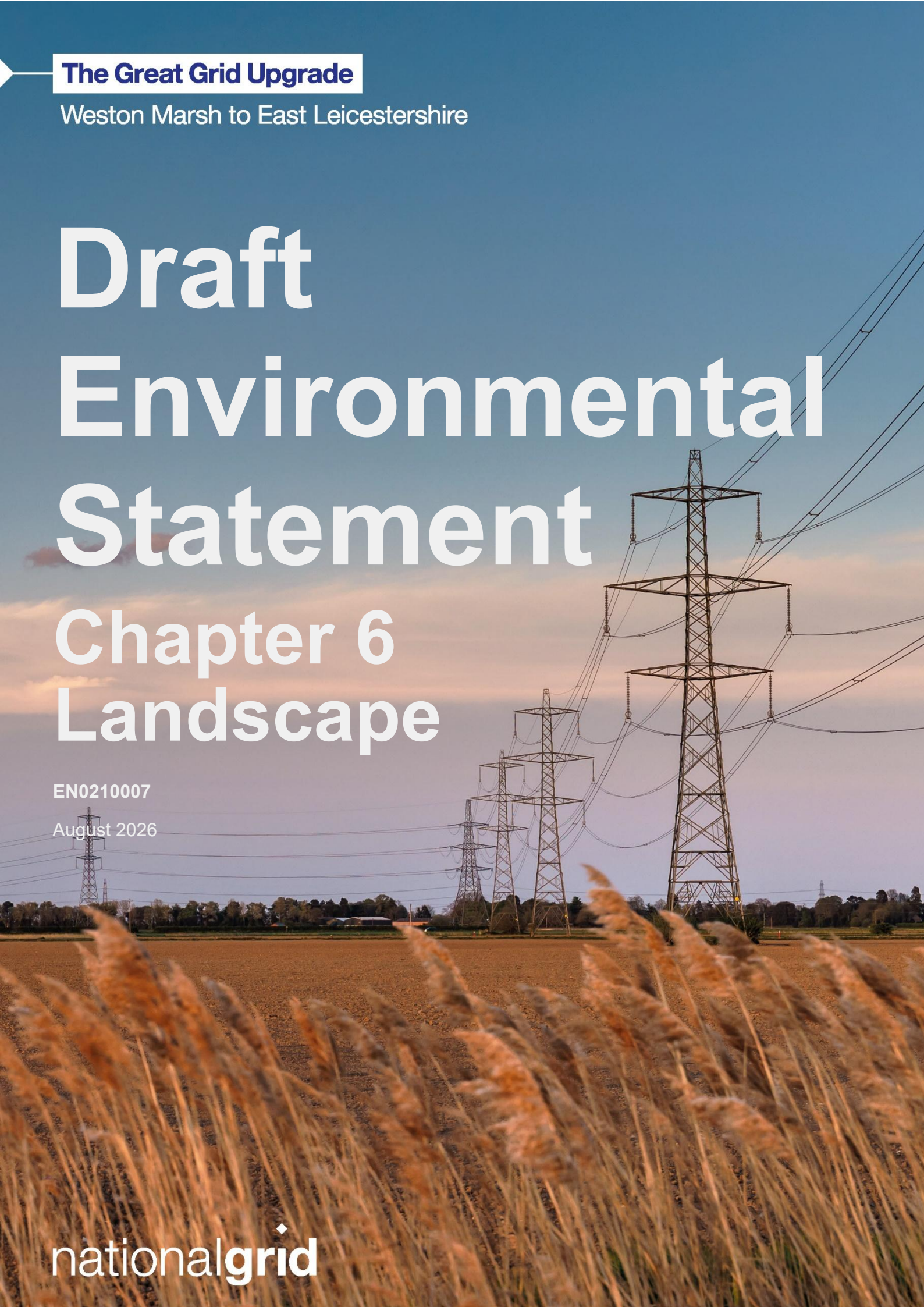




The Great Grid Upgrade

Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire

Draft Environmental Statement

Chapter 6 Landscape

EN0210007

August 2026

nationalgrid

Contents

6.	Landscape	6-1
6.1	Introduction	6-1
6.2	Legislation, Policy Framework and Guidance	6-2
6.3	Scope of Assessment	6-4
6.4	Stakeholder Engagement	6-4
6.5	Assessment Methodology	6-6
6.6	Baseline Conditions	6-10
6.7	Design, Standard, and Additional Mitigation Measures	6-14
6.8	Preliminary Assessment of Effects	6-16
6.9	Alternative Scenarios	6-31
6.10	Monitoring	6-32
6.11	Further Assessment	6-32
	Table 6.1 Key stakeholder engagement and National Grid's response	6-4
	Table 6.2 Key principles in identifying significance of landscape effects	6-9
	Table 6.3 Preliminary summary of landscape effects	6-21
	Table 6.4 Preliminary assessment of alternative scenarios	6-31
	References	6-33

6. Landscape

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This chapter reports the preliminary assessment of the potential effects of the Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire Project (the Project) on the landscape. This chapter includes consideration of landscape receptors, comprising landscape designations, landscape character units and components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the Project. This can include identified key characteristics, the overall character, physical features and/or specific perceptual attributes.
- 6.1.2 This chapter should be read in conjunction with the following chapters which provide the Project context and approach to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):
- **Chapter 2 Regulatory and Planning Policy Context;**
 - **Chapter 3 Main Alternatives Considered;**
 - **Chapter 4 Description of the Project;** and
 - **Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology.**
- 6.1.3 There are interrelationships with other disciplines; therefore, this chapter should also be read in conjunction with the following chapters:
- **Chapter 7 Visual** includes the identification and assessment of effects for visual receptors and considers the impact on views and the visual experience of observers. Landscape and visual effects are closely related but assessed and reported separately.
 - **Chapter 8 Ecology and Biodiversity** includes the identification of ecological designations and existing habitats and vegetation cover which informs landscape character (and value).
 - **Chapter 9 Cultural Heritage** identifies heritage assets which are factors that can contribute towards landscape value.
 - **Chapter 12 Agriculture and Soils** includes the consideration of impacts on agricultural land and soil resources, with potential for change in land use or management to influence landscape character.
 - **Chapter 14 Air Quality** and **Chapter 15 Noise and Vibration** assess the potential impacts on receptors, recognising that changes in air quality and noise and vibration levels can influence how people perceive and experience the landscape.
 - **Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects** includes an overview of potential cumulative effects on landscape receptors.
- 6.1.4 This chapter is supported by the following figures and appendices:
- **Figure 6.1 Topography and Landscape Study Area;**
 - **Figure 6.2 Landscape Designations and Context;**

- **Figure 6.3 National Landscape Character;**
- **Figure 6.4 Regional Landscape Character;**
- **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character;**
- **Appendix 6A Landscape Assessment Methodology;**
- **Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment;** and
- **Appendix 6C Draft Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.**

6.2 Legislation, Policy Framework and Guidance

Legislation and National Policy

- 6.2.1 Legislation and national policy relevant to the Project and this chapter are described in **Chapter 2 Regulatory and Planning Policy Context**, and supporting appendices **Appendix 2A Key Legislation**, **Appendix 2B National and Regional Policy** and **Appendix 2C Local Policy**.

Regional and Local Policy

- 6.2.2 **Chapter 2 Regulatory and Planning Policy Context** sets out relevant regional and local policy. Regional and local plans or policies relevant to this assessment are as follows:
- The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011–2036, adopted 2019 (Ref 6.1): Policy 2 Development Management, Policy 3 Design of New Development, and Policy 29 The Historic Environment;
 - The South Kesteven District Council Local Plan 2011–2036, adopted 2020 (Ref 6.2): Policy SD1: The Principles of Sustainable Development in South Kesteven, Policy EN1 Landscape Character, Policy EN3 Green Infrastructure and Policy DE1 Promoting Good Quality Design;
 - Colsterworth and District Neighbourhood Plan, adopted 2017 (Ref 6.3): Policy 4 Open Countryside and Policy 6 Trees and Hedgerows;
 - Corby Glen Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2036, adopted 2024 (Ref 6.4): Policy CG1 Sustainable Development, Policy CG4 Landscape Character and Openness and Policy CG12 Countryside Management;
 - Rippingale Neighbourhood Plan 2023–2036, adopted 2023 (Ref 6.5): Policy EP1 Environmental Protection Obligations;
 - Rutland Local Development Framework, consisting of a Core Strategy document, adopted 2011 (Ref 6.6) and Site Allocations and Policies document, adopted 2014 (Ref 6.7): Policy CS2 The Spatial Strategy, Policy CS19 Promoting Good Design, Policy CS21 The Natural Environment, Policy SP15 Design and Amenity and Policy SP23 Landscape Character in the Countryside;
 - Market Overton Neighbourhood Plan 2018–2036, adopted 2022 (Ref 6.8): Policy MOP2 Landscape Character;
 - Melton Local Plan 2011–2036, adopted 2018 (Ref 6.9): Policy EN1 Landscape;

- Ab Kettleby Neighbourhood Plan, adopted 2019 (Ref 6.10): Policy ENV 2 Protection of Sites and Features of Environmental Significance;
- Asfordby Neighbourhood Plan, adopted 2023 (Ref 6.11): Policy A2 Countryside and Policy A9 Design;
- Clawson, Hose and Harby Neighbourhood Plan, adopted 2018 (Ref 6.12): Policy ENV 2 Other Sites of Environmental (natural and historical) Significance;
- Broughton and Old Dalby Parish Neighbourhood Plan, adopted 2018 (Ref 6.13): Policy ENV 2 Protection of Other Sites of Environmental (natural and historical) Significance;
- Scalford Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2019–2036, adopted 2021 (Ref 6.14): Policy ENV 2 Protection of Sites of Environmental Significance and Policy ENV 7 Protecting Scalford’s Dark Night Sky;
- Waltham on the Wolds and Thorpe Arnold Neighbourhood Plan 2017–2036, adopted 2018 (Ref 6.15): Policy ENV4 Protection of Other Sites of Environmental (natural or historical) Significance; and
- Wymondham and Edmondthorpe Neighbourhood Plan, adopted 2018 (Ref 6.16): Policy ENV2 Other Sites of Environmental Significance.

Guidance

6.2.3 Relevant guidance specific to landscape character, which has informed this non-statutory Draft Environmental Statement (DES) (referred to in this document as the “DES” and the “non-statutory DES”) and will inform the assessment within the Environmental Statement (ES), comprises:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) (Ref 6.17);
- Notes and Clarifications on aspects of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3), Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01 (Ref 6.18);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.19);
- The Holford Rules, National Grid (Ref 6.20);
- The Horlock Rules, National Grid (Ref 6.21);
- Planning Inspectorate Advice Note: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment (Ref 6.22);
- Technical Guidance Note (TGN) 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations (Ref 6.23);
- TGN 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (currently under review) (Ref 6.24); and
- Tranquillity – An overview – Technical Information Note 01/17 (Ref 6.25).

6.3 Scope of Assessment

- 6.3.1 The scope of the assessment has been informed by the Scoping Opinion (adopted by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State on 17 December 2025), provided in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion**, and ongoing engagement with relevant technical consultees.
- 6.3.2 A full summary of all issues raised relevant to landscape in the Scoping Opinion and National Grid’s response is provided in **Appendix 5C Preliminary Scoping Opinion Response**. Further details of engagement undertaken to date is provided in Section 6.4.

6.4 Stakeholder Engagement

- 6.4.1 National Grid has organised meetings with relevant consultees, including the host local planning authorities, and feedback was received from Lincolnshire County Council, South Holland District Council and South Kesteven District Council.
- 6.4.2 A summary of discussions and how these have influenced the Project, scope and/or the approach to the assessment is provided at **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1 Key stakeholder engagement and National Grid’s response

Organisation and date	Summary of issue discussed	Project response
Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council 2 June 2026.	Approach for Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping was discussed. It was agreed that these would be based on 1 m LiDAR digital terrain model data with the addition of national forest inventory and ordnance survey buildings data, and calculated to 5 km from each proposed new overhead line tower and the proposed substations using maximum height parameters.	Figure 7.2 Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Locations provides ZTVs of the proposed new overhead line and WMEL-A and WMEL-B substations using the agreed approach. Details of the parameters used for the ZTV calculations are provided in Appendix 7A Visual Assessment Methodology .
	Extent of the Study Area for the landscape assessment was discussed and agreed to be based on a 3 km offset from the outer limit of the defined horizontal Limits of Deviation (LoD) of permanent infrastructure (overhead line towers and substations).	The Study Area is described in Section 6.5, below and shown on Figure 6.1 Topography and Landscape Study Area , and follows the agreed approach. Details of the horizontal LoD are provided in Chapter 4 Description of the Project .
	Approach to the consideration of National Character Areas (NCAs) was discussed and agreed, with a summary appraisal to be provided with reference	A preliminary baseline description and summary of effects on NCAs is provided in Appendix 6B Preliminary

Organisation and date	Summary of issue discussed	Project response
	to detailed assessment of underlying local character units.	Landscape Baseline and Assessment.
	Clarification was sought on the approach to undergrounding in relation to the Project, with discussions confirming that no undergrounding is proposed for the new overhead line, although with targeted undergrounding of existing overhead lines potentially required.	Chapter 4 Description of the Project provides details of the Project, including the approach to undergrounding or diversion of existing utility infrastructure. Potential impacts of proposed works to underground existing assets as part of the Project will be considered within the landscape assessment within the ES.
	Approach to the consideration of lighting in the landscape assessment was discussed and it was agreed that this aspect would be considered as part of overall judgements, with no requirement for a separate night-time assessment.	The preliminary assessment in Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment considers potential temporary lighting (related to construction and operation phase lighting at the WMEL-A and WMEL-B substations) within the overall judgements of the significance of effects on each of the identified landscape receptors.
	Concerns were raised regarding potential for cumulative effects of the Project in connection with other developments, particularly in the Weston Marsh area.	Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects provides initial consideration of potential cumulative landscape effects of the Project in relation to other proposed and committed developments. A more detailed assessment of cumulative effects will be provided within the ES.

6.5 Assessment Methodology

- 6.5.1 This section describes the methodology used to establish the existing and future baseline, together with the methodology/approach used to undertake the preliminary assessment and proposed for the detailed assessment of landscape impacts. Elements of the approach deviate from the overarching approach described in **Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology** and follow accepted standard methodology and guidance for landscape assessment, referenced above.

Study Area

- 6.5.2 Identification of the Study Area has involved a desk-based review of mapping and landscape character information and the maximum parameters of each element of the Project, preparation of initial ZTV mapping, a field survey to gain an understanding of the existing baseline, the application of professional judgement, and consultation with Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council. The ZTVs give an indication of the theoretical extent of potential indirect change related to visibility of elements of the Project, and also allow identification of areas and landscape receptors where change is unlikely to occur.
- 6.5.3 In accordance with good practice guidance set out in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) (Ref 6.17), the Study Area for the landscape assessment seeks to encompass all landscape receptors with the potential to be significantly affected by the Project.
- 6.5.4 A Study Area extending 3 km from the outer extents of the horizontal LoD for the proposed new overhead line (outlined in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**) and new substations near Corby Glen (referred to as WMEL-A) and west of Ab Kettleby (referred to as WMEL-B), has been identified for the preliminary assessment, as illustrated at **Figure 6.1 Topography and Landscape Study Area**. This approach was agreed in consultation with Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council, and ensures that the Study Area also covers at least 1 km from the draft Order Limits and 2 km from proposed construction compounds associated with the proposed new overhead line and new WMEL-A and WMEL-B substations. The exception to this is the draft Order Limits associated with potential off-site highway works at the A1/A151 junction and A46 Six Hills junction, which have not been considered as part of the preliminary assessment. This approach will be reviewed for the ES when more details of potential off-site highway works are available.
- 6.5.5 The Study Area does not take account of reconductoring of the existing ZA overhead line, as that element of the Project has been scoped out of the landscape assessment, as confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (IDs 3.2.11 and 3.2.12).
- 6.5.6 It is acknowledged that elements of the Project may be visible beyond the defined 3 km extents. However, at locations beyond the Study Area, the separation distances would be such that potential indirect impacts resulting from the Project are unlikely to lead to a fundamental change to the perception or experience of the landscape and, as such, potential effects are unlikely to be significant.
- 6.5.7 The Study Area will continue to be reviewed, in light of feedback received during stakeholder engagement, Stage 2 Consultation, ongoing site surveys, and following the production of updated ZTV mapping as the Project design develops. This is to assist in capturing all potentially significant landscape effects in the assessment.

Data Collection

Desk study

- 6.5.8 The identification and evaluation of the existing landscape baseline have been informed by a desk study, which has drawn on the following key information sources:
- Mapping and data:
 - Ordnance Survey (OS) Maps at 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 scales;
 - Aerial photography, Google Earth, and Google Maps Street View;
 - Open-source GIS data; and
 - 1 m LiDAR composite Digital Terrain Model (DTM).
 - Published Landscape Character Assessments:
 - Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) profiles (Ref 6.26);
 - East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.27);
 - South Holland District – Strategic Landscape Capacity Study for South Holland District Council (Ref 6.28);
 - South Kesteven District – South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.29);
 - Rutland District – Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.30); and
 - Melton District – Melton Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.31) and subsequent update (Ref 6.32).

Site visits and survey

- 6.5.9 Field survey work was carried out during several visits between January 2025 and June 2026, and records were made in the form of field notes and photographs. Field survey work included visits to the draft Order Limits, each of the identified landscape receptors, and extensive travel around the Study Area to consider likely effects on landscape character. Field work has been undertaken in winter, spring and summer to fully understand the effect of seasonality on the landscape baseline.

Further data to be collected to inform the Environmental Statement

- 6.5.10 Further targeted site survey in winter and summer conditions will be undertaken to inform the baseline and assessment at the ES stage.

Impact Assessment Methodology

Approach to preliminary assessment

- 6.5.11 The preliminary assessment provides a description of the landscape baseline and an initial evaluation of potential change resulting from the Project. This follows the same principles and process as the methodology for the detailed assessment, described below. However, the preliminary assessment is undertaken at a high level, making initial predictions as to whether the identified impacts on landscape receptors have the potential to result in significant effects or not. This is informed through an

understanding of the baseline, anticipated change and application of professional judgement. All conclusions and assessments are by their nature preliminary, and the assessment has applied a precautionary principle, in that where detailed information is not currently available (in terms of the proposals for the Project), a realistic worst-case scenario is considered. Further details, including additional narrative and ratings for landscape value and susceptibility (components of sensitivity) will be provided within the detailed assessment in the ES.

6.5.12 The preliminary assessment considers potential sources of effects, during both construction and operation. Due to their limited, localised, temporary and short-term nature, potential maintenance activities during the operation phase have been scoped out of the ES (and therefore, this preliminary assessment), as confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.14).

6.5.13 No additional mitigation measures have been identified at this stage, meaning the preliminary assessment of operation phase impacts takes a worst-case approach without the addition of potential additional mitigation. The detailed landscape assessment in the ES will consider longer-term operation phase effects with additional mitigation in place, where relevant.

Approach and methodology for detailed assessment

6.5.14 The following provides an overview of the proposed approach for the detailed landscape assessment to be undertaken as part of the ES, with further details of the proposed methodology provided in **Appendix 6A Landscape Assessment Methodology**.

6.5.15 The assessment methodology is based on the principles of GLVIA3 (Ref 6.17), which promotes an approach to landscape assessment that is proportional to the scale and nature of the proposals and the likely effects.

6.5.16 Elements of the landscape assessment methodology differ from the general assessment methodology presented in **Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology**. For example, landscape sensitivity includes consideration of both the landscape value, identified as part of the baseline, and susceptibility, which is influenced by the specific nature of the Project. The landscape assessment also refers to 'magnitude of effect' rather than 'magnitude of impact', in accordance with GLVIA3 (Ref 6.17).

6.5.17 The assessment is part of an iterative process where, as potentially significant effects are identified, these inform the siting, routeing and design of the Project, alongside consideration of other constraints. The assessment is carried out based on the following key steps:

- Establishment of the baseline conditions, including identification and evaluation of key physical and perceptual attributes and receptor value. The landscape baseline is based on local landscape character units defined within published district and local landscape character assessments.
- Appreciation of the Project, including an understanding of the location, nature, scale and maximum parameters of each element and any design, standard and additional mitigation measures. Consideration is also to be given to any required tree removals identified within the arboriculture surveys and reports for the Project, which will be provided with the ES and include details of trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.
- Assessment of effects on landscape receptors, with a focus on the potential for significant effects.

- 6.5.18 Each of the above steps is informed by a combination of desk-based research, evaluation and site-based surveys. Surveys are undertaken both during winter months and in the summer to gain an appreciation of how the landscape changes with the seasons.
- 6.5.19 GLVIA3 (Ref 6.17) places a strong emphasis on the importance of professional judgement in identifying and defining the significance of landscape effects. The landscape assessment has been undertaken by experienced Chartered Landscape Architects and professional judgement is used in combination with structured methods and criteria to determine the significance of effect.
- 6.5.20 The detailed assessment is based on an evaluation of the sensitivity to change and the magnitude of effect for each of the identified landscape receptors with potential for significant effects. The assessment considers potential impacts of all relevant aspects of the Project as a whole, including across the five Project Section boundaries as described in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project** and shown on **Figure 1.1 Project Location Plan**, on each of the identified landscape receptors.
- 6.5.21 **Table 6.2** is intended to provide an understanding of the key principles adopted in this assessment in identifying the significance of landscape effects and is informed by professional experience and judgement.

Table 6.2 Key principles in identifying significance of landscape effects

	Less likely to be significant	More likely to be significant
Landscape	The Project is reasonably well accommodated within the landscape and does not overly contrast with key characteristics. It does not substantially undermine the valued characteristics or overall impression of the landscape. The effect is small in scale or localised or may be short-lived and easily reversible.	The Project contrasts strongly with the character of the landscape, forming a clear feature which substantially alters the valued key characteristics and overall impression of the landscape. The effect is large in scale, long lasting and difficult to reverse.

- 6.5.22 Details of the factors which inform the identification and categorisation of the sensitivity to change and magnitude of effect, and how these are analysed and combined to indicate the level of effect and significance, are set out in **Appendix 6A Landscape Assessment Methodology**.
- 6.5.23 The level and nature of effects can vary at different stages of the Project and can change over time, particularly where mitigation planting is proposed. The landscape assessment therefore includes consideration of temporary effects associated with construction, and more permanent effects related to the operation phase. Where mitigation planting is proposed, the detailed assessment of operation phase effects in the ES will include consideration of impacts at Year 1 (the first year of operation, after all construction activities are completed), to indicate the potential worst case effects, and at Year 15, to indicate the influence of mitigation planting on longer-term effects. The preliminary assessment in the DES takes a worst-case approach for operation phase effects, without consideration of potential mitigation planting.

Assessment Assumptions and Limitations

- 6.5.24 The preliminary assessment has been undertaken based on initial Project design information. This information is iterative and will be updated for the ES as the design evolves and relevant changes are accounted for in the assessment.
- 6.5.25 Several assumptions and limitations are made in relation to the information presented in this chapter. These reflect the evolving nature and preliminary stage of the Project:
- Assumptions in relation to vegetation clearance and management are set out in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**, and include the following:
 - Targeted clearance of vegetation with the potential to impede construction of the proposed new overhead line towers and wiring works and/or infringe on statutory clearance zones;
 - Temporary removal of vegetation in construction compounds, laydown areas and along temporary haul roads; and
 - Permanent loss of vegetation within the footprint of proposed substations and along associated permanent access roads, including bellmouths and visibility splays.
 - The preliminary assessment assumes that vegetation removed during construction would be reinstated, except where there are planting restrictions associated with requirements to maintain an overhead line safety clearance and within the footprint of permanent works (e.g., substations and permanent access roads). It is anticipated that grassland reinstatement would be achieved within up to 1 to 2 years, whereas hedgerow and tree planting would take longer to become established and mature and, as such, would not represent a direct replacement but would develop over time.
 - Field surveys to inform establishment of the baseline, capture photography and inform the assessment of effects are ongoing and are undertaken from publicly accessible locations, such as from the road network and Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), in line with standard practice for landscape assessment.
 - The landscape assessment is to be supported by ZTV mapping. The use and limitations of ZTVs and how they are used in the assessment process is set out in **Appendix 7A Visual Assessment Methodology** of this DES.
- 6.5.26 The key parameters and assumptions will be reviewed based on the design to be presented in the application for development consent and, where required, updated, or refined. The ES will present the final key parameters and assumptions used within that assessment, including any areas that may have changed from what is presented in this preliminary assessment.

6.6 Baseline Conditions

Existing Baseline

- 6.6.1 The Project has been divided into five Sections as described in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project** and shown in **Figure 1.1 Project Location Plan**. Each of the five Sections are defined by the geographical alignment of the draft Order Limits and the administrative boundaries of the local authorities. The southern part of Section 3 and the whole of Sections 4 and 5 relate to reconductoring of the existing

ZA overhead line. This element of the Project has been excluded from the landscape assessment due to the temporary, short duration and localised nature of potential change and limited potential to influence landscape character. The landscape assessment is therefore focused on Sections 1 to 3, as indicated in **Figure 6.1 Topography and Landscape Study Area**. This approach is as agreed and set out within **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (IDs 3.2.4, 3.2.7, 3.2.11 and 3.2.12).

- 6.6.2 The following provides an overview of the landscape baseline within the Study Area, with initial descriptions of the baseline of each of the identified landscape receptors provided in **Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**.

Landscape designations

- 6.6.3 No National Landscapes or locally designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) have been identified within the Study Area; the closest being the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, located over 30 km to the east of the Project, and the Welland Valley SLA, located approximately 35 km to the south. Both of these designations have been scoped out of the assessment as a result of the distance from the Project and therefore no potential for significant effects. Agreement of this approach is confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.2).
- 6.6.4 Two non-statutory designations, Stapleford Hall and Grimsthorpe Castle Registered Park and Gardens (RPGs), have been identified within the Study Area, as shown in **Figure 6.2 Landscape Designations and Context**.

Landscape character units

- 6.6.5 Landscape character is a composite of physical and cultural elements. Landform, hydrology, vegetation, land cover, land use pattern, cultural and historic features and associations combine to create a common 'sense of place' and identity that can be used to categorise the landscape into definable units. The level of detail and size of a unit can be varied to reflect the scale of definition required. It can be applied at a national, regional and local level.
- 6.6.6 The hierarchy of landscape classification of the Study Area is set out below, initially highlighting the national and regional-level characterisation before identifying the more detailed local landscape units. The national and regional scale units provide a useful context; however, the local landscape units have been used to define the baseline against which potential for significant effects is assessed.
- 6.6.7 The following three NCAs, as defined by Natural England (Ref 6.26), are partially located within the Study Area, as shown in **Figure 6.3 National Landscape Character**:
- NCA 46: The Fens;
 - NCA 75: Kesteven Uplands; and
 - NCA 74: Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds.
- 6.6.8 At a regional level, the landscape character of the Study Area is defined and described in the East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.27). The following seven Regional Landscape Character Types (RLCTs) are located within the Study Area, as shown in **Figure 6.4 Regional Landscape Character**:

- RLCT 2a: Settled Fens and Marshes;
- RLCT 2b: Planned and Drained Fens and Carrlands;
- RLCT 2c: Fen and Marsh Margin Farmlands;
- RLCT 3a: Floodplain Valleys;
- RLCT 4a: Unwooded Vales;
- RLCT 8a: Clay Wolds; and
- RLCT 10a: Forest Hills and Ridges.

6.6.9 The following paragraphs provide an overview of the landscape character and identify the local landscape character units, on which the assessment is based, for each Section. The local landscape character units and extents of the Project Sections are shown on **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**.

Section 1 – South Holland

6.6.10 The landscape of Section 1, located within South Holland, is characterised by a relatively flat, low-lying topography and productive arable land use. It is a large scale and predominantly open landscape, divided by linear ditches and drains and occasional linear tree belts along field boundaries. This is a well-settled landscape with a series of small settlements and dispersed individual properties.

6.6.11 The local landscape character of South Holland is defined within the Strategic Landscape Capacity Study for South Holland District Council (Ref 6.28), identifying three distinct Landscape Character Types (LCTs). The majority of published landscape character documents refer to Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) rather than LCTs. For consistency, all local landscape character units are referred to as LCAs within this preliminary assessment. The following two LCAs are located within the Study Area, as shown in **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**:

- Settled Fens LCA; and
- Peaty Fens LCA.

Section 2 – South Kesteven

6.6.12 The landscape of Section 2, located within South Kesteven, transitions from open flat fens to the east and more elevated rolling landform to the west. The fens are a low-lying and productive arable landscape, divided by a network of ditches and drains and occasional trees. Further west, the topography is more variable consisting of a series of low, broadly north–south ridges and valleys, creating a large-scale undulating agricultural landscape.

6.6.13 The local landscape character of South Kesteven is defined within the South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.29). This document identifies a series of seven distinct LCAs, the following three of which are located within the Study Area, as shown in **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**:

- The Fens LCA;
- Fen Margin LCA; and
- Kesteven Uplands LCA.

- 6.6.14 A small part of the Study Area related to Section 2 is also covered by the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.30), and includes the fringes of the following two LCAs, as shown in **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**:
- Cottesmore Plateau LCA; and
 - Clay Woodlands LCA.
- 6.6.15 As highlighted in the Scoping Report and confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.9), these two LCAs have been scoped out of the assessment due to no potential for significant effects.

Section 3 – Melton

- 6.6.16 The landscape of Section 3, located within Melton, is broadly characterised by undulating agricultural land with a variable sense of scale, openness and enclosure, influenced by topography, tree cover and field pattern. This is a well-settled landscape, including Melton Mowbray and a range of smaller villages and scattered rural properties.
- 6.6.17 The local landscape character of Melton District is defined within the Melton Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.31), which identifies a series of 21 LCAs, the following 14 of which are located within the Study Area, as shown in **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**:
- Vale of Belvoir LCA;
 - Wolds Scarp LCA;
 - Wolds Top LCA;
 - Ridge and Valley LCA;
 - Village Pastures LCA;
 - Limestone Edge LCA;
 - Mixed Farmland LCA;
 - Wreake Valley LCA;
 - Eye Valley LCA;
 - Farmland Patchwork LCA;
 - Open Arable LCA;
 - Asfordby Quarry LCA;
 - Melton Farmland Fringe LCA; and
 - Melton LCA.
- 6.6.18 As detailed in **Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**, the Vale of Belvoir, Mixed Farmland and Melton LCAs have not been considered further in this assessment, in line with the approach confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (IDs 3.2.9, 3.2.10 and 3.2.13).
- 6.6.19 A small part of the Study Area related to Section 3 is also covered by the Rutland Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6.30). As highlighted above in Section 2, and set out in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.9), the Cottesmore Plateau LCA has been scoped out of the assessment.

Section 4 – Harborough and Section 5 – Northamptonshire

- 6.6.20 These two Sections of the Project relate to the reconductoring of the existing ZA overhead line which has been excluded from the landscape assessment, as confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (IDs 3.2.11 and 3.2.12), due to the temporary, short duration and localised nature of potential change and limited potential to influence the landscape character.

Future Baseline

- 6.6.21 The future baseline relates to anticipated changes to the current baseline that are predicted to occur in the absence of the Project. Relevant factors in defining the future baseline and considered in this DES are described here, and will be considered in more detail in the ES.
- 6.6.22 Landscapes change and evolve over time through both natural processes and as a result of human influence through changes in land use, management or development and climate change.
- 6.6.23 The detailed landscape assessment will make predictions relating to potential change to the baseline, informed by known development pressures, local development plan allocations, local policy, and observations in the field. In addition, the future baseline will consider proposed and committed developments that will be completed before this Project commences, including renewable energy schemes and other National Grid infrastructure projects, which may influence the character and perception of the landscape. The future baseline seeks to highlight potential changes in the baseline that may influence the assessment outcomes.
- 6.6.24 There are a range of development pressures within parts of the Study Area, including settlement expansion and energy related development, such as solar farms and transmission and distribution infrastructure. It is likely that these pressures will continue at least in the short-term, with the potential to result in changes to the baseline landscape character. Other developments with the potential to result in cumulative effects on landscape receptors are considered as part of the preliminary cumulative assessment presented in **Chapter 19 Cumulative Effects**. A full cumulative assessment will be presented in the ES.
- 6.6.25 A number of pests and diseases that can negatively affect trees and woodland, including *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (ash dieback), are present in many areas of England. These diseases can cause leaf and crown reduction and loss of trees, which can have an influence on the landscape character. Within woodland settings, it is likely that gaps created by the loss of individual trees would be filled by other trees over time, and overall levels of vegetation are likely to remain broadly similar to existing conditions.

6.7 Design, Standard, and Additional Mitigation Measures

- 6.7.1 Mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, manage, or control potential impacts and resulting effects of the Project are typically described and considered in assessment in three groups or types, as defined in **Chapter 5 EIA Approach and Methodology** of this DES. Each measure considered in this preliminary assessment is described in the relevant section below.

Design Measures

- 6.7.2 Landscape assessment is an iterative process with progressive levels of survey and appraisal informing detailed siting and routeing, and refinement of the design of the Project. Landscape constraints and potential impacts have informed the initial siting and routeing process and the identification and refinement of the draft Order Limits.
- 6.7.3 The Project and draft Order Limits have been designed to avoid designated sites and sensitive landscape receptors as far as practicable. This is in accordance with the 'Holford Rules' (Ref 6.20), applicable to routeing of the proposed new overhead line, and the 'Horlock Rules' (Ref 6.21), which apply to the design and siting of substations.
- 6.7.4 Key design mitigation measures relevant to landscape character include:
- Sensitive routeing of the proposed new overhead line to avoid Grimsthorpe Castle RPG and areas with smaller-scale landscape character.
 - Routeing of the proposed new overhead line to relate to underlying landscape character, pattern and landform, seeking to minimise direction changes, particularly in the more level Fens and plateau landscapes, and avoid running along ridges.
 - Making use of existing features such as topography, trees and woodland to guide siting and routeing and provide local screening and/or an opaque background to reduce the apparent height or prominence of structures.
 - Considered siting of temporary haul roads, construction compounds and laydown areas to minimise loss of existing trees, hedgerows and other important landscape features.
 - Reinstatement of vegetation along field and ditch/watercourse margins and roadsides at earliest opportunity, which is expected to be within the next available sowing season (March to May or August to October) after construction of each Section is completed and temporary haul roads, compounds and laydown areas are removed.
- 6.7.5 The iterative design and assessment process will continue at the ES stage and will include evaluation of the detailed alignment and locations of individual overhead line towers, positioning and design of the substations, and the identification of appropriate mitigation measures to minimise potential residual effects.

Standard Measures

- 6.7.6 Standard measures are those that would be implemented on a project of this scale and nature regardless of being subject to statutory assessment. As such, it can be assumed these measures will be applied in the assessment.
- 6.7.7 A range of standard measures for the Project will be adopted throughout the duration of the construction phase. A Draft Outline Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) is provided in **Appendix 4A Draft Outline CoCP**. Measures relevant to the control and management of impacts that could affect landscape character are (refer to **Appendix 4A** for the full description of each measure):
- GG07 – on the Environmental Control Plans to be prepared prior to construction, including a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) (described in paragraph 6.7.8 below);

- GG09 – on reinstatement of land used temporarily;
- GG10 – on protection of retained sensitive features;
- GG13 – on design of construction sites relative to landscape features;
- GG20 and AS01 – on earthworks, soil storage and protection;
- GG22 and LV04 – on design and position of construction lighting;
- GG26 – on fencing of working areas;
- LV01 – on retention and replacement of vegetation;
- LV02 – on tree protection measures;
- LV03 – on aftercare and establishment period; and
- LV05 – on pre-construction soil surveys.

6.7.8 An Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be provided with the application for development consent and secured through appropriate requirements in the Development Consent Order. This will set out the details of proposed landscape and habitat reinstatement, mitigation and/or enhancement measures and associated maintenance, management and monitoring requirements. The Outline LEMP will include design and standard mitigation measures applicable to the Project and can be used to secure potential additional mitigation measures, where identified as a result of the detailed assessment. A draft of this plan is provided as **Appendix 6C Draft Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan** of this DES.

Additional Mitigation Measures

- 6.7.9 Additional mitigation measures are those identified through assessment to reduce likely significant adverse environmental effects, which may still occur despite the inclusion of the embedded design and standard measures described above.
- 6.7.10 No additional mitigation measures have been identified based on the preliminary assessment within this DES. Potential for additional measures will continue to be considered and reviewed as part of the ongoing assessment and design process and any measures identified will be reported in the ES.

6.8 Preliminary Assessment of Effects

- 6.8.1 A summary of potential impacts and mitigation measures identified in this preliminary assessment, and likely significance of the resulting effect, is provided at **Table 6.3**. Where appropriate for likely significant or notable effects, further explanation is provided in the following sections on construction and operation effects. More details on the baseline conditions, nature of change and resulting effects on each of the identified landscape receptors are provided in **Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**. It is important to note that although receptors are presented by Project Section, the assessment of impacts on each receptor considers all relevant aspects of the Project as a whole, including across Section boundaries.

Section 1: South Holland District

Construction

Landscape character

- 6.8.2 The preliminary assessment (presented in **Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified that effects relating to construction of the Project on the LCAs identified within Section 1 (Settled Fens and Peaty Fens) would be minor adverse, which are **not significant**. While it is recognised that construction activity has the potential to locally alter aspects of the landscape, change would be largely localised to the immediate vicinity of the draft Order Limits, and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration, with little influence on the majority of the defined key characteristics.

Operation

Landscape character

- 6.8.3 As with construction, the preliminary assessment (**Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified minor adverse effects, which are **not significant**, on both of the LCAs within Section 1 (Settled Fens and Peaty Fens). Although the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA and overall impression of the landscape would be relatively limited and would not alter the majority of the key characteristics. It is considered that the proposed overhead line towers would relate well to the large-scale nature of the landscape, and the Project would not alter the majority of the physical attributes, such as the flat topography, linear and geometric pattern, and the rivers, drainage channels and ditches. While the Project would be visible in parts of the landscape, the overall impression of a productive agricultural landscape would remain.

Section 2: South Kesteven District

Construction

Landscape designations

- 6.8.4 One landscape designation, Grimsthorpe Castle RPG has been included within the assessment. Construction of the Project would occur outside the RPG and would be temporary and of short duration; therefore, potential construction effects on the RPG have been scoped out of the assessment, as confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.3).

Landscape character

- 6.8.5 The preliminary assessment (**Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified that effects relating to construction of the Project on each of the LCAs identified within Section 2 (The Fens, Fen Margin and Kesteven Uplands) would be minor adverse, which is **not significant**. As with Section 1, while construction activity has the potential to locally alter aspects of the landscape, change would largely be localised, temporary in nature and of a short duration, with little influence on the majority of the defined key characteristics.

- 6.8.6 However, the preliminary assessment recognises the potential for more intensive and notable direct and indirect change within a localised area in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-A substation site. It is anticipated that this may result in **localised significant effects** on the Kesteven Uplands LCA due to the increased concentration of temporary compounds, laydown areas and haul roads, together with the movement, activity and lighting associated with earthworks operations and construction of the substation structures and series of overhead line towers. These aspects, and the potential for localised significant effects, will be considered in more detail in the ES when the Project design is further developed.

Operation

Landscape designations

- 6.8.7 The preliminary assessment (**Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified that the potential effects on Grimsthorpe Castle RPG would be minor adverse, which is **not significant**. This is as a result of the routing process, which ensured that the Project was located outside of the RPG, thereby avoiding direct effects on landscape components that contribute to the RPG. Potential change would therefore be indirect and related to perceptual aspects of the landscape character. Mature tree and woodland planting along the northern boundary of the RPG would provide partial screening and increase the sense of separation from the Project, reducing the extent and impression of change.
- 6.8.8 Potential impacts on Grimsthorpe Castle RPG relating to the operation of the proposed substations have been scoped out of the assessment, due to the separation distance and screening by intervening landscape, as confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (ID 3.2.5).

Landscape character

- 6.8.9 The preliminary assessment (**Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified minor adverse effects, which are **not significant**, on the overall extents of each of the LCAs within Section 2 (The Fens, Fen Margin and Kesteven Uplands). While the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change to the wider extent and overall impression of each LCA would be relatively limited with little influence on the majority of the key characteristics. It is considered that the overhead line towers would relate well to the large-scale nature of the landscape, and the Project would not alter the majority of the physical attributes, such as the flat topography, linear and geometric pattern in the east, and the large blocks of woodland further to the west. While the Project would be visible in parts of the landscape, the overall impression of a productive agricultural landscape would remain. Siting and routing of the Project also makes use of trees and woodland to provide local containment and reduce potential effects.
- 6.8.10 As with construction, the preliminary assessment recognises the potential for more intensive and notable direct and indirect change within a localised area in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-A substation site. It is anticipated that this may result in **localised significant effects** on the Kesteven Uplands LCA due to the presence of substation structures, fencing and lighting, hard standing and an access road, and locally increased concentration of overhead line towers. These aspects, and the potential for localised significant effects, will be considered in more detail in the ES when the Project design is further developed.

Section 3: Melton Borough

Construction

Landscape character

- 6.8.11 The preliminary assessment (**Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified that effects relating to construction of the Project on five of the LCAs identified within Section 3 (Wolds Top, Ridge and Valley, Village Pastures, Eye Valley and Open Arable) would be minor adverse, which are **not significant**. While construction activity has the potential to locally alter aspects of these landscapes, change would largely be localised and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration, with little influence on the majority of the defined key characteristics. Reduced impacts and negligible adverse effects, which are **not significant**, are anticipated for five of the LCAs (Wolds Scarp, Wreake Valley, Farmland Patchwork, Asfordby Quarry and Melton Farmland Fringe).
- 6.8.12 However, the preliminary assessment recognises the potential for more intensive and notable direct and/or indirect change within a localised area in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B substation site. It is anticipated that this may result in **localised significant effects** on parts of the Wolds Top LCA and Village Pastures LCA due to increased concentration of temporary compounds, laydown areas and haul roads, together with the movement, activity and lighting associated with earthworks operations and construction of the substation structures and series of overhead line towers. These aspects, and the potential for localised significant effects, will be considered in more detail in the ES when the Project design is further developed.

Operation

Landscape character

- 6.8.13 The preliminary assessment (**Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment**) has identified minor adverse effects, which are **not significant**, on the overall extents of four of the LCAs within Section 3 (Wolds Top, Village Pastures, Eye Valley and Open Arable). This recognises that the Project would locally alter aspects of the landscape. However, change to the wider extents and overall impression of these landscapes would be relatively limited, and the majority of the key characteristics would be unaltered. As with construction, reduced impacts and negligible adverse effects, which are **not significant**, are anticipated for five of the identified LCAs (Wolds Scarp, Wreake Valley, Farmland Patchwork, Asfordby Quarry and Melton Farmland Fringe).

Wolds Top LCA and Village Pastures LCA

- 6.8.14 The preliminary assessment has identified that overall impacts on these two LCAs would be minor adverse, which is **not significant**. However, it is recognised that there is potential for more intensive and notable direct and/or indirect change within a localised area in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B substation site. It is anticipated that this may result in **localised significant effects** on parts of the Wolds Top LCA and Village Pastures LCA due to the presence of substation structures, fencing and lighting, hard standing and an access road, and locally increased concentration of overhead line towers. These aspects, and the potential for localised significant effects, will be considered in more detail in the ES when the Project design is further developed.

Ridge and Valley LCA

- 6.8.15 A section of proposed new overhead line of approximately 7.5 km in length would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change.
- 6.8.16 Direct change would result from the permanent loss of vegetation and the introduction of overhead line towers. The nature of the tower construction means that direct change would be limited and localised, although with potential for additional loss of a small number of trees along parts of the overhead line corridor. The defined key physical characteristics of the landscape would remain largely unchanged.
- 6.8.17 Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to the influence of the visibility of overhead line towers on perceptual aspects of the landscape. Although trees and woodland locally reduce the impression of change, indirect change is likely to be relatively widespread across much of the largest part of this LCA, located to the north of Melton. More limited and localised indirect change resulting from distant visibility of the Project would occur within the remaining two areas of this LCA, located at the west and north extents of the Study Area.
- 6.8.18 Overall, although direct change would be limited and localised, there is potential for more widespread indirect change. The Project would run along the length of the relatively narrow part of the LCA to the north of Melton, crossing a number of ridges and valleys, adding further electrical infrastructure into the landscape. Taking a precautionary approach the magnitude of effect on the part of the LCA north of Melton is anticipated to be medium, and when combined with the medium sensitivity indicates a moderate adverse effect, which is **significant**.

Table 6.3 Preliminary summary of landscape effects

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
Project Section 1 – Construction					
Settled Fens LCA and Peaty Fens LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads and compounds.	Localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .
Project Section 1 – Operation					
Settled Fens LCA and Peaty Fens LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features and replacement planting where direct reinstatement not possible.	Localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of LCAs and key characteristics remain largely unchanged.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
Project Section 2 – Construction					
The Fens LCA and Fen Margin LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads and compounds.	Localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and/or laydown areas. More widespread indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .
Kesteven Uplands LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads and compounds.	Localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics, although with potential for locally greater impacts in the immediate vicinity of WMEL-A substation.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant (potential for localised significant effects to be considered in ES).
Project Section 2 – Operation					
Grimsthorpe Castle RPG	Alignment of overhead line and avoiding towers within	Localised and limited indirect change through introduction of overhead line into the landscape outside the RPG, with no impacts on physical elements that define the RPG.	Low	High	Minor adverse which is not significant .

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
	designed vistas.				
The Fens LCA and Fen Margin LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features and replacement planting where direct reinstatement not possible.	Localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of LCAs and key characteristics remain largely unchanged.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .
Kesteven Uplands LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features. Potential for earthworks and planting to provide partial screening of WMEL-A substation.	Localised direct impact through loss of vegetation, alteration of landform and introduction of overhead line towers, and substation structures, fencing and lighting, hard standing and an access road. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line and WMEL-A substation on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of LCA and key characteristics remain largely unchanged. Potential for locally greater impacts in immediate vicinity of WMEL-A substation.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant (potential for localised significant effects to be considered in ES).

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
Project Section 3 – Construction					
Wolds Scarp LCA	n/a	Intervening topography and woodland would screen the majority of construction activity associated with the proposed WMEL-B substation and overhead lines, such that any change on this LCA would be limited and very localised, with little or no impacts on key characteristics.	Very low	Medium	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Wolds Top LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads and compounds.	Very localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of haul roads, laydown areas and access to the WMEL-B substation. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line and WMEL-B substation. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics, although with potential for locally greater impacts in the immediate vicinity of WMEL-B substation.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant (potential for localised significant effects to be considered in ES).
Ridge and Valley LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads	Localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and/or laydown areas. More widespread indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
	and compounds.				
Village Pastures LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads and compounds.	Localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas in one part of the LCA. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line and WMEL-B substation. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics, although with potential for locally greater impacts in the immediate vicinity of WMEL-B substation.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant (potential for localised significant effects to be considered in ES).
Wreake Valley LCA	n/a	Intervening topography, woodland and buildings would screen the majority of construction activity associated with the proposed overhead line and WMEL-B substation, such that any change on this LCA would be very limited and very localised, with no impacts on key characteristics.	Very low	Low	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Eye Valley LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads	Very localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of haul roads. Slightly more widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
	and compounds.				
Farmland Patchwork LCA	Careful siting of temporary compounds and minimise vegetation loss in adjacent LCA.	Intervening topography and woodland would largely screen construction activity associated with the proposed overhead line from the majority of this LCA, such that any change would be limited and very localised, with little or no impacts on key characteristics.	Very low	Medium	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Open Arable LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads and compounds.	Localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line. Overall, little influence on identified key characteristics.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .
Asfordby Quarry LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss, and removal and reinstatement of haul roads	Very localised direct impact through temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of haul roads. Potential indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line limited by topography and woodland and the modified and developed nature of much of the LCA. Overall, very little influence on identified key characteristics.	Very low	Low	Negligible adverse which is not significant .

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
		and compounds.			
Melton Farmland Fringe LCA	Minimise temporary footprint and vegetation loss.	Very localised or no direct impact relating to works to a very short section of low voltage overhead line. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of temporary structures and movement and activity associated with construction of the proposed overhead line. Perception of change further limited by modified nature of LCA, with very little influence on identified key characteristics.	Very low	Low	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Project Section 3 – Operation					
Wolds Scarp LCA	n/a	The Project is outside this LCA and therefore there would be no direct impacts. The proposed WMEL-B substation and overhead line would be predominantly screened from this LCA by intervening topography and woodland, such that any change would be limited and very localised, with no impacts on key characteristics.	Very low	Medium	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Wolds Top LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features. Potential for earthworks and planting	Localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of an overhead line tower and access road to the WMEL-B substation. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line and WMEL-B substation on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of LCA and key characteristics remain	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant (potential for localised significant effects to be

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
	to provide partial screening of WMEL-B substation.	largely unchanged. Potential for locally greater impacts in immediate vicinity of WMEL-B substation in adjacent LCA.			considered in ES).
Ridge and Valley LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features and replacement planting where direct reinstatement not possible.	Localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers. More widespread indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes. The Project would run along the length of the relatively narrow part of the LCA to the north of Melton with potential to alter key characteristics and the overall impression of parts of the landscape.	Medium	Medium	Moderate adverse which is significant .
Village Pastures LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features. Potential for earthworks and planting to provide partial screening of WMEL-B substation.	Localised direct impact to part of the LCA through loss of vegetation, alteration of landform and introduction of overhead line towers, and substation structures, fencing and lighting, hard standing and an access road. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line and WMEL-B substation on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of the LCA and key characteristics remain largely unchanged. Potential for locally greater impacts in immediate vicinity of WMEL-B substation.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant (potential for localised significant effects to be considered in ES).

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
Wreake Valley LCA	n/a	The Project is outside this LCA and therefore there would be no direct impacts. The proposed WMEL-B substation and overhead line would be predominantly screened from this LCA by intervening topography, buildings and woodland, such that any change would be very limited and very localised, with no impacts on key characteristics.	Very low	Low	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Eye Valley LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features and replacement planting where direct reinstatement not possible.	Very localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of an overhead line tower. Slightly more widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of LCA and key characteristics remain largely unchanged.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .
Farmland Patchwork LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing vegetation within adjacent LCA.	The Project is outside this LCA and therefore there would be no direct impacts. Potential indirect change would largely be focused towards the northern fringes of the LCA where in closer proximity to the proposed overhead line, with little or no influence on the majority of the area due to increased distance and partial screening provided by trees and woodland and intervening topography. Overall, change would be very limited and localised with little or no impacts on key characteristics.	Very low	Medium	Negligible adverse which is not significant .

Receptor(s)	Key Design, Standard and Additional Mitigation	Impact	Magnitude of Change	Sensitivity	Likely Significance of Effect
Open Arable LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features and replacement planting where direct reinstatement not possible.	Localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers. More widespread, although overall limited, indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes. Although the Project would locally alter aspects of character, the overall impression of LCA and key characteristics remain largely unchanged.	Low	Medium	Minor adverse which is not significant .
Asfordby Quarry LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing features and replacement planting where direct reinstatement not possible.	Very localised direct impact through loss of vegetation and introduction of an overhead line tower. Potential indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes limited by topography and woodland and the modified and developed nature of much of the LCA. Overall, very little influence on identified key characteristics or impression of the LCA.	Very low	Low	Negligible adverse which is not significant .
Melton Farmland Fringe LCA	Alignment of overhead line, retention of existing vegetation within adjacent LCA.	The Project is outside this LCA and therefore there would be no direct impacts. Potential indirect change relating to influence of overhead line on perceptual attributes would be localised and focused towards the northern fringe of part of this LCA. Overall, very little impression of change to the key characteristics of this variable and modified landscape.	Very low	Low	Negligible adverse which is not significant .

6.9 Alternative Scenarios

- 6.9.1 As described in Section 4.4 of **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**, there are elements of the Project which have not been fixed at this stage. Therefore, flexibility needs to be considered in this DES. Two alternative scenarios are outlined in **Table 4.3** and are assessed in **Table 6.4** below.
- 6.9.2 This assessment considers each scenario, together with the assumptions and mitigation measures described in this chapter. It provides a qualitative appraisal of the potential changes to the preliminary conclusions reported in this section, should these scenarios occur.
- 6.9.3 **Table 6.4** presents the conclusions of this appraisal, supported by appropriate qualitative justification, to ensure that any potentially significant effects are identified in this DES. If these alternative scenarios remain under consideration in the application for development consent, they will be appropriately assessed in the ES.

Table 6.4 Preliminary assessment of alternative scenarios

Scenario	Potential change in impacts	Potential change in effects
1. No or reduced haul roads	This scenario could change the spatial extent and nature of direct (physical) impacts on landscape components and indirect impacts on perceptual aspects of landscape character. The use of existing agricultural access points with temporary trackways in place of constructed haul roads would considerably reduce the extent of ground disturbance, earthworks alteration, and temporary vegetation clearance associated with construction of the Project. There would also be a reduction in potential indirect impacts associated with construction as a result of decreased levels of activity and movement relating to installation and subsequent removal and reinstatement of haul roads. There is also potential for a reduction in both direct and indirect operation phase impacts through increased retention of existing trees.	This scenario is likely to result in a considerable reduction of construction phase impacts and the significance of effects, as it would remove the need for temporary vegetation clearance, earthworks and operations and activity associated with installation and subsequent removal and reinstatement of haul roads. Increased retention of existing vegetation may also provide partial screening of construction activities which could reduce the extent of change. This scenario may also result in a reduction of the significance of effects relating to the operation phase, if it results in retention of additional existing trees which may otherwise be required to be removed to accommodate haul roads and associated visibility splays.
2. Off-site construction compound near Melton Mowbray	This scenario could change the distribution of direct and indirect impacts on landscape receptors during construction. Removing the requirement for several construction compounds along the proposed new overhead line would	This scenario is likely to result in a localised reduction in the significance of effects associated with construction for several of the landscape receptors, as a result of removing the need for multiple construction compounds along the proposed new overhead line.

Scenario	Potential change in impacts	Potential change in effects
	locally reduce direct impacts relating to temporary vegetation clearance and earthworks, and reduce indirect impacts relating to the presence of temporary structures and activity to construct and subsequently remove the structures and infrastructure. The potential location for the off-site compound is within the Asfordby Business Park and consists of an area of existing hard standing, surrounded by mature vegetation and other development. The nature of the location would considerably limit potential impacts on the underlying character of the Asfordby Quarry LCA and the mature boundary planting would limit impacts on the adjacent Ridge and Valley LCA.	The existing modified nature of the identified off-site construction compound location and the surrounding mature vegetation would limit any potential effects on landscape character and, as such, would represent an overall reduction in potential effects relating to the construction phase of the Project. Little or no difference to operation phase effects between the two scenarios is anticipated.

6.10 Monitoring

- 6.10.1 As set out in **Appendix 6C Draft Outline LEMP**, it is anticipated that monitoring of reinstated vegetation and proposed mitigation planting would be required. The purpose of monitoring would be to ensure successful establishment, determine that the desired functions are being achieved, and/or identify whether any remedial management action may be required. Further details of monitoring and management, tailored to specific reinstatement measures and approaches, and to proposed mitigation planting will be set out in the Outline LEMP as part of the ES.

6.11 Further Assessment

- 6.11.1 The ES will present a full detailed assessment based on the principles of GLVIA3 (Ref 6.17) and other relevant good practice guidance, and the methodology set out in **Appendix 6A Landscape Assessment Methodology**. The assessment will include an evaluation and classification of the value, susceptibility and resulting sensitivity, the magnitude of effect, and the level and significance of anticipated effects for each of the identified receptors. Descriptive text will be included to provide an explanation and justification for the judgement reached.
- 6.11.2 The ES will provide final details of design, standard, and any additional mitigation measures which will be informed by the findings of the DES and Stage 2 Consultation. The assessment of operation phase effects in the ES will include consideration of potential impacts at Year 1 of operation, to represent the anticipated worst case effects and, where relevant, the potential impacts at Year 15 of operation, to demonstrate the influence of proposed planting included as part of mitigation design.

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