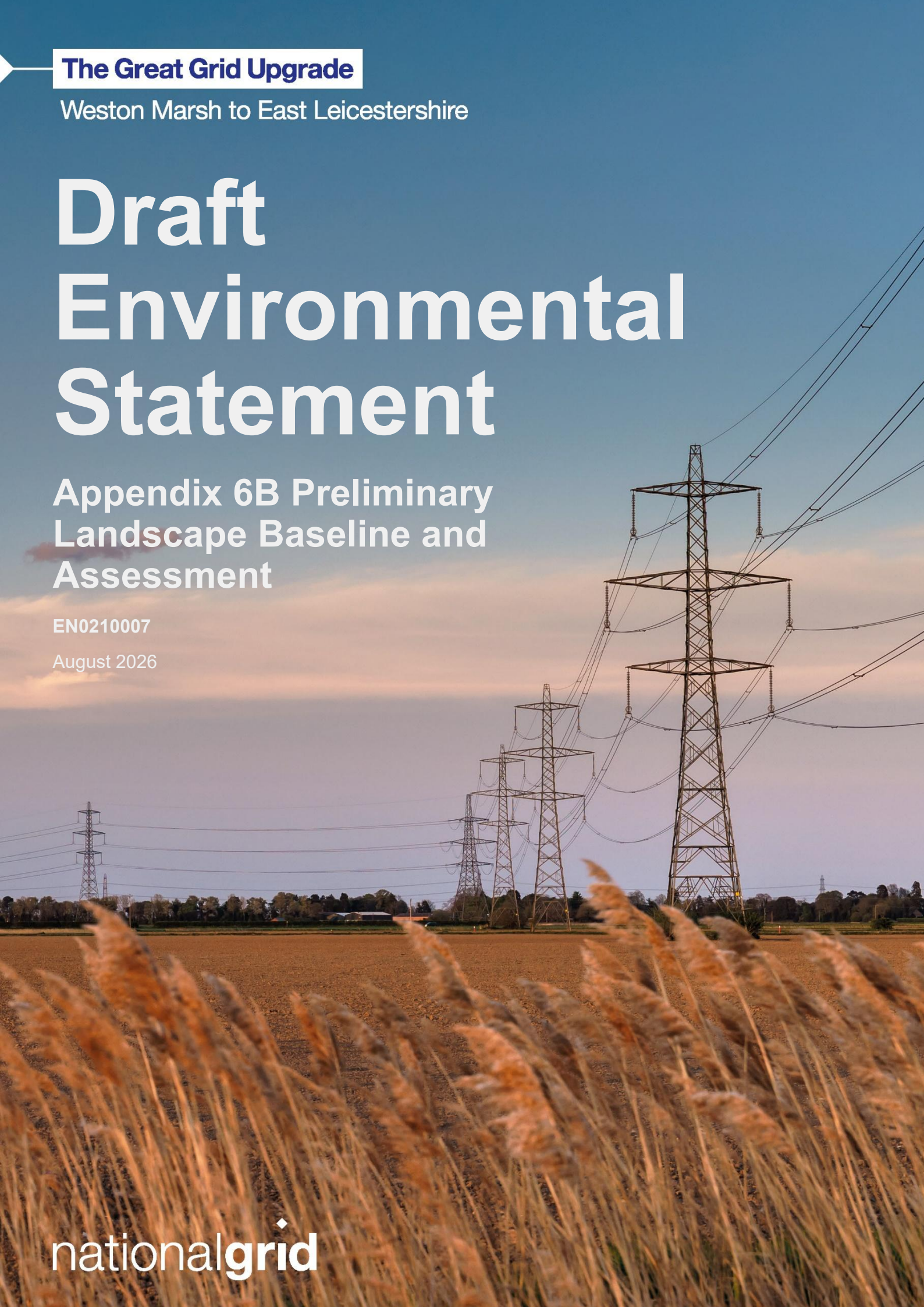




The Great Grid Upgrade

Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire

Draft Environmental Statement

Appendix 6B Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment

EN0210007

August 2026

nationalgrid

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6B. Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment

6B. Preliminary Landscape Baseline and Assessment

6B.1 Introduction

- 6B.1.1 This appendix provides a description of the landscape baseline of the Study Area and provides a preliminary assessment of potential effects resulting from the Project.
- 6B.1.2 The baseline includes a description of relevant designated and/or recognised sensitive landscapes found within the Study Area. In relation to landscape character, the baseline includes a high level description of national and regional landscape character units to provide context, and sets out the relevant published key characteristics of the local level landscape character units which form the basis for the preliminary assessment.
- 6B.1.3 A preliminary assessment of potential effects resulting from the Project is then provided, describing the nature of change and indicating the potential for significant effects. The preliminary assessment includes consideration of both temporary change relating to construction and longer term change relating to the operation phase of the Project. 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 Environmental Statement (ES) will consider longer term operation effects with additional mitigation in place, where relevant.
- 6B.1.4 Potential effects relating to maintenance of the Project during the operation phase have been scoped out of the assessment, as confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (Paragraph 3.2.14). This is due to the limited, localised, temporary and short duration of potential change associated with maintenance activities.
- 6B.1.5 As detailed in **Chapter 4 Description of the Project**, the decommissioning of the Project has been scoped out of the environmental assessment.

6B.2 Designated Landscapes

- 6B.2.1 No National Landscapes or locally designated Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) have been identified within the Study Area. The nearest such designations are 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 confirmed in the **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (Paragraphs 3.2.2 and 3.2.7), due to the distance from the Project and therefore no potential for significant effects.

Registered Parks and Gardens

- 6B.2.2 Two Registered Parks and Gardens (RPGs), Stapleford Hall and Grimsthorpe Castle, have been identified within the Study Area for the Project, as shown on **Figure 6.2 Landscape Designations and Context**.

- 6B.2.3 Only a very small part of the northern edge of Stapleford Hall RPG is within the Study Area. Given the separation distance from the new overhead line and the mature tree belts immediately to the north of the estate limiting outward views towards the Project, it is considered that there would be no potential for significant effects on Stapleford Hall RPG and therefore it has not been considered further in the preliminary assessment.
- 6B.2.4 As confirmed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (Paragraph 3.2.3), construction phase impacts on Grimsthorpe RPG have been scoped out of the assessment as there would be no physical change anticipated due to the careful siting of construction works in line with the draft Outline Code of Construction Practice (refer to **Appendix 4A Draft Outline Code of Construction Practice**). A review of the updated Project design has been undertaken, and has confirmed that potential perceptual change would still be limited by screening from existing boundary vegetation and landform and would be temporary and of short duration. It is therefore considered that significant effects on Grimsthorpe RPG from construction of the Project are unlikely and therefore this aspect continues to be scoped out of the assessment.
- 6B.2.5 **Table 6B.1** provides a baseline description and preliminary assessment of potential effects of the operation phase of the Project on Grimsthorpe Castle RPG.

Table 6B.1 Preliminary assessment of Registered Parks and Gardens within the Study Area for the new overhead line and substations

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change (Operation)
Grimsthorpe Castle RPG (Grade I)	Grimsthorpe Castle RPG is located to the west of the settlement of Grimsthorpe within the central part of the Study Area. The park and gardens are described on the Historic England official list entry (Ref 6B.1) as an <i>‘early C16 park, with alterations by Lancelot Brown in 1771, forms the setting for a castle rebuilt in the mid C16 as a country house’</i>. The RPG is bound to the north by the A151 with farmland to the west, south, and east. The list entry states that the <i>‘Castle is set on a ridge running from north-west to south-east through the site, giving views to east and west’</i>. The RPG consists of a series of formal gardens and pleasure grounds immediately surrounding the garden, and parkland made up of <i>‘a series of lesser parks enclosed by woodland’</i>. Special qualities include: • <i>‘undulating parkland to the south-west of which are two lakes, the Great Water and Red Bridge Pond’</i>; • <i>‘undulating parkland bounded to the south-west by Crow Wood and Bishopshall Wood’</i>; • <i>‘a wooded valley known as the Vaudey, site of a Cistercian abbey’</i>; • <i>‘Grimsthorpe Park which has an open aspect with a few scattered trees’</i>; • <i>‘a long piece of woodland known as Old Hills’</i>; and • <i>‘an area of parkland around several disused quarries known as Maize Hill’</i>.	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Recognised as of national importance as a Grade I RPG and containing a range of valued historic features and designed elements. Some local influence from external infrastructure and development. Sensitivity is considered to be High. <u>Magnitude of effect:</u> The Project would be located outside of the Grimsthorpe Castle RPG at a distance of approximately 500 m and as such would not result in any direct change to physical components or features. Potential change would therefore be indirect and largely relate to influence of the visibility of new structures on the perceptual aspects of the landscape. A combination of woodland and topography would limit the extent and nature of potential indirect change from many areas of the RPG. Where apparent, the overhead line would be perceived as a relatively distant feature beyond the boundary of the RPG, reducing the influence on the character or impression of the RPG. The Project would also be experienced in the context of an existing overhead line located in closer proximity to the RPG, immediately to the north and within 300 m to the east. Overall, potential change would be indirect with no impact on the designed and historic features of the RPG, and only limited and localised influence on perceptual attributes, indicating a Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect:</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a high sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant).

6B.3 Landscape Character

6B.3.1 Landscape character is described at the national, regional and district/county scales as set out below.

National Character Areas

6B.3.2 At a national scale, the Project and Study Area lie within the following National Character Areas (NCAs) as described in the Natural England NCA profiles (Ref 6B.2):

- NCA 46: The Fens;
- NCA 75: Kesteven Uplands; and
- NCA 74: Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds.

6B.3.3 The baseline character and key characteristics of the NCAs are described in **Table 6B.2** and their locations are shown on **Figure 6.3 National Landscape Character**.

Table 6B.2 National Character Areas within the Study Area

NCA	Project Section(s)	Location and Key Characteristics Relevant to the Study Area
NCA 46: The Fens	1, 2	NCA 46 The Fens (Ref 6B.3) covers an extensive area from Cambridge in the south towards Lincoln in the north. Within the Study Area the NCA encompasses the entirety of Section 1, whilst also including a small part of Section 2 to the west of Northgate, and to the east of Dunsby and Haconby. NCA 46 is characterised by a 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. The published key characteristics of the NCA which are of relevance to the Study Area are as follows: • <i>‘Expansive, flat, open, low-lying wetland landscape influenced by the Wash estuary, and offering extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies throughout, provides a sense of rural remoteness and tranquillity’.</i> • <i>‘Overall, woodland cover is sparse, notably a few small woodland blocks, occasional avenues alongside roads, isolated field trees and shelterbelts of poplar, willow and occasionally leylandii hedges around farmsteads [...] Various alders, notably grey alder, are also used in shelterbelts and roadside avenues’.</i> • <i>‘The predominant land use is arable – wheat, root crops, bulbs, vegetables and market gardening made possible by actively draining reclaimed land areas’.</i> • <i>‘Open fields, bounded by a network of drains and the distinctive hierarchy of rivers (some embanked), have a</i>

NCA	Project Section(s)	Location and Key Characteristics Relevant to the Study Area
		<i>strong influence on the geometric/rectilinear landscape pattern. The structures create local enclosure and a slightly raised landform, which is mirrored in the road network that largely follows the edges of the system of large fields’.</i> • <i>‘Large, built structures exhibit a strong vertical visual influence, such as ... wind farms and other modern large-scale industrial and agricultural buildings, while drainage and flood storage structures and embanked rail and road routes interrupt the horizontal fen plain’.</i> • <i>‘Settlements and isolated farmsteads are mostly located on the modestly elevated ‘geological islands’ and the low, sinuous roddon banks (infilled ancient watercourses within fens). Elsewhere, villages tend to be dispersed ribbon settlements along the main arterial routes through the settled fens, and scattered farms remain as relics of earlier agricultural settlements’.</i>
NCA 75: Kesteven Uplands	2, 3	NCA 75 Kesteven Uplands (Ref 6B.4) covers a large area from Stamford and Peterborough in the south to Grantham in the north. Within the Study Area this NCA encompasses most of Section 2 and the eastern part of Section 3. NCA 75 is characterised by an undulating large-scale agricultural landscape. The topography is variable, consisting of a series of low, broadly north south ridges and valleys, rising towards the west. A range of linear infrastructure is also present within this landscape, including the A1, East Coast Main Line railway and several high and low voltage overhead lines. The published key characteristics of the NCA which are of relevance to the Study Area are as follows: • <i>‘Medium-scale, undulating mixed farmland landscape gently rising from the Fens in the east to the limestone ridge in the west. Large arable fields predominate on the higher ground of the Kesteven Plateau, with clipped and gappy hedgerows, while heavier land in the river valleys provides good grazing for cattle and sheep. Enclosure is generally by hedgerows and more locally by stone walls’.</i> • <i>‘Rivers Witham, East Glen and West Glen dissect the area, their valleys containing species-rich meadows, grazing marsh and woodlands’.</i> • <i>‘Significant areas of woodland including semi-natural and ancient woodland, commercial woodlands and parkland landscapes which, in combination with the topography, frame and contain views’.</i> • <i>‘Nucleated settlement pattern comprising small traditional villages with few isolated farmsteads or houses. Villages are evenly distributed throughout the area’.</i>

NCA	Project Section(s)	Location and Key Characteristics Relevant to the Study Area
		• <i>‘Picturesque villages and towns with buildings constructed in the local honey-coloured limestone, with roofs of the local yellowish Collyweston slate in the south and red pantiles in the north. Also present is a concentration of historic country houses with their associated parklands’.</i> • <i>‘Recreation includes restored sand and gravel quarries and long-distance routes and trackways’.</i> • <i>‘Major roads and the East Coast Main Line run north–south dissecting the landscape.’</i>
NCA 74: Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds	3	NCA 74 Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds (Ref 6B.5) covers a large area from Rutland Water in the south east to Loughborough and towards Nottingham in the west and north west. Within the Study Area this NCA encompasses most of Section 3 towards the western extent of the Project. NCA 74 is characterised by undulating agricultural land with a variable sense of scale, openness and enclosure, influenced by topography, tree cover and field pattern which becomes more intricate towards the west. The published key characteristics of the NCA which are of relevance to the Study Area are as follows: • <i>‘A range of rolling hills, with elevated plateaux, narrow river valleys and distinctive scarp slopes’.</i> • <i>‘Woodland cover is generally sparse, except for some wooded scarps and in the Wreake Valley and adjacent to Rutland Water. Elsewhere, spinneys, fox coverts, hedgerows, hedgerow trees and streamside trees provide moderate cover’.</i> • <i>‘Agricultural land use dominates with arable farming on the plateaux tops and pasture on steep sloping valley sides’.</i> • <i>‘Agricultural land use has diminished semi-natural habitat although important habitats do remain, including species-rich neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, reservoirs, rivers and streams’.</i> • <i>‘Evidence of many deserted and shrunken settlements, as well as extensive areas of ridge and furrow separate small villages and farms linked by country lanes with wide verges’.</i> • <i>‘Red brick buildings with pantile roofs are widespread and most abundant clustered around churches, which are constructed from ironstone and limestone contributing to the local vernacular’.</i> • <i>‘Urban influences include overhead lines, mineral extraction sites, airfields and the busy A46 ... although these do not weaken the rural character.’</i>

Regional Landscape Character

- 6B.3.4 At a regional level, the landscape character of the Study Area is defined and described in The East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6B.6). The following Regional Landscape Character Types (RLCTs) are located within the Study Area as shown on **Figure 6.5 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.
- 6B.3.5 Summary descriptions of these RLCTs are provided in **Table 6B.3**, to give context to the locally defined landscape character units on which the preliminary assessment is based.

Table 6B.3 East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Types within the Study Area

NCA	Project Section(s)	Summary of Description in Published Study Relevant to the Study Area
RLCT 2a: Settled Fens and Marshes	1	This RLCT is described as a <i>‘Low lying, flat and open landscape with wide horizons and panoramas encompassing vast skies’</i> . Intensive arable land use unifies and defines this simple landscape. Fields are rectilinear bound by <i>‘narrow, shallow wet dykes interspersed with modified river channels’</i> rather than hedgerows. Trees and woodland blocks are scarce, limited to occasional shelter belts or associated with settlement which <i>‘merge in views at ground level to form a backdrop to many panoramic views to the wide horizon’</i> . Settlement and access is limited creating a local perception of relative isolation. This is often reduced where there is a greater concentration of settlement and infrastructure, including overhead lines.
RLCT 2b: Planned and Drained Fens and Carrlands	1, 2	This RLCT is described as a highly productive landscape where the varied arable land use dominates. Productive land use and water management has dictated the layout of rectilinear fields, land drains, canalisation of rivers, and the limited pallet of landscape elements. This has created a <i>‘large scale open landscape of flat farmlands with extensive and uninterrupted vistas to distant horizons beneath vast skies’</i> . Settlement is limited to isolated farms and linear groups along roads. In combination this contributes to a <i>‘strong sense of remoteness’</i> within parts of the area, although often influenced by agricultural operations, particularly during sowing and harvest.

NCA	Project Section(s)	Summary of Description in Published Study Relevant to the Study Area
RLCT 2c: Fen and Marsh Margin Farmlands	2	This RLCT is described as ' <i>a transitional landscape, displaying features characteristic of elevated areas to the west, and lowland fens and marshes to the east</i> '. The terrain is gently undulating often informed by watercourses feeding the Fens to the east from higher ground in the west. Hedgerows, woodland and riparian tree belts are more prevalent and along with landform contribute to a locally more intimate, enclosed landscape. Settlement is limited to nucleated villages and hamlets and occasional scattered properties, with the area retaining a ' <i>quiet, rural character</i> '. An existing overhead line passes along the fringe of this RLCT within the Study Area.
RLCT 3a: Floodplain Valleys	3	This RLCT is found along the broad valley of the River Wreake within the Study Area. The river is lined by riparian trees with ' <i>wetland species, such as willow, poplar and ash which contribute to the overall pastoral character of the floodplain landscape</i> '. Broadleaved copse and clumps of woodland on the valley sides partially screen the adjacent settlement areas, although with more recent urban expansion and an overhead line extending the influence of development. A series of small lakes within former quarries add to the influence of water within the landscape.
RLCT 4a: Unwooded Vales	3	This RLCT is described as a ' <i>softly undulating landscape</i> ' often with a rural and relatively tranquil character. Land use is mixed with both arable and pastoral farming on medium sized rectilinear fields bound by hedgerows. Small watercourses are important landscape elements within the RLCT and are often ' <i>not discernible in the landscape and only become evident by tracing alder and willow trees, and sinuous belts of riparian habitat or rushy pastures</i> '. Settlement is limited to isolated farms and nucleated villages, and an existing overhead line passes through the western part of this RLCT found within the Study Area. Low hills and ridges are visually prominent, but it is the landform at the margins of the RLCT that contribute heavily to the character within. This creates a sense of visual enclosure in an otherwise gently undulating landscape.
RLCT 8a: Clay Wolds	3	This RLCT is described as ' <i>a distinctive elevated plateau farmland landscape</i> '. Land use is predominantly agricultural with ' <i>mainly arable on the plateau tops and pasture on steep sloping land and along valleys</i> '. Watercourses are an important landscape element that has informed the rolling terrain of the RLCT. Fields are medium sized. Woodland is present but not a dominant landscape feature. Hedgerow and hedgerow trees provide some containment where terrain predicates. Settlement is generally limited to scattered farms and small villages on lower ground, although also includes

NCA	Project Section(s)	Summary of Description in Published Study Relevant to the Study Area
		the larger urban area of Melton Mowbray. More eastern parts of the RLCT within the Study Area have a ' <i>quiet and remote, often empty character</i> ' with greater influence from settlement, development and infrastructure, including a series of overhead lines within the east. Elevated, expansive plateaus offer panoramic views adding to the sense of scale of the landscape, whilst more complex valley areas have a more intimate feel influenced by settlement and vegetation.
RLCT 10a: Forest Hills and Ridges	2, 3	This RLCT is defined by broad undulating landform and large areas of woodland cover across the landscape. Originating from fragments of former Royal Forests, the woodland tends to have scenic and ecological value and is often associated with designed parklands and estates. Woodland blocks whilst prevalent are fragmented and interspersed with large areas of agricultural land. The low hedgerows and intermittent hedgerow trees unify the two landcover types, often coalescing to form a wooded backdrop and intimate landscape. The area is relatively sparsely populated with small settlements and scattered isolated properties. A series of linear infrastructure elements, including major road and railways and several overhead lines cross the landscape, locally influencing perceptual attributes.

Local Landscape Character

- 6B.3.6 At a local level, the landscape of the Study Area is described within the following published district level landscape character assessments:
- Strategic Landscape Capacity Study for South Holland District Council (Ref 6B.7);
 - South Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6B.8); and
 - Melton Landscape Character Assessment (Ref 6B.9) and Melton Landscape Character Assessment Update (Ref 6B.10).
- 6B.3.7 The documents identify a series of local landscape character units, referred to as Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). For consistency, all local landscape character units are referred to as LCAs within this assessment. The LCAs form the basis of the landscape assessment and those found within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**. An initial description of the baseline focused on published key characteristics and a preliminary assessment of change related to construction and operation of the Project is provided in **Table 6B.4** to **Table 6B.6**.

Project Section 1: South Holland District

- 6B.3.8 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.
- 6B.3.9 The following two LCAs have been identified within the Study Area for Section 1, as shown on **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**:
- Settled Fens LCA; and
 - Peaty Fens LCA.
- 6B.3.10 **Table 6B.4** provides a description of the baseline and key characteristics of each of the local landscape units relevant to the Study Area and provides a preliminary evaluation of change and potential effects related to construction and operation of the Project.

Table 6B.4 Preliminary Assessment of LCAs in Project Section 1

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
Settled Fens LCA	The Settled Fens LCA covers a relatively large area north of Spalding, at the eastern end of the Study Area. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.7) include: • <i>‘Predominantly flat topography, dissected by main roads, rivers, drainage channels and drainage ditches’;</i> • <i>‘Medium to large fields with intensive market garden crops’;</i> • <i>‘The settlement form is predominantly nucleated, interspersed with some linear settlement’;</i> and • <i>‘Medium-large scale landscape’.</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value. Large scale open and productive landscape with localised influence of infrastructure and other development. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of a section of overhead line would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas and would be confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. This would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape and would have little influence on the existing key characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of existing settlement and development and movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape. Landform along the River Welland and trees and settlement would locally restrict the sense of change across parts of this LCA. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited, temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little influence on the identified key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant).

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		<u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation and introduction of structures into the landscape. This change would largely be limited to the footprint of the Project, although with potential for localised loss of trees along the overhead line corridor. The defined key physical characteristics of the landscape would remain largely unchanged. Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of new structures on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation and tranquillity. Although locally present, these perceptual qualities are limited within the Study Area due to the influence of settlement and infrastructure, including existing overhead lines. Settlement and trees provide an element of local containment, reducing the extent and impression of change. Overall, although the Project would introduce additional structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA would be relatively limited and would not alter the key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Peaty Fens LCA	The Peaty Fens LCA encompasses an approximately 3 km wide strip of land located between the settlement of Northgate through to South Forty Foot Drain. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.7) include:	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value. Large scale open and heavily modified landscape with limited context of

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
	• <i>'Flat topography dissected by long straight roads, rivers, drainage channels and drainage ditches';</i> • <i>'Large scale, extensive views, and a largely uninterrupted skyline';</i> • <i>'A strong linear pattern, defined by geometric arable fields of cereal and root crops';</i> and • <i>'Linear settlement and isolated farmsteads with associated shelterbelts'.</i>	infrastructure and local sense of remoteness. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of the Project would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas and would be confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. Temporary vegetation loss would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape and would have little influence on the existing key characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of existing settlement and development, movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape which reduce the strength of perceptual attributes in the baseline. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited to a small part of this LCA and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little influence on the identified key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A short section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers. The nature of the tower construction means that direct change would be limited and localised, although with potential for loss of a small number of trees along the overhead line corridor. The defined key physical characteristics of the landscape would remain largely unchanged, although with some local interruption of skylines. Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of overhead line towers on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation and tranquillity. Existing linear and scattered settlement and road network, locally influence perceptual attributes in the baseline and therefore the impression of change is reduced. Overall, although the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA would be relatively limited and would not alter the majority of the key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation.

Project Section 2: South Kesteven District

- 6B.3.11 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.
- 6B.3.12 The following five LCAs have been identified within the Study Area for Section 2, as shown on **Figure 6.5 Local Landscape Character**:
- The Fens LCA;
 - Fen Margin LCA;
 - Kesteven Uplands LCA;
 - Cottesmore Plateau LCA; and
 - Clay Woodlands LCA.
- 6B.3.13 As highlighted in the Scoping Report and confirmed within **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (Paragraph 3.2.9), Cottesmore Plateau LCA and Clay Woodlands LCA have been scoped out of the assessment due to no potential for significant effects.
- 6B.3.14 **Table 6B.5** provides a description of the baseline and key characteristics of each of the local landscape units relevant to the Study Area and provides a preliminary evaluation of change and potential effects related to construction and operation of the Project.

Table 6B.5 Preliminary Assessment of LCAs in Project Section 2

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
The Fens LCA	The Fens LCA encompasses an approximately 5.5 km wide strip of land located between the South Forty Foot Drain and the eastern edges of the settlements of Haconby and Dunsby. Published key characteristics (Ref 6B.8) include: • <i>‘Low flat terrain, level horizons and large skies’;</i> • <i>‘Large-scale open rectangular fields, divided by drainage ditches and embanked rivers’;</i> • <i>‘Sparse trees and woodland cover’;</i> and • <i>‘Little settlement apart from individual farmsteads, often with large-scale agricultural buildings’.</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value. Large scale open and heavily modified landscape with limited context of infrastructure and local sense of isolation. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of elements of the Project would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of a construction compound and haul roads, confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. Temporary vegetation loss would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape, with little influence on the existing key physical characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape which reduce the strength of perceptual attributes in the baseline. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited to a small part of this LCA and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little influence on the majority of the key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A relatively short section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers and as such would be limited and localised, with little influence on the key physical characteristics. Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of overhead line towers on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation and tranquillity. Existing scattered farms, agricultural operations and movement of traffic on the road network locally influence perceptual attributes in the baseline and therefore the impression of change is reduced. Overall, although the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA would be relatively limited and would not alter the majority of the key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Fen Margin LCA	The Fen Margin LCA encompasses an approximately 3.2 km wide strip of land located between the eastern edges of the settlements of Haconby and Dunsby, and the settlement of Stainfield. Published key characteristics (Ref 6B.8) include:	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value and recreational opportunities. Large scale relatively open and heavily

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
	• <i>'A transitional area between the wooded Kesteven Uplands and the flat open fens';</i> • <i>'Broad east-facing slope, with local variations in topography';</i> • <i>'Medium-scale rectilinear fields with some hedgerow trees and a variety of farming uses';</i> and • <i>'High proportion of settlement along the A15 and B1177 roads provides activity in the landscape'.</i>	modified landscape with localised influence of infrastructure and settlement. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of a short section of overhead line would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas and would be confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. This would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape and would have little influence on the existing key physical characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of existing settlement and development and movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape. Rising landform and Dunsby Wood to the north and the settlements of Haconby, Morton and Hanthorpe would limit the extent of indirect change within the wider LCA. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited, temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little influence on the identified key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant).

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		<u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A short section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation and introduction of overhead line towers. The nature of the tower construction means that direct change would be limited and localised, although with potential for loss of a small number of trees along the overhead line corridor. The defined key physical characteristics of the landscape would remain largely unchanged, although with potential for local influence on long distance views. Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of new structures on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation and tranquillity. Although locally present, these perceptual qualities are limited within the Study Area due to the influence of settlement and infrastructure, including the A15 and associated traffic. Settlement, trees and a series of woodland blocks provide an element of local containment, reducing the extent and impression of change. Overall, although the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA would be relatively limited and would not alter the majority of the key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Kesteven Uplands LCA	The Kesteven Uplands LCA encompasses an approximately 19 km wide strip of land located	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Largely undesignated, although including part of the Grimsthorpe RPG, and consisting of relatively common elements and

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
	between the settlement of Stainfield and The Drift. Published key characteristics (Ref 6B.8) include: • <i>‘A relatively unified, simple, medium-scale agricultural landscape, with a high proportion of historic woodland’;</i> • <i>‘Undulating landform based around the valleys of the Rivers Witham and East and West Glen’;</i> • <i>‘Picturesque villages built of local limestone, with collyweston slate roofs to the south, and pantiles to the north’;</i> • <i>High concentration of houses and parks, with areas of farmland under estate management’;</i> • <i>‘A dispersed, nucleated settlement pattern, mostly following the river valleys’;</i> • <i>‘Enclosed mostly by hedgerows, with hedgerow trees’;</i> and • <i>‘Modern human influences include airfields and the A1, Great North Road’.</i>	characteristics and reasonable recreational opportunities. Medium to large scale undulating landscape with notable localised influence from infrastructure, including the A1 and overhead lines. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of approximately 20 km of overhead line and the WMEL-A Substation would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of compounds, haul roads and laydown areas and would be confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. This would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape and would have little influence on the existing key physical characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of existing settlement and development, movement of traffic on the road network, including on the A1 and A151, trains along the East Coast Main Line, and agricultural operations across the landscape. The undulating nature of the topography and presence of a series of woodland blocks would locally limit the extent and impression of change. Overall, change is likely to be relatively localised within and in close proximity to the draft Order Limits and would be temporary and of a short duration and with little influence on the identified key characteristics, indicating an overall Low magnitude of effect. However, there is potential for more notable direct and indirect change within, and in the immediate vicinity of, the WMEL-A Substation site.

Significance of effect (Construction):

Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate an overall low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be **Minor Adverse** (not significant). There is potential for a locally greater level of effect in relation to the proposed WMEL-A Substation site and this will be considered in more detail within the ES.

Magnitude of effect (Operation):

The proposed WMEL-A Substation and an approximate 20 km section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change.

Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation, alteration of landform and introduction of structures, fencing and lighting, hard standing and an access road. This change would largely be limited to the footprint of the Project, although with potential for localised loss of trees along the overhead line corridor. The defined key physical characteristics of the landscape would remain largely unchanged.

Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of new structures and/or lighting on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation, tranquillity and dark skies. Although locally present, these perceptual qualities are limited within the Study Area due to the influence of settlement, infrastructure, including existing overhead lines, and road and rail traffic. Landform, trees and a series of woodland blocks provide an element of local containment, reducing the extent and impression of change.

Overall, although the Project would introduce additional structures into part of the landscape, locally adding to the influence of electrical infrastructure, change is likely to be relatively localised and/or limited and would not notably alter the overall impression of the landscape and key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be **Low**. However, there is potential for more notable

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		direct and indirect change within and in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-A Substation site. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate an overall low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation. There is potential for a locally greater level of effect on a small part of the LCA in relation to the proposed WMEL-A Substation and this will be considered in more detail within the ES.

Project Section 3: Melton Borough

- 6B.3.15 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.
- 6B.3.16 The following 14 LCAs have been identified within the Study Area for Section 3, as shown on **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.
- 6B.3.17 The Vale of Belvoir LCA and Mixed Farmland LCA are outside the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility and therefore would not be affected by the Project and as such have not been considered further in this assessment. This is in line with the approach agreed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (Paragraph 3.2.13).
- 6B.3.18 Only a very small part of the Limestone Edge LCA is located within the Study Area, with the majority of the LCA being located beyond 3 km from the draft Order Limits. It is therefore considered that there is no potential for significant effects on the character this LCA and as such it has not been considered further in this assessment.
- 6B.3.19 Melton LCA covers the urban area of Melton Mowbray and is largely characterised by built development and infrastructure and as such the Project would have no potential to result in significant effects. On this basis, the Melton LCA has not been considered further in the assessment, as agreed in **Appendix 5B Scoping Opinion** (Paragraph 3.2.10).
- 6B.3.20 **Table 6B.6** provides a description of the baseline and key characteristics of each of the local landscape units relevant to the Study Area and provides a preliminary evaluation of change and potential effects related to construction and operation of the Project.

Table 6B.6 Preliminary Assessment of LCAs in Project Section 3

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
Wolds Scarp LCA	The Wolds Scarp LCA covers a linear steeply sloping band to the east of Old Dalby at the north west extent of the Study Area. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘A pronounced locally dramatic northwest facing escarpment landscape’;</i> • <i>‘A distinct pattern of traditional small scale regular & irregular shaped pastures’;</i> and • <i>‘woodland and historic features.’</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting of a locally distinct escarpment and landscape pattern and strong sense of place. Small to medium scale landscape with distinct landform and localised influence from infrastructure and development, including overhead lines. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> The Project and associated construction would be located outside of this LCA and as such potential change would be indirect, with no influence on physical attributes. Intervening topography and woodland would screen the majority of construction activity such that any change on this LCA would be limited and very localised, indicating a Very Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> The Project would be located outside of this LCA and as such potential change would be indirect with no alteration of physical attributes. Intervening topography and woodland would screen the Project from the majority of the LCA such that there would be very little or no impression of change, indicating a Very Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Wolds Top LCA	The Wolds Top LCA is a narrow linear band along the top of the scarp slopes towards the north west extent of the Study Area to the north of and between Wartnaby and Ab Kettleby. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘An even elevated wold top landscape’;</i> • <i>‘medium to large scale predominantly arable fields’;</i> and • <i>‘homogenous and open with scattered ash trees but generally lacking distinctive qualities.’</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics with few features of value. Medium to large scale flat to undulating landscape with local influence from infrastructure including the A606 and an overhead line. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of approximately 400 m of overhead line, and a short section of the access to the WMEL-B Substation would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation associated with introduction of haul roads, laydown area and access to the WMEL-B Substation site which would be confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. Temporary loss of vegetation would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape. There would be little or no change to the identified key physical characteristics of the LCA. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of existing settlement and development, movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape. Intervening woodland would locally limit the extent and impression of change. Overall, change is likely to be relatively localised and/or limited and would be temporary and of a short duration and with little influence on the identified key characteristics, indicating an overall Low magnitude

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		of effect. However, there is potential for more notable indirect change within small parts of this landscape where in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation site. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant). There is potential for a locally greater level of effect in relation to the proposed WMEL-B Substation site and this will be considered in more detail within the ES. <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A short section of the WMEL-B Substation access road and an approximately 400 m section of overhead line and associated tower would be located within the LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation, alteration of landform and introduction of a short section of access road and an overhead line tower. This change would be limited and localised to the footprint of the Project, although with potential for loss of a small number of trees along the overhead line corridor. The defined key physical characteristics would be largely unaltered. Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of new structures and/or lighting on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation, tranquillity and dark skies. Although locally present, these perceptual qualities are often limited within the Study Area due to the influence of settlement, traffic on the road network, agricultural operations and an existing overhead line. Trees and woodland blocks provide an element of local containment, reducing the extent and impression of change.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Overall, although the Project would introduce additional structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA would be relatively limited and would not alter the key characteristics or overall impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Low. However, there is potential for more notable indirect change within the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation site. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation. There is potential for a locally greater level of effect in relation to the proposed WMEL-B Substation site and this will be considered in more detail within the ES.
Ridge and Valley LCA	The Ridge and Valley LCA covers three areas of the west of the Study Area, to the north and west of Melton. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘broadly homogenous gently rolling ridge & valley landscape’;</i> • <i>‘contrasting large scale arable fields along ridgelines and smaller scale pastures in the valleys’;</i> and • <i>‘managed hedges and scattered mostly ash trees.’</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value. Variable medium and large scale undulating landscape with local influence from infrastructure including roads (A606 and A607), overhead lines and wind turbines. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of approximately 7.5 km of overhead line would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would result from the temporary loss of vegetation and the introduction of construction compounds, laydown area, and haul roads, confined to specific parts of the draft Order Limits within one part of this LCA. Temporary vegetation loss would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape and would have limited influence on the existing key characteristics.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape. The undulating nature of the landform in combination with trees, woodlands and hedgerows would locally limit the apparent extent and impression of change on perceptual attributes and key characteristics. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited, temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little influence on the identified key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> An approximately 7.5 km section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. 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. 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

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		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 at the west and north of the Study Area. 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. A lower level of change and lesser effects are likely to be experienced in the other two areas of this LCA within the Study Area. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a medium magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Moderate Adverse (significant) during operation.
Village Pastures LCA	The Village Pastures LCA covers three related areas forming a broad band to the north of Melton and with a fourth area to the northeast of Old Dalby at the northwest extent of the Study Area. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • ‘A distinctive traditional pastoral landscape’; and • ‘attractive nucleated villages with a strong pattern of small fields often with historic features, enclosed by abundant hedgerow trees’.	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value and reasonable recreational opportunities. Variable, small to medium scale undulating landscape with local influence from infrastructure including the A606 and A607, overhead lines and settlement. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of approximately 3 km of overhead line and the WMEL-B Substation and removal of approximately 1.5 km of existing overhead line would occur within the LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of a compound, haul roads, laydown areas and associated construction facilities, which would be confined to the draft Order Limits in one part of this LCA. The greatest level of change would occur within the WMEL-B Substation site. Temporary loss of vegetation would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape and would have little influence on the existing key characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent, including from two additional areas of the LCA and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. The greatest sense of change would be within the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation site where there would be more intensive construction activity. Potential change would be experienced in the context of existing settlement and development, movement of traffic on the road network, and occasional trains along the Old Dalby Test Track, and agricultural operations across the landscape. The presence of woodland, trees and hedgerows would locally limit the extent and impression of change. Overall, change is likely to be relatively localised and focused within and in close proximity to the draft Order Limits, with more limited change in more distant areas of the LCA. Change would also be temporary in nature and of short duration, and the overall magnitude of effect on the LCA as a whole is anticipated to be Low. However, there is potential for more notable direct and indirect change within and in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate an overall low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		(not significant). There is potential for a locally greater level of effect in relation to the proposed WMEL-B Substation site and this will be considered in more detail within the ES. <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> The proposed WMEL-B Substation and an approximate 3 km section of overhead line would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. An approximate 1.5 km of existing overhead line would also be removed from this LCA. Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation, alteration of landform, introduction of structures, fencing and lighting, hard standing and an access road and removal of four existing overhead line towers. This change would largely be limited to the footprint of the Project, although with localised loss of vegetation along the new overhead line corridor. Direct change would occur in a relatively small part of one of the areas of this LCA found within the Study Area, with no direct change to the remaining three areas. Indirect change would occur over a greater area and largely relate to influence of the visibility of new structures and/or lighting on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of tranquillity and dark skies. Although locally present, these perceptual qualities are often limited within the Study Area due to the influence of settlement, infrastructure, including existing overhead lines, and road and rail traffic. Landform, woodland blocks and hedgerows provide an element of local containment, reducing the extent and impression of change. The greatest sense of change would be within the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation site with more limited change in much of the wider extent of the LCA. Overall, although the Project would introduce additional structures into part of the landscape, locally adding to the influence of electrical infrastructure, change is likely to be relatively localised and/or limited and largely focused in one part of the LCA. The Project would not

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		notably alter the overall impression of the landscape or associated key characteristics and as such the magnitude of effect on the LCA as a whole is anticipated to be Low. However, there is potential for more notable direct and indirect change within and in the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation site. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation. There is potential for a locally greater level of effect on a small part of the LCA in relation to the proposed WMEL-B Substation and this will be considered in more detail within the ES.
Wreake Valley LCA	The Wreake Valley LCA is located at the south west extent of the Study Area, covering a small area east from Asfordby. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘A gentle lowland river valley landscape with contrasting sinuous river course’;</i> • <i>‘Regular pattern of small to medium scale pastoral fields with distinct wetland and water areas from former gravel pits’;</i> and • <i>‘small-nucleated villages situated along the rising slopes of the valley edge.’</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting of a range of common place and more distinct elements and locally valued features. Small to medium scale variable landscape with strong influence from development. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Low. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of the Project would occur outside of this LCA and as such change would be indirect, with no influence on physical characteristics. Construction would occur at a distance of approximately 1.8 km at the nearest point and would be predominantly screened by intervening topography and vegetation such that there would be very little or no sense of change and a Very Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> The Project would be located outside of this LCA and as such potential change would be indirect with no change to physical attributes. Intervening topography would screen the Project from the majority of the LCA such that there would be very little or no impression of change, indicating a Very Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Eye Valley LCA	The Eye Valley LCA is a narrow and predominantly linear landscape along the River Eye to the north east of Stapleford and Saxby towards the west of the Study Area. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • ‘A mixed rather discordant river valley landscape’; • ‘Traditional small scale pastoral land to the north’; • ‘Large scale intensive open arable land to south, which suppresses the natural river valley landscape’; and • ‘Sparse hedgerows and tree clumps.’	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics with some recreational opportunities. Medium to large scale relatively open landscape, with some limited local influence from infrastructure. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of a very short section (less than 500 m) of the overhead line would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would result from the temporary loss of vegetation and the introduction of short section of haul road, confined to a very limited extent within the draft Order Limits. Temporary vegetation loss would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape, with little influence on the existing key characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a slightly greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		and lighting associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape and would be limited by trees and woodland and local landform. Overall, change is likely to be limited to a very small part of the LCA and would be temporary in nature and of short duration and with little influence on the defined key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A very short section of overhead line (less than 500 m) would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation and the introduction of an overhead line tower. The nature of the tower construction means that direct change would be limited and localised although may also include loss of a small number of trees along the overhead line corridor. There would be little or no change to the defined key physical characteristics of this LCA. Indirect change would occur over a slightly greater extent and largely relate to the influence of the visibility of the overhead line towers on the perceptual aspects, such as sense of isolation or tranquillity. While present locally, these attributes are somewhat influenced by existing settlement and traffic on the road network and other structures in the landscape and therefore the impression of change is reduced. Topography, trees and woodland provide local containment and would limit the extent and nature of change in parts of this LCA.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Overall, although the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the identified key characteristics and overall impression of the LCA would be limited, indicating a Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Farmland Patchwork LCA	The Farmland Patchwork LCA covers three relatively small areas of undulating farmland to the east of Melton, towards the west of the Study Area. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • ‘A gently rolling lowland mixed farmland landscape’; and • ‘A distinct patchwork of small to medium scale regular shaped pastoral and arable fields with blocks of game cover and small woodlands’.	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of local value. Medium to large scale relatively open landscape, with some local influence from infrastructure. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> The Project and associated construction would be located outside of this LCA and as such potential change would be indirect, with no influence on physical attributes. Potential indirect change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape which reduce the strength of perceptual attributes in the baseline. A combination of topography and trees and woodland blocks would limit visibility of construction activity from much of this LCA, further limiting the sense of change. Overall, change would be relatively limited and localised, temporary in nature and of a short duration and would have very little or no influence on the identified key characteristics such that the magnitude of effect would be Very Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u>

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Considering factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effects of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> The Project would be located outside of this LCA and as such potential change would be indirect, with no influence on physical attributes or key characteristics. Indirect change would relate to influence of visibility of overhead line towers on perceptual attributes of the landscape. Potential change would largely be focused towards the northern fringes of the LCA where in close proximity to the Project, 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, potential change would be indirect, limited and localised with little or no influence on the perceptual attributes and key characteristics of the LCA, indicating a Very Low magnitude of effect. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Open Arable LCA	The Open Arable LCA covers two relatively large areas to the east and west of the upper Eye Valley towards the western part of the Study Area. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘Intensively farmed, large scale open landscape’;</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting largely of common elements and characteristics although containing some features of value. Large scale open undulating and productive landscape with relatively limited context of infrastructure. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Medium. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u>

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
	• <i>'hedge and woodland removal has created a large-scale open rather homogenous arable landscape'; and</i> • <i>'the pattern of a more ancient landscape is evident beneath the surface, in the lines of parish boundaries, green lanes and highways.'</i>	Construction of approximately 10 km of overhead line would occur within this LCA and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of a construction compound, haul roads and laydown areas, confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. Temporary vegetation loss would be experienced in the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent across the productive agricultural landscape, with little influence on the existing key characteristics. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the road network and agricultural operations across the landscape. The undulating topography and occasional woodland blocks provide local containment and reduce the extent and nature of change locally. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited to a small part of this LCA and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little influence on the key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A section of overhead line, approximately 10 km in length, would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change. Direct change would result from the permanent loss of vegetation and the introduction of overhead line towers. The nature of the tower

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		construction means that direct change would be limited and localised, although with potential for 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. Indirect change would occur over a wider area and would largely relate to the influence of the visibility of overhead line towers on the perceptual aspects of the landscape, such as the sense of isolation and tranquillity. Existing scattered farms, agricultural operations and movement of traffic on the road network locally influence perceptual attributes in the baseline and therefore the sense of change is reduced. Overall, although the Project would introduce new structures and locally alter aspects of the landscape, change on the wider LCA would be relatively limited and would not alter the majority of the key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Low. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a medium sensitivity with those which indicate a low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on the LCA is anticipated to be Minor Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Asfordby Quarry LCA	The Asfordby Quarry LCA is located to the west of Melton and is centred on the former Holwell Ironworks and more recent industrial and business estate. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘A disturbed, excavated, large scale, former colliery landscape now in industrial use.’</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape which has been widely modified by a range of historic and current land use and development with few features of value. Variable landscape much of which is heavily modified by past industrial use and with two solar farms. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Low. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u>

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Construction of a very short section (approximately 400 m) of overhead line would occur within this LCA, and as such change would be both direct and indirect. Direct change would be the result of temporary loss of vegetation and introduction of haul roads confined to those parts of the draft Order Limits within the construction footprint. Temporary vegetation loss would be experienced within the context of seasonal variation in vegetation type and extent associated with agricultural operations and in the context of wider industrial and energy development which largely define this LCA. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a slightly greater extent and related to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction. Potential change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the local road network and agricultural operations across the landscape. Much of this LCA is defined by past and current industrial and energy land use, limiting the strength of perceptual aspects. Overall, change is likely to be limited to a small part of the LCA and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration and with little or no influence on the identified key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Very Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> A very short section of overhead line, approximately 400 m in length, would be located within this LCA, resulting in both direct and indirect change.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Direct change would be the result of permanent loss of vegetation and introduction of an overhead line tower and as such would be limited and localised, with no influence on the key characteristics. Indirect change would occur over a slightly wider area and would largely relate to the influence of the visibility of the overhead line towers on the perceptual aspects of the landscape. The extent and nature of potential change would be limited by topography and woodland, and the Project would be experienced in the context of existing industrial and energy development both within this LCA and the adjacent landscape. Overall, although the Project would introduce additional structures into a small part of the fringe of this landscape, the resulting change is likely to be limited and localised and would not alter the overall impression of the landscape or its key characteristics. The magnitude of effect is therefore anticipated to be Very Low. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant) during operation.
Melton Farmland Fringe LCA	The Melton Farmland Fringe LCA forms a band around the urban area of Melton towards the west of the Study Area and is a transitional landscape containing a range of infrastructure, development and recent urban expansion. Published characteristics (Ref 6B.9) include: • <i>‘A mixed urban fringe ridge and valley and valley floor landscape’;</i> • <i>‘Rolling landscape of fields and hedges’;</i> • <i>‘Mixed pasture and arable land’;</i>	<u>Sensitivity:</u> Undesignated landscape consisting of a range of elements and characteristics typical of the urban fringe although with some valued features. Variable landscape acting as a transition between urban and more rural landscapes, with a notable influence from a range of infrastructure and development and urban expansion. Landscape sensitivity is considered to be Low. <u>Magnitude of effect (Construction):</u> Construction of a minor element of the Project may occur within this LCA and as such there is potential for both direct and indirect change.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
	• <i>'Clear distinction between urban edge and countryside';</i> • <i>'Housing estates remain unscreened';</i> and • <i>'Some industrial and other land uses.'</i>	Potential direct change would be associated with very localised and limited works to an existing low voltage overhead line to facilitate the Project, with no discernible change to the physical characteristics of the landscape. Indirect change is likely to be experienced over a greater extent and relate to temporary structures and to movement, activity and lights associated with construction in the adjacent landscape. Potential change would be experienced in the context of movement of traffic on the road network, agricultural operations and a range of other development and activity. Overall, change is likely to be relatively limited and focused towards the fringes of this LCA and would be temporary in nature and of a short duration and with very little or no influence on the identified key characteristics or impression of the landscape such that the magnitude of effect of construction is anticipated to be Very Low. <u>Significance of effect (Construction):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of construction on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant). <u>Magnitude of effect (Operation):</u> The Project would be located outside of this LCA and as such potential change would be indirect, with no change to physical attributes or characteristics. Indirect change would largely relate to influence of the visibility of overhead line towers in the adjacent landscape on perceptual attributes of this LCA. The existing character is influenced by a range of development and infrastructure and therefore exhibits limited sense of tranquillity or naturalness. Indirect change would be focused on the northern fringes of this LCA, which little or no change to the remaining extent.

Receptor	Description of Baseline	Preliminary Evaluation of Potential Change
		Overall, while there would be localised change on aspects of the landscape, this would be very limited and would not alter the overall impression of the character or the identified key characteristics of this landscape. The magnitude of effect is anticipated to be Very Low. <u>Significance of effect (Operation):</u> Considering the factors which contribute to a low sensitivity with those which indicate a very low magnitude, the significance of effect of the Project on this LCA is anticipated to be Negligible Adverse (not significant) during operation.

Summary of Effects on National Character Areas

- 6B.3.21 The following paragraphs provide a summary of potential effects on landscape character within the three NCAs found within the Study Area, with reference to preliminary assessment of the underlying local landscape units set out above.

NCA 46: The Fens

- 6B.3.22 This NCA covers an extensive area from Cambridge in the south towards Lincoln in the north and is primarily characterised by a flat and low-lying topography and productive arable land use.
- 6B.3.23 Within the Study Area this NCA is predominantly aligned to the Settled Fens LCA, Peaty Fens LCA and The Fens LCA within Section 1 and the eastern part of Section 2 of the Project. The preliminary assessment of these landscape units has identified that although there is likely to be localised direct and indirect change to aspects of landscape character, both construction and operation of the Project would result in **Minor Adverse** (not significant) effects.
- 6B.3.24 At the scale of the NCA, perception of change resulting from the Project would be limited to a very small extent, with the majority of the area unaffected. The Project would represent an additional feature within a localised part of the extensive landscape, within which overhead lines and electrical infrastructure are existing features. The overall impression of the NCA and its key characteristics would remain unchanged.

NCA 75: Kesteven Uplands

- 6B.3.25 This NCA covers a large area from Stamford and Peterborough in the south to Grantham in the north and is primarily characterised by an undulating large-scale predominantly agricultural landscape.
- 6B.3.26 Within the Study Area this NCA is largely aligned to the Fen Margin LCA and Kesteven Uplands LCA within Section 2 of the Project. The preliminary assessment of these landscape units has identified that although there is likely to be localised direct and indirect change to aspects of landscape character the overall significance of effects would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) both from construction and operation of the Project. However, there is potential for locally increased effects within the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-A Substation which will be subject to more detailed consideration within the ES.
- 6B.3.27 Considering the wider extent of the NCA, perception of change resulting from the Project would be limited to a very small extent, cutting across rather than running along its length and with the majority of the area unaffected. The Project would represent an additional feature within a localised part of the extensive landscape, within which overhead lines and other linear infrastructure such as the A1 and East Coast Main Line are existing features. The overall impression of the NCA and its key characteristics would remain unchanged.

NCA 74: Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Wolds

- 6B.3.28 This NCA covers a large area from Rutland Water in the south east to Loughborough and south of Nottingham in the west and north west. This NCA is characterised by undulating agricultural land with a variable sense of scale, openness and enclosure, influenced by topography, tree cover and field pattern which becomes more intricate towards the west.

- 6B.3.29 Within the Study Area the underlying local character units to this NCA include those listed in Paragraph 6B.3.16 and described in **Table 6B.6**. The preliminary assessment has identified that although there is likely to be localised direct and indirect change to aspects of landscape character for the Wolds Top LCA, Village Pastures LCA, Eye Valley LCA, and Open Arable LCA, the overall significance of effects would be **Minor Adverse** (not significant) both from construction and operation of the Project. Increased change and a **Moderate Adverse** (significant) effect is anticipated for the Ridge and Valley LCA during the operation phase. There is also potential for locally increased effects within the immediate vicinity of the WMEL-B Substation which will be subject to more detailed consideration within the ES. For the remaining LCAs included in the preliminary assessment (Wolds Scarp, Wreak Valley, Farmland Patchwork, Asfordby Quarry and Melton Farmland Fringe), very limited or no discernible change and **Negligible Adverse** (not significant) effects are identified for construction and operation of the Project.
- 6B.3.30 The perception of change resulting from the Project would be limited to a small part of the wider extent of the NCA, with the majority of the area unaffected. The Project would represent an additional feature within a localised part of the extensive and variable landscape, within which overhead lines and other linear infrastructure, including major roads and railway lines and a range of other development, are existing features. The overall impression of the NCA and its key characteristics would remain unchanged.

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