/Checkley CP/12) which crosses the A50 to the southeast of the Site and then continues north following the existing farm tracks approximately 200m west of the Site and then runs through Tean Leys Farm and across the farmland to the north.
- 2.3.6 To the south of the A50 there are a number of Public Footpaths radiating out of Blythe House, one of which Checkley 14 runs northeast from Blythe House before merging with Checkley 12 just south of the A50. Public Footpath Checkley 5 crosses the A50 approximately 560m north west of the Site and continues north through the countryside, past Highfields Farm and Benthouse Farm before continuing north to Upper Tean. Public Footpath Checkley 9 is located on the lower lying land alongside the River Tean approximately 600m from the Site.

2.4 Landscape Resource and Contribution of the Site to Landscape Character

Landscape Fabric of the Site (landscape Features)

- 2.4.1 The location of the Site is shown Figure 1 (Site Location), which illustrates how the land forms the larger part of an arable field situated immediately to the North West of Tean Leys Farm. The Site is currently used for agriculture. The Site is bounded to the east and south by hedgerows with the north and west being formed by the remainder of the agricultural field. The wider landscape is formed agricultural fields interspersed with copses, lone trees, and blocks of woodland.
- 2.4.2 The topography of the Site is shown on Figure 3 (Landform), which illustrates how the landform is relatively flat at approximately 75m AOD and occupies a finger of elevated landform alongside the A50 that forms the plateau above the slopes of the River Tean to the north and the River Blithe to the south.
- 2.4.3 The Site is currently in arable production and is classified as being Grade 3 agricultural land under Natural England's Agricultural Land Classification. A subsequent investigation will be undertaken to determine whether the land is to be subcategorised as 3a (good quality agricultural land) or 3b (poor quality agricultural land).

Vegetation Cover

- 2.4.4 Vegetation cover across the Site is limited to the field margins, otherwise, the Site is the southern end of an open arable field.

Tree Cover

- 2.4.5 Trees on Site are restricted to the field boundaries. The Site is close (approximately 110m) to two isolated blocks of woodland to the north west and there is a scattering of trees to the north of the Site.
- 2.4.6 The Northern Churnet and Rudyard Woodlands Zone contains scattered blocks of woodland set within a wider landscape of heathland, pasture, and agriculture. The priorities are the preservation and enhancement of existing woodland and increasingly the connectivity of the semi-natural habitats, particularly those associated with the woodland.

Hedgerows

- 2.4.7 The Site is bounded to the east and south by established native hedgerows with the north and west being formed by the remainder of the agricultural field.

Contribution to Landscape Character

- 2.4.8 The Site, and the wider countryside of which it is a part of, is typical of the character of the Settled plateau farmland slopes, and is therefore considered to positively contribute to the rural character of this area.
- 2.4.9 The Site sits on the rolling plateau above the Rivers Tean and Blithe. The field parcels, including that of the Site are more rectilinear on the plateau than within the lower lying landform along the River corridors. Native woodland blocks provide containment and enclosure across the countryside to the north of the A50. The A50 itself forms a well vegetated visual barrier across the landscape to the south that separates the countryside and screens views and separates the countryside.
- 2.4.10 The Site is located in proximity to existing large scale farmsteads with large farm sheds and areas of hard standing. The existing enclosure provided by woodlands and the A50 allow for these large features to become absorbed into this landscape, with limited wider appreciation.
- 2.4.11 The nature of battery development is that it is low level and easily screened in a way that is consistent with the established pattern of boundary treatments within the landscape.

- 2.4.12 In the context of the identified characteristics of the landscape character and the associated planning guidance, the development could be easily absorbed into the landscape to the north of the A50. The proposal includes planting that would screen the batteries from view and it is envisioned that this screening would take the form of native planting and retention of existing boundary vegetation.

2.5 Visual Resource

- 2.5.1 The visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors) in the locality of the Site differs according to many factors. Visual receptors of higher sensitivity with limited susceptibility to change include residents at home (private viewpoints), people engaged in outdoor recreation (including use of PROWs), visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, travelers on recognised scenic routes (public viewpoints) and people at their work place where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of their working life. Travelers on road, rail or other transport routes are considered less sensitive to changes in visual amenity.
- 2.5.2 Consideration of the study area, via desk research, has identified locations from which the Site and the proposed development would potentially be visible. Further field study is required to provide a refined understanding of the likely extent of visibility for the proposed development. Current field work has established an area of search of approximately 2km, based on the following factors:
- Screening provided by the A50 and associated roadside vegetation.
 - Screening provided by woodland blocks through out the surrounding landscape.
 - Location of the Site within the middle / top of the plateau. Set back of Site away from plateau edge limits opportunities for proposals to be visible on horizons or skylines.
 - Mature field boundary vegetation – mature trees and established hedgerows layer together to provide enclosure across the countryside.
- 2.5.3 Overall, the extent of views and visual influence of the proposed development are limited to the local area and mostly contained to locations immediately alongside the Site to the north of the A50, (see Figure 9 Augmented ZTV). The ZTV indicated limited potential visibility in limited zones on the edge of the Study Area, however it is unlikely that at this distance (circa 2KM) that there would be any notable views of the proposals, with the layering of low level vegetation across the countryside screening the development. A number of visual receptors have been selected. The following receptors have been identified as having the potential to be affected by the development:
- Private Receptors**
- 2.5.4 The proposals occupy a location away from any large settlements, and as such impacts on large numbers of private Receptors are considered unlikely. There are a limited number of isolated farmsteads local to the Site. Other than Tean Leys Farm, these properties are not covered by the ZTV 'splash', however, for robustness, the nearest of these have been selected for inclusion within the assessment:
- Tean Leys Farm
 - Hillcrest House
 - Highfields Farm

Public Receptors

2.5.5 In terms of Public Receptors, there are a number of public rights of way (PROW) in the area surrounding the Site, however in proximity to the Site, it is only PROW Checkley 12 that the ZTV identifies as having any potential visibility. PROW Checkley 5 is located to the west of the Site, and although is not covered by the ZTV 'splash', given proximity, for robustness has been selected for inclusion within the assessment:

- PROW Checkley 12
- PROW Checkley 5

Transport Receptors

2.5.6 In terms of transport receptors, views are unlikely to be experienced from the A50 at approximately 180m to the south of the Site owing to the extent of vegetation cover bordering the road, which creates an almost continuous visual screen. This is supported by the Augmented ZTV. However, given its proximity and for robustness has been selected for inclusion within the assessment.

2.5.7 Riverside Road (route of PROW Checkley 5) is located to the west of the Site, and although is not covered by the ZTV 'splash', given its proximity and for robustness has been selected for inclusion within the assessment:

- Users of the A50
- Users of Riverside Road

Summary

2.5.8 Overall, the extent of views and visual influence of the proposed development would be limited to the local area and mostly contained to locations immediately alongside the Site to the north of the A50, (see Figure 9 Augmented ZTV).

2.5.9 To accompany any future LVIA work, the representative viewpoints shown on Figure 10, Proposed Viewpoints are intended to be used to support the LVIA.

3 Identification of Potential Effects

3.1 Potential Landscape Effects

- 3.1.1 The Site, and the wider countryside of which it is a part of, is typical of the character of the Settled plateau farmland slopes, and is therefore considered to positively contribute to the rural character of this area. The Site is located in proximity to existing large scale farmsteads with large farm sheds and areas of hard standing.
- 3.1.2 The Site sits on the rolling plateau above the Rivers Tean and Blithe. Native woodland blocks within the surrounding farmland provide containment and enclosure across the countryside to the north of the A50. The A50 itself forms a well vegetated visual barrier across the landscape to the south that separates the countryside and screens views and separates the countryside locally.
- 3.1.3 The existing enclosure provided by woodlands and the A50 allow for low level features to be absorbed into this landscape, with limited wider appreciation. The nature of battery development is that it is low level and easily screened in a way that is consistent with the established pattern of boundary treatments within the landscape.
- 3.1.4 In the context of the identified characteristics of the landscape character and the associated planning guidance, the development could be easily absorbed into the landscape to the north of the A50. The proposal includes planting that would screen the batteries from view and it is envisioned that this screening would take the form of native planting and retention of existing boundary vegetation.

3.2 Potential Visual Effects

- 3.2.1 Overall, the extent of views and visual influence of the proposed development are limited to the local area and mostly contained to locations immediately alongside the Site to the north of the A50, (see Figure 9 Augmented ZTV). The ZTV indicated limited potential visibility in limited zones on the edge of the Study Area, however it is unlikely that at this distance (circa 2KM) that there would be any notable views of the proposals, with the layering of low level vegetation across the countryside screening the development.
- 3.2.2 Given the enclosure to the Site, and contained potential visibility identified by the ZTV study, a limited number of visual receptors have been selected for inclusion within any future assessment. The visibility of the proposed development locally is not considered likely to result in any significant adverse effects over and above the presence of existing farm buildings locally.
- 3.2.3 The proposals could be readily absorbed into the countryside to the north of the A50 with limited visual appreciation in the local or wider landscape. The proposed woodland and hedgerow planting on the edge of the Site would, once established, provide additional screening and absorption of the proposals, further limiting any opportunities for visibility of the proposals.

4 Conclusions

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 In the context of the identified characteristics of the landscape character and the associated planning guidance the development is considered unlikely to lead to any notable effects on Landscape Character of Visual Amenity. The proposal includes for native planting that would screen the batteries from view and support the Landscape Planning Guidelines of the Settled Plateau Farmland Slopes Landscape Character Area.
- 4.1.2 Overall, it is considered that the proposal would provide development which respects and enhances local landscape character whilst also conserving and enhancing the biodiversity qualities of the Site through the use of native woodland planting on the Site boundaries.
- 4.1.3 Potential visibility of the proposals would be extremely limited with those receptors with the potential to be affected located within the immediate setting of the Site such as PRoW Checkley 12 and people at Tean Leys Farm being those most likely to appreciate visibility of the proposals.
- 4.1.4 There are strong field boundary treatments in the area, as noted as part of the character assessment. Increasing the strength of the boundary treatment surrounding the Site would be consistent with both the existing landscape and the landscape planning guidance identified.
- 4.1.5 The Site does not form part of the views into or out of a settlement and the development of the Site would consequently have no impact on any such views.
- 4.1.6 With reference to priority habitat (peripheral habitats – hedgerows and field margins), restoration of hedgerows should be pursued with this including increases to the numbers of young trees and the diversity of flora within hedgerows. Where possible small field patterns should be restored with the creation or restoration of meadows
- 4.1.7 The development would be screened on all sides by planting which would conceal it within the landscape and allow it to be readily absorbed in to its immediate setting with limited effects on the character of the immediate or wider area.
- 4.1.8 The Site is considered to be visually self-contained with there being limited views into or out of the Site as a result of both its location and the strength of existing boundary treatments and the boundary treatments of other fields that interrupt views from any of the possible vantage points. The Site's proximity to the A50 limits its role within the wider landscape as the A50 is noted as being a dominant and negative landscape feature and lies to the south of the Site.
- 4.1.9 The Site is in agricultural use as pasture and consequently has some biodiversity potential, however new planting has the scope to improve habitat and biodiversity across the Site. The development provides the opportunity to deliver biodiversity net gains as a result of the improvements to the Site boundaries and peripheral planting is acceptable under NE1 and in line with the SBAP and Staffordshire Moorlands Biodiversity Opportunity Map.

