COYLTON GREENER GRID PARK

LAND SOUTH OF AYR ROAD, COYLTON

APPENDIX 1: LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL

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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 East Ayrshire Council ('the Council') by Arcus Consultancy Services Ltd ('Arcus'), on behalf of Statkraft UK LTD ('the Applicant') for the development of Coylton Greener Grid Park ('the Development') at Land south of Ayr Road, Coylton, East Ayrshire, neighbouring the existing Coylton 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, a 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, south of the A70 road, and adjacent to the Coylton Substation, East Ayrshire. North of the development is Open Cast Coal and Breedon Killoch Depot is north east. The Site is located approximately 2 kilometres (km) northeast of Drongan, 3.6 km west of Ochiltree, 5 km east of Coylton; and adjacent to the existing Coylton substation. The Site will be accessed from Ayr Road (A70) which is directly adjacent to the north of the Site.

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

- 48 no. battery units (each 12.9 m x 2.44 m x 2.59 m);
- 6 no. inverter units (each 6.1 m x 2.44 m x 2.59 m);
- 1 no. 275kV AIS & Transformer (14.8 m x 5.05 m x 10.8 m);
- 2 no. 2500kVA 690V Transformers (each 4.0 m x 4.0 m x 2.9 m);
- 1 no 1000kVA 400v BoP Auxiliary Transformers (3.0 m x 3.0 m x 2.14 m);
- 1 no. LV electrical houses (12.19 m 3.45 m x 2.59 m);
- 2 no. synchronous compensator (22.07 m x 8.58 m x 10.0 m envelope);
- 6 no. air blast coolers (each 8.87 m x 2.3 m x 2.5 m);
- 2 no. water cooler pump skids (each 6.35 m x 2.3 m x 2.6 m);
- 2 no. lube oil pump skids (each 2.15 m x 1.1 m x 1.1 m);
- 1 no. MV electrical houses (12.19 m 3.45 m x 2.59 m);
- 1 no. comms house (12.19 m x 2.44 m x 2.59 m);
- 2 no. emergency back-up diesel generators (5.1 m x 2.07 m x 1.6 m);
- 6 no. switchgear containers (each 12.2 m x 2.44 m x 3.0 m);
- 5 no. security columns of 6 m in height with CCTV cameras located at various points around the site boundary;
- Internal roads;
- 4.0 m high noise attenuation fencing; and
- 3.4 m high palisade gate and electric security palisade fencing.

A visibility splay at the entrance to the A70 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 1.99 hectares ('ha'). A Site Layout Plan is appended to this Application as Planning Drawing 2.

The construction and installation of the Development will take approximately 13 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 1/13[1];
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 2019, The Landscape Institute[2];
- SNH and The Countryside Agency (2002) Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for Scotland and England[3]; 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 Greener Grid Park 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

[1] The Landscape Institute (2015) GLVIA3 – Statements of Clarification [Online] Available at: https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/technical-resource/glvia3-clarifications/ (Last accessed 20.10.21)

[2] The Landscape Institute, *Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19*, 17th September 2019 [Online] Available at: https://landscapewpstorage01.blob.core.windows.net/www-landscapeinstitute-org/2019/09/LI_TGN-06-19_Visual_Representation.pdf (Last accessed 20.10.21)

[3] SNH and The Countryside Agency (2002). Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for Scotland and England [Online] Available at: https://www.nature.scot/sites/default/files/2018-02/Publication%202002%20-%20Landscape%20Character%20Assessment%20guidance%20for%20England%20and%20Scotland.pdf (Last accessed 20.10.21)

[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 20.10.2021)

[5] Ibid. page 21.

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:

- 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.

2.5 Cumulative Assessment

The operational Coylton Substation, operated by SP Energy Networks, 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:

- East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (Adopted April 2017);
- East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study (2018) for local landscape character descriptions[6];
- NatureScot (2019) National Landscape Character Assessment[7];
- 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

On 10th March 2021, Arcus submitted a Pre-Application Advice request to the Council for preliminary advice on the Development. The Council provided detailed pre-application advice, via email, on 28th April 2021. The advice contained within the pre-application response and received during a meeting on 17th May 2021 has influenced the scope of the assessment provided in support of the Application.

The screening opinion concluded that the application did not require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); therefore, no scoping application was required, and no formal consultee responses were received.

[6] East Ayrshire Council (2018) East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study by Carol Anderson Landscape Associates [Online] Available at: https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/L/Landscape-wind-capacity-study.pdf (Last Accessed 20.10.21)

[7] https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-character-assessment/scottish-landscape-character-types-map-and-descriptions (Last accessed 20.10.21)

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 Coylton Substation, overhead power lines and pylons connected to the substation, open agricultural grazing and arable land. The eastern edge of the settlements of Drongan and Coalhall, are located within the west of study area, and other properties are scattered farm properties 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 500 m to the north, and on the north facing slopes of small hills within the 2 km radius to the south, south-west and south-east of the Development (refer to Figure 1.9).

2.9 Field Study

Following the desk-based assessment, fieldwork was undertaken in August and September 2021.

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 or 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 1.5a – 1.5f, 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 1.5a – 1.5f for the baseline landscape photographs, and photomontages of the Development from Viewpoints 1 - 6.

Table 2.1: LVA Selected Viewpoints

VP No.	Name	VP Grid Reference	Distance to the Site	Receptor Groups
1	East Tarelgin at A70	246577, 619817	0.16 km NE	The viewpoint is representative of the views available for A70 road users, possible rear views from residential properties and from an elevated location to illustrate the landscape context of the Site, within LCT 66: Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire.
2	West Tarelgin	246118, 619991	0.42 km SW	The viewpoint is representative of the views available for local road users and local recreational receptors along the Core Path, within LCT 66: Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire.
3	C9 Core Path (Ochiltree to Drongan) north-east of Clydenoch	247459, 619464	0.48 km NW	The viewpoint is representative of the views available for residential and local road receptors and possible rear views from residential properties, within LCT 66: Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire.
4	C9 Core Path (Ochiltree to Drongan)	246752, 619093	0.89 km SE	The viewpoint is representative of the views available for local road users and local recreational receptors along the Core Path, within LCT 66: Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire.
5	C9 Core Path (Ochiltree to Drongan) north of Treesmax	246125, 618637	0.9 km SW	The viewpoint is representative of the views available for residential, road and local recreational receptors along the Core Path, within LCT 66: Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire.
6	Bardarroch Pet Supplies north-east of Bardarroch Farm	247214, 618666	1.03 km SW	The viewpoint is representative of the views available for residential and local road receptors, within LCT 66: Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire.

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 East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (Adopted April 2017)

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

Formally adopted in 2017, the East Ayrshire Local Development Plan[8] (the 'LDP') sets out strategic spatial priorities and policies for East Ayrshire, supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance. Policies have been reviewed and the following apply to the Development.

3.1.1.1 Overarching Policy OP1

This policy states that all development proposals will require to meet the following criteria in so far as they are relevant, or otherwise demonstrate how they contribute:

(i) Comply with the provisions and principles of the EALDP vision and spatial strategy, all relevant LDP policies and associated supplementary guidance and non-statutory guidance;

(ii) Be fully compatible with surrounding established uses and have no unacceptable impacts on the environmental quality of the area;

(iii) Ensure that the size, scale, layout, and design enhances the character and amenity of the area and creates a clear sense of place;

(iv) Where possible, reuse vacant previously developed land in preference to greenfield land;

(v) Be of the highest quality design by meeting with the provisions of SPP, the Scottish Government's policy statement Designing Streets, the Council's Design Guidance and any master plan/design brief prepared for the site;

(vi) Prepare Master Plans/Design Statements in line with Planning Advice Notes 83 and 68 respectively where requested by the Council and/or where this is set out as a requirement in Volume 2 of the EALDP;

(vii) Be compatible with, and where possible implement, projects shown on the EALDP placemaking maps;

(viii) Ensure that there is no unacceptable loss of safeguarded areas of open space/green infrastructure and prime quality agricultural land;

(ix) Protect and enhance natural and built heritage designations and link to and integrate with green infrastructure where possible;

(x) Ensure that there are no unacceptable impacts on the landscape character or tourism offer of the area;

(xi) Meet with the requirements of all relevant service providers and the Ayrshire Roads Alliance; and

(xii) Be accessible to all.

3.1.1.2 Policy IND 3: Business and Industrial Development in the Rural Area

Policy IND 3 states:

"Outwith settlement boundaries, new business, industrial and commercial development, will be encouraged and supported by the Council only where the proposal relates to one or more of the following types of development:

[8] East Ayrshire Council (2017) East Ayrshire Local Development Plan [Online] Available at: https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/PlanningAndTheEnvironment/Development-plans/LocalAndStatutoryDevelopmentPlans/East-Ayrshire-Local-Development-Plan-2017.aspx (Last accessed 20.10.21)

(i) Identified Business and Industrial sites and Miscellaneous Sites, with the potential for business and industrial development as indicated on the Local Development Plan Maps;

(ii) Developments relating to and supporting the traditional rural activities of agriculture and forestry where there is a demonstrated site specific locational need;

(iii) Sensitive developments relating to recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting sectors;

(iv) Rail freight based industrial uses at existing coal disposal points or coal loading facilities within existing and/or former surface coal mines served by rail;

(v) Sympathetic farm diversification developments, supported by a 5 year business plan;

(vi) Small scale business developments which operate entirely from rural residential properties or community based facilities;

(vii) Renewable energy developments within the Rural Area that have been subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria."

3.1.1.3 Policy RE1: Renewable Energy Developments

Policy RE1 states:

"Proposals for the generation and utilisation of renewable energy in the form of new build development, infrastructure will be supported in standalone locations and as integral parts of new and existing developments where it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable significant adverse impacts on all of the relevant Renewable Energy Assessment Criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the EALDP, that the scale of the proposal and its relationship with the surrounding area are appropriate and that all relevant policies are met."

3.2 Landscape Planning Designations

This section, which should be read in conjunction with Figure 1.4 (Annex A.2), 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 the 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	None	None
Conservation Areas	None	None
Scheduled Monuments	None	None
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 Assessment[9].

At a regional level there is one Landscape Character Type (LCT) within the 2 km Study Area (refer to Figure 1.6, Annex A.2), the Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT 66.

4.1.1 Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT 66

The Agricultural Lowlands-Ayrshire Landscape Character Type occurs in five places focussed on the northern half of Ayrshire. It covers a large area, including most of the Ayrshire Basin to the north of Kilwinning and Irvine. It comprises inland areas on the mainland between the coastal edge and higher moorland to the east.

The key characteristics of the Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire LCT 66 include:

- *Complex landform, gently increasing in height from the coastal fringe, dissected by many burns and streams draining to incised main river valleys to create an undulating lowland landscape;*
- *Geology dominated by coal measures, though basalt, sandstones, limestones, millstone grit and volcanic intrusions are also present;*
- *Generally small to medium scale landscape;*
- *Landcover is predominantly pastoral, with some arable on lower and better soils.*
- *Fields often regular in shape and enclosed by beech or hawthorn hedges, with mature hedgerow trees giving the landscape a surprisingly wooded character;*
- *Settlement pattern historic in origin based upon larger, more self-contained farmsteads set in a hinterland of fields;*
- *Number of larger towns and villages with historic cores surrounded by more modern development;*
- *Several major road corridors creating a degree of conflict between the rural character and presence of heavy traffic;*
- *Dense network of often very rural minor roads;*
- *Varying landscape character which ranges from very rural to more fragmented and developed landscapes on urban fringes; and*
- *Views tend to be dictated by the local topography and landcover.*[10]

Landscape characteristics detailed within the national character area (NCA) profiles are likely to be represented over a wide area of the NCA. As such, any changes at the Site level relative to the NCA would be extremely small in scale and are unlikely to impact upon

[9] NatureScot (2020) 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 20.10.21)
[10] Ibid No. 8

those key landscape characteristics identified for the NCA. As such, the Agricultural Lowlands-Ayrshire LCT 66 is not considered further in the LVA.

The regional / local landscape character assessment, with more detail on the local landscape have been used within this assessment.

4.1.2 East Ayrshire Lowlands LCT

At a regional level, local landscape character types are identified in the (LCT) 7c East Ayrshire Lowlands. A summary description of the LCT includes:

- *This character type covers a fairly extensive area across Ayrshire. Within East Ayrshire it forms the edge to generally smaller scale and often diverse Lowland River Valleys (9) which cut through it including the valleys of the Ayr, Lugar and Irvine.*
- *This landscape gradually merges with a more elevated landscape of rugged ridges and hills in the north-east at the transition with East Renfrewshire and with the relatively simple and more extensive uplands of the East Ayrshire Plateau Moorlands with Forestry and Wind Farms (18b) and the Foothills with Forest and Opencast Mining (17a);*
- *The gently rolling landform combines with the strongly enclosed field pattern and regularly spaced dispersed small farms, houses and woodlands to create a small to medium scale landscape, dependant on the complexity of landform and land cover pattern. Some small but prominent hills occur in places;*
- *A gently undulating to rolling landform with occasional more defined small hills forming prominent features and pockets of more complex interlocking drumlins enclosing narrow valleys and small flat areas of wetter pasture;*
- *This farmed landscape has small to medium sized pastures, strongly enclosed by intact hedgerows with field trees in places. Small mixed woodlands and shelterbelts are also a common feature;*
- *A regular and fairly dense pattern of small farms, these often located on low hill tops and ridges, is characteristic of this landscape together with some small settlements;*
- *This landscape is crossed by a concentrated network of roads and high voltage transmission lines…; and*
- *Opencast mining operations are evident in the southern part of this character type at the transition with the Foothills with Forest and Opencast Mining (17a).*[11]

4.1.3 Landscape Character of the Site Area

The 2 km Study Area is dissected by the A70 road from west to east.

The land surrounding the Development is rural in nature, comprising of open arable farmland, used for rough grazing, adjacent to Coylton Substation located north west of the site, on the A70 road.

The south east and north and north west part of the 2 km Study Area is dissected by burns and streams draining to incised main river valleys. The Taiglum Burn is located on the south, south east and south west within the 2 km Study Area. The closest point of Taiglum Burn is located at approximately 0.75 km south of the Site; at approximately 0.04 km south of Clydenoch and at approximately 0.25 km south of Treesmax.

The nearest settlement to the Development is the settlement of Drongan, located 2 km south west. The closest residential properties are East Tarelgin located approximately 0.16 km north west east of the Site, and Timancha located approximately 0.35 km, Macquittiston located at approximately 0.45 km and West Tarelgin located approximately 0.5 km. The open cast coal site is located at approximately 0.72 km to north of the Site and Breedon Killoch Depot located approximately 1.0 km to north east of the Site.

[11] Ibid No. 6, page 31 - 34

The landscape character of the Site:

- **Landform & Scale** – the landscape is simple in form and medium in scale. The highest point at 168 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) is located 0.58 km north east of East Tarelgin and levels gently incline to north where an open cast coal site is located at approximately 160 m AOD. The open cast coal site is boarded by the single railway track on the east, north and west side. The levels of the open cast coal site area incline gently to west, north and north east. The Killoch Disposal Point is located at the end of the Single Railway Track. The topography levels continue from open cast coal site through Killoch Disposal Point to the east along the A70 road at approximately 155 to 170 m AOD;
- **Land cover** – the landscape of the Site and surrounding area comprises of simple land cover of arable farmland, used for rough grazing; mostly regular fields enclosed by hedges, with mature hedgerow trees creating a wooded character;
- **Settlement / Man Made Influences** – the immediate surroundings of the site are very lightly settled. The scattered farms are located mostly on low hills and ridges, typically comprising a courtyard with the farmhouse at the centre. Buildings are often limewashed with slate roofs and black painted woodwork. The Site and local landscape are dominated by the operational Coylton Substation and associated overhead lines and pylons. There is inevitably a degree of conflict between the pastoral character of this landscape type and the presence of a major road carrying heavy traffic;
- **Movement** – the Site itself is settled in appearance, with a hedgerow and hedgerow trees shelter on the west and north boundaries and grassland for grazing. The A70 road links settlements of Ayr, Old Toll, Belston, Coylton, Coalhall, Hillhead, Ochilltree and Cummock. The busy traffic on the A70 road exerts a strong influence of movement in the landscape;
- **Skylines & Key Views** – the Site is situated in a landscape, with expansive skyline views to the east and west and south. However, views to the north are restricted by the topography which rises in level to north of the site, towards the open cast coal site, located at approximately 180 m AOD 500m north of the Site;
- **Inter-visibility** – the Site is located on the south facing slope, south east of the Coylton Substation. The local topography and vegetation cover restricts views across the wider landscape to the north and north east and north west. However, the open aspect to the south, offers direct views of the Development;
- **Perceptual Aspects** – the Site is open in character, with open views to the south across the agricultural lowland farmland landscape. The single carriageway A70 is a minor, but busy, road. The surrounding area is quiet, but with traffic noise evident along the A70 corridor.

4.2 Landscape Designation

The Site is located within an undesignated landscape.

Refer to Figures 1.4, Annex A.2.

4.3 Listed Buildings

There are two listed buildings 1.45 km west of the Development, Drongan House, Byre (Category B LB14328) and Schaw Church (Category C LB14376)

However, the listed buildings are 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 1.9, Annex A.2.

4.4 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 receptors[12];
- Residential properties, encompassing individual and groups of properties; and
- Transport Route users, users of the existing road network, within the Study Area.

4.4.1 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 C9, located 424 m south of the Development at the closest point;

There are no regionally promoted cycle or walking routes within 2 km radius of the Development.

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

4.4.2 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 1 km of the Development (Figure 1.7, Annex B). From a desk-based assessment and site visit, eleven properties were identified within a 1 km radius of the Development.

The nearest settlements, Coalhall and Drongan are 2 km west and south west of the Development. Coalhall lies outwith the ZTV, and there are no predicted views of the Development. There are distant, horizon views from the south eastern edge of Drongan, at the junction of Littlemill Road (B730) and Barbieston Ave. A site investigation confirmed that there would be very limited views of the Development from the south eastern edge of Drongan, where views of the Development would be negligible, and therefore both the settlements of Coalhall and Drongan have been scoped out of this assessment.

[12] The Core Path Plan was adopted on 5 November 2008 and has recently been updated in the form of a draft Recreation Plan: https://eastayrshireleisure.com/media/2131/draft-recreation-plan-2021-2024-1.pdf (Last accessed 20.10.21)

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

4.4.3 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:

- A roads – The A70 road approximately 0.14 km north of the Site. This is a well-used local road which runs from Coylton to Ochiltree;
- B roads – the B730 road is located approximately 1.75 km on north west of the Site where at the junction connects with A70, and follows a route south along east side of Drongan. The B7046 starts at south east side of Drongan and follows the route to east and at Treesmax Bridge follows south at the closest point at approximately 1.4 km to the Site; 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.

4.5 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:

- Agricultural Lowlands-Ayrshire LCT 66;
- The settlements of Drongan and Coalhall;
- Residential properties outwith the ZTV, within 1 km of the Development, and beyond 1km radius;
- B730 road; and
- Two listed buildings 1.45 km west of the Development, Drongan House, Byre (Category B LB14328) and Schaw Church (Category C LB14376).

4.6 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.

4.7 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, and the location of Coylton Substation north west of 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 patches of visibility of the Development within 2 km radius of the Site, within the north and north east / north west facing slopes, south of the Site.

Predicted visibility in the area is anticipated immediately surrounding the Site, within a 2 km radius to the west and south, and along the A70 corridor.

Predicted visibility to the north of the Site is reduced by local topography. Likewise, as the landform slopes with a more gently gradient to the south, visibility to the south increasing.

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 East Ayrshire Lowlands LCT 7c 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**
Temporary Construction Compound 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.	Low	Small	Negligible - Minor temporary, reversible and direct adverse landscape effect

Construction Activity and Assessment	Landscape Assessment		
	Sensitivity	**Magnitude**	**Level of Effect**
Greener Grid Park Compound The Greener Grid Park development would occupy an area of rough grazing farmland. The magnitude of change would increase from zero to medium, and the landscape effect of the construction activity would be minor, temporary (reversible), direct, and negative.	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 associated with the Coylton Substation to the west, and rising topography to the north, north of the A70. There would be clear and open views of the Development from a short section of the A70 to the north, and open farmland to the west and south and east, and core path C9 Ochiltree to Drongan, 500m south of the Development to the south.

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.

7 EMBEDDED MITIGATION

For locations and details of proposed embedded mitigation such as quantities and species please refer to the Landscape Masterplan (Appendix 4). Landscape mitigation embedded within the design of the Development, includes the following:

- 0.26 km of native species hedgerow with 25 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 western and eastern boundaries, 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. This has been located to the eastern, southern and western boundaries, to facilitate screening / filtering of views of the Development from open views from residential properties, the core path and local road to the east, west and south; and
- An area of 0.67 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:

- Regional setting, in relation to the East Ayrshire Landscape Character Types; 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 East Ayrshire Lowlands LCT 7c.

8.1.1.1 East Ayrshire Lowlands LCT 7c

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

There is an overall positive landscape quality, within an agricultural moorland landscape, which includes the Coylton Substation on the A70 adjacent to 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 Coylton Substation and associated infrastructure south of the substation, including overhead lines and pylons, and open cast coal site and Killoch Depot 800m to the north east of the site.

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 overhead lines neighbouring the Site, which contribute to a more developed landscape character. The Development would be located in an area which features similar electricity generation infrastructure and nearby industrial/commercial premises, accessed from the A70 road.

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 Coylton 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 Greener Grid Park 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 East Ayrshire Lowlands LCT 7c.

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 is an undesignated landscape, therefore, the landscape of the site is considered to be of a low landscape value;
- **Landscape quality** – the grazing 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 vary in quality around the Site;
- **Capacity to change** – the surrounding lowland farmland landscape, adjacent Coylton Substation and associated infrastructure, and the visually open nature of the site to the west, south and 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 Coylton 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 manmade, built elements within the Site.

The landscape sensitivity of the Site is low. The magnitude of change arising from the Development within the local landscape and the Site, would be large on completion of the construction works, and any resulting landscape effects within the local landscape, and of the Site, 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, Appendix 4).

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 six 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 1.9 (Annex A.2). Photographs of the existing landscape are shown in Viewpoints 1 – 6, Figures 1.5a to 1.5f (Annex A.2).

Viewpoint selection and micro-siting of each viewpoint location accord with technical guidance[13].

9.1.1 Viewpoint 1 – East Tarelgin at A70

9.1.1.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, the A70 road which is situated 159 m north east of the Site.

The Coylton Substation and pylons are dominant elements within the view in front of East Tarelgin residential property on the A70 road. Rough grazing farmland of the Site extends in the middle distance to the south of the A70 road, within the open lowland landscape, with distant views to Drongan to the west, south west, and plateau moorland to the south.

Refer to Figure 1.5a, Annex A.2.

9.1.1.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity, and views from a residential property, 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 Coylton Substation, and for a short section of the A70 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 to Major*** (for residential properties and road users)***,*** long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location.

Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the eastern boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees (see Appendix 4: Landscape Planting Plan), the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be ***Moderate - Major***, long-term (reversible), and adverse.

9.1.2 Viewpoint 2 – Core Path C9 Ochiltree to Drongan

9.1.2.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the core path network, the C9 Ochiltree to Drongan which is situated 420m south of the Site.

The rough grazing moorland extends in the foreground, with the Site and open views of the Coylton Substation visible on higher ground to the north of the core path.

Refer to Figure 1.5b, Annex A.2.

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

9.1.2.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include recreational users of the core path, which would be of a high 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 core path, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation.

9.1.2.4 Level of Visual Effect

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

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

9.1.3 Viewpoint 3 – West Tarelgin

9.1.3.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from a residential farm property adjacent to a farm shop, situated 480 m north west of the Site and north of the A70.

The grazing moorland extends in the foreground of the view, with the Coylton Substation visible in the middle distance and north west of the Site. The pylons and overhead lines connecting to the Substation are dominant features within this view. The mature trees north of the Substation, along the A70 screen views of the Site. The nearest residential property to the Site, is visible north of the A70 and the Substation. There are distant horizon views of the plateau moorland.

Refer to Figure 1.5c, Annex A.2.

9.1.3.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include views from a residential property, which would be of a high 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 negligible, but only where the Development would be visible above the tree line and adjacent to the Coylton Substation, and viewed within the context of the Coylton Substation and nearby pylons.

9.1.3.4 Level of Visual Effect

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

9.1.4 Viewpoint 4 – C9 Core Path (Ochiltree to Drongan) north east of Clydenoch

9.1.4.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the core path network, the C9 Ochiltree to Drongan which is situated 890 m south east of the Site.

The grazing moorland extends in the foreground, with the Site and open views of the Coylton Substation visible on the horizon to the north west of the core path. East Tarlgin property is visible on the horizon to the north, and traffic on the A70 visible from this location.

Refer to Figure 1.5d, Annex A.2.

9.1.4.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include recreational users of the core path, which would be of a high sensitivity.

9.1.4.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the view of the Development, in the middle distance, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small, where the Development is visible from the core path, but in the middle distance and viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation.

9.1.4.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be ***Minor - Moderate***, long-term (reversible), and adverse for recreational users of the core path.

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

9.1.5 Viewpoint 5 – C9 Core Path (Ochiltree to Drongan) north of Treesmax

9.1.5.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the core path network, the C9 Ochiltree to Drongan which is situated 900 m south west of the Site.

The grazing moorland extends in the foreground, with the Site and open views of the Coylton Substation visible on the horizon to the north east of the core path at this location. East Tarlgin property is visible on the horizon to the north, and traffic on the A70 visible from this location.

Refer to Figure 1.5e, Annex A.2.

9.1.5.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include recreational users of the core path, which would be of a high sensitivity.

9.1.5.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the view of the Development, in the middle distance, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small, where the Development is visible from the core path, but in the middle distance and viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation.

9.1.5.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be ***Minor - Moderate***, long-term (reversible), and adverse for recreational users of the core path.

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

9.1.6 Viewpoint 6 – Carlton Husthwaite

9.1.6.1 Baseline

This viewpoint is representative of views from the local road network, and views from a residential property, which is situated 1.3 km south east of the Site.

The grazing moorland extends in the foreground, with the Site and open views of the Coylton Substation visible on the horizon to the north east of the core path at this location. East Tarlgin property is visible on the horizon to the north.

Refer to Figure 1.5f, Annex A.2.

9.1.6.2 Sensitivity

Visual receptors would include local road users, which would be of a medium sensitivity, and views from a residential property, which would be of a high sensitivity.

9.1.6.3 Magnitude of Change

Given the view of the Development, on the horizon north west of this viewpoint location, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small, where the Development is visible, and viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation, and pylon network.

9.1.6.4 Level of Visual Effect

The nature of these effects would be ***Minor to Minor - Moderate***, long-term (reversible), and adverse for recreational users of the core path.

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

9.2 Visual Effects on Views from Residential Properties

Visual assessment of residential properties within the study area (1 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.

Eleven properties have been assessed within 1 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 Coylton Substation.

Table 9.1: Visual Effects on Residential Properties

Property	Description of Effect
R1	**Distance to the Development:** 0.2 km **Description:** A small rendered white bungalow is situated north of the A70. Roadside vegetation screens views from the property to the south. There is an open driveway to the property from the A70, with views to the operational Coylton Substation, overhead lines and pylons within the landscape to the south west of the property. **Magnitude of Change:** Given the lack of views from the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be negligible at most with views screened by tree cover. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be negligible. The nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R2 (refer to Viewpoint 1 Figure 1.7a)	**Distance to the Development:** 0.17 km **Description:** This property is a small bungalow, facing south, with garden area and driveway, with primary open views on to the A70 and directly to the Site. **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 property, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Moderate - Major to Major (for residential properties and road users), long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location. Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the eastern boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be Moderate - Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R3 East Tarelgin (refer to Viewpoint 1 Figure 1.7a)	**Distance to the Development:** 0.19 km **Description:** This is a two storey farmhouse property, with primary open views on to the A70, and directly towards the Site. There are farm buildings to the rear of the property. **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 property, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Moderate - Major to Major (for residential properties and road users), long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location. Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the eastern boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be Moderate - Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R4 Timancha	**Distance to the Development:** 0.35 km **Description:** This is a bungalow property, with primary open views on to the A70, and rear views directly towards the Site to the south east.

Property	Description of Effect
	Magnitude of Change: Given the open view of the Development to the rear of the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, where the Development is clearly visible from the rear property, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Moderate - Major to Major (for residential properties and road users), long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location. Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the western boundary of the Site, visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be Moderate - Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R5 West Tarelgin (refer to Viewpoint 3 Figure 1.7c)	**Distance to the Development:** 0.48 km **Description:** This viewpoint is representative of views from a residential two storey farm property adjacent to a farm shop, situated 480 m north west of the Site and north of the A70. The grazing moorland extends in the foreground of the view, with the Coylton Substation visible in the middle distance and north west of the Site. The pylons and overhead lines connecting to the Substation are dominant features within this view. The mature trees north of the Substation, along the A70 screen views of the Site. The nearest residential property to the Site, is visible north of the A70 and the Substation. There are distant horizon views of the plateau moorland. **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 negligible, but only where the Development would be visible above the tree line and adjacent to the Coylton Substation, and viewed within the context of the Coylton Substation and nearby pylons. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Negligible, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R6 Macquittiston	**Distance to the Development:** 0.47 km **Description:** There was no access to this property at time of site visit (August 2021). Access is via a long private drive, and the property is open in aspect within the lowland agricultural landscape. Aerial photography indicates potential oblique views from the northern elevation of the property, and garden area, to the east, towards the site. The Coylton Substation would be visible due north of the property, and pylons visible to the north and east. Views from the access track to the property. **Magnitude of Change:** Given the open, yet oblique view of the Development, in the proximity to the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, and viewed within the context of the Coylton Substation and nearby pylons. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Major and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location. Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the western boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be Moderate - Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R7	**Distance to the Development:** 0.73 km **Description:** Access to this property is via a farm track, and the core path route, the property is open in aspect to the north and south within the lowland agricultural landscape. There would be oblique views from the northern elevation of the property, to the north west towards the site. The Coylton Substation would be visible north west of the property, and pylons visible to the north and west. **Magnitude of Change:** Given the open, yet oblique view of the Development, in the proximity to the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, and viewed within the context of the Coylton Substation and nearby pylons.

Property	Description of Effect
	Level of Effect: The nature of these effects would be Major and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location. Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the eastern boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be Moderate - Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R8 Clydenoch	**Distance to the Development:** 0.67 km **Description:** Access to this property is via a farm track, and the core path route, the property is open in aspect to the north and south within the lowland agricultural landscape. There would be potential oblique views from the northern elevation and garden to the north of the property, to the north west towards the site. The Coylton Substation would be visible north west of the property, and pylons visible to the north and west. Garden vegetation would filter views to the north and west. Views from the access track to the property. **Magnitude of Change:** Given the open, yet oblique view of the Development, in the proximity to the property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be large, and viewed within the context of the Coylton Substation and nearby pylons. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Major and adverse given the proximity of the Development at this location. Once the perimeter hedgerow planting and woodland planting is established on the eastern boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, and the visual effects would be Moderate - Major, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R9 Bardarroch Pet Supplies (refer to Viewpoint 6 Figure 1.7f)	**Distance to the Development:** 1.1 km **Description:** A white painted bungalow property, with primary views orientated to the north west. A small garden to the north and east of the property. Commercial premises and barns are situated to the south west of the residential property. **Magnitude of Change:** Given the view of the Development, on the horizon north west of this property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small, where the Development is visible, and viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation, and pylon network. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Minor to Minor - Moderate, long-term (reversible), and adverse for views from the residential property. Once the tree planting on the southern boundaries is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to negligible, and the visual effects would be Negligible, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R10 Bardarroch Farm (two properties)	**Distance to the Development:** 1.05 km **Description:** A white painted bungalow property, with primary views orientated to the south. A small garden to the north and east of the property, with garden outbuildings and small menage for horses to the east of the bungalow. The farmhouse is situated within the main farm complex, orientated to the north east, and views to the west, north west and south west screened by buildings and garden vegetation. No views towards the Development are anticipated. **Magnitude of Change:** Given the view of the Development, on the horizon north west of the bungalow property, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would be small, where the Development is visible from the rear of the property and the garden to the north, and viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation, and pylon network. **Level of Effect:** The nature of these effects would be Minor to Minor - Moderate, long-term (reversible), and adverse for views from the residential property. Once the tree planting on the southern boundaries is established, the visual effects would reduce. The magnitude of change would reduce to negligible, and the visual effects would be Negligible, long-term (reversible), and adverse.
R11 Treesmax	**Distance to the Development:** 0.96 km

Property	Description of Effect
(refer to Viewpoint 5 Figure 1.7e for views north of the property)	**Description:** A farm property, with primary views orientated to the west. The farmhouse is situated within the main farm complex, with views to the north screened by farm building. No views towards the Development are anticipated.

9.3 Visual Effects on Views from Core Path C9 Ochiltree to Drongan

This section considers the views from the Core C9 Ochiltree to Drongan, situated 420 m south at its closest point.

Viewpoints 2, 4 and 5 (Figures 1.5b, d and e, Annex A.2), illustrates the view from the Core south east and south west of the Site.

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 core path. Given the open view of the Development, in the foreground, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would vary between small and large depending on the distance along the route, where the Development is clearly visible from the core path, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation.

9.3.1.3 Level of Visual Effect

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

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

9.4 Visual Effects on Views from the A70 Road

This section considers the views from the A70 road, which borders the Site to the north. The views from the A70 would be experienced transiently, and the entrance to the Site would be directly on to the A70.

The A70 was driven in both directions to assess the potential effects on the route. The Development would be viewed obliquely and directly within the open agricultural landscape, but viewed in the context of the operational Coylton Substation, and associated infrastructure.

Refer to Figure 1.5a, 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 A70, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton

Substation, and for a short (680 m) section of the road, as it passes directly north of 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 and woodland planting is established on the eastern boundary of the Site, with hedgerow trees (see Appendix 4: Landscape Planting Plan), 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.

9.5 Visual Effects on Views from the Local Road Network

This section considers the views from the local road network, south of the Development. Views would be experienced transiently, with views to the Site, north of the local road, and in the context of the Coylton Substation.

The local road was driven in both directions to assess the potential effects on the route. The Development would be viewed obliquely and directly within the open agricultural landscape, but viewed in the context of the operational Coylton Substation, and associated infrastructure.

9.5.1.1 Sensitivity

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

9.5.1.2 Magnitude of Change

Given the open view of the Development, in the middle distance and on the horizon to the north of the local road, the predicted magnitude of change arising from the Development would range from small to large, where the Development is clearly visible from the A70, however viewed within the context of the operational Coylton Substation, and for a short (680 m) section of the road, as it passes directly north of the Site.

9.5.1.3 Level of Visual Effect

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

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

10 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

10.1 Summary of Predicted Landscape Effects

The Development would comprise of a Greener Grid Park including batteries and energy management equipment and associated site infrastructure.

The Development is situated within the East Ayrshire Lowlands LCT 7c. As such the Development is well sited within the landscape, set with a backdrop of the rising topography to the north tree cover along A70 associated with the operational Coylton Substation, which helps 'absorb' the proposed Greener Grid Park within the landscape. The Development is located within an open, but expansive, working rural landscape, and in proximity to the operational Coylton 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 Coylton 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 ***Minor - Moderate*** 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 viewpoints within the study area, and within 2 km radius of the Development;
- There would be ***Negligible – Moderate – Major*** visual effects from the Development from residential properties within 1 km radius of the Development. Of the 11 properties assessed, 8 would have no view, or a negligible visual effect, and a further 5 properties would experience a ***Major*** visual effect within 1 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 path within 2 km of the Development. Where there are predicted view from the core path, the visual effects would be ***Minor - Moderate to Major*** given the proximity of the route;
- There would be a range of visual effects on the road users of the A70 ranging from ***Moderate - Major*** reducing to ***Moderate.*** This variation is as a result of the embedded mitigation planting which, once matures, will filter views of the Development within the landscape; and
- There would be a range of visual effects from the local road network, ranging from ***Minor – Moderate*** to ***Moderate – Major***, long-term (reversible), and adverse given the proximity of the Development from the local road south of the Development.

10.3 Conclusion

The Development would not exceed the capacity of the Lowland 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 Coylton Substation.