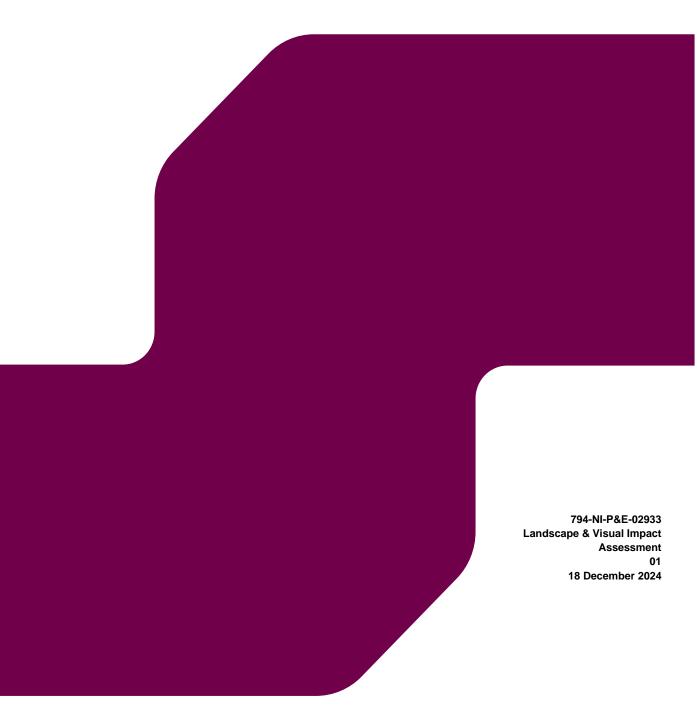


LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Shaneragh Battery Energy Storage Facility



rpsgroup.com

REPORT

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1 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

1.1 Introduction

RPS was commissioned by RES to undertake a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the installation and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with associated infrastructure on lands located on lands approximately 475m west of 17 Skreen Road, Omagh, BT78 1SR, henceforth referred to as the 'Proposed Development'.

The purpose of this LVIA is to identify and determine the effects on landscape character, landscape features, visual receptors and visual amenity because of the works associated with the construction of the Proposed Development.

This assessment has been prepared and reviewed by chartered landscape architects at RPS.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 General Approach

The methodology and approach to the assessment contained within this chapter has been carried out in accordance with best practice guidance described in the following documents;

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (The Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment, 2013) (GLVIA3);
- Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (The Landscape Institute, 2019).

GLVIA3 recommends that an LVIA 'concentrates on principles and process' and 'does not provide a detailed or formulaic 'recipe" to assess effects, it being the 'responsibility of the professional to ensure that the approach and methodology adopted are appropriate to the task in hand' (preface to the third edition).

The effects on the landscape resources and visual receptors (people) have been assessed by considering the proposed change in the baseline conditions (the impact of the development) against the type of landscape resource or visual receptor (including the importance and sensitivity of that resource or receptor).

These factors are determined through a combination of quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) assessment using professional judgement.

The assessment methodology is summarised in **Figure 1-1** below.

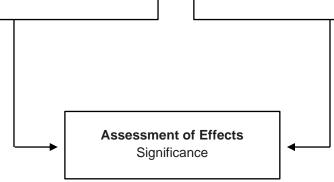
Figure 1-1: Assessment Methodology Summary

Landscape Resources/Visual Receptors

- Description of existing character and / or views
- Importance/value
- Sensitivity/susceptibility to proposed change

Landscape/Visual Change (Impacts)

- Magnitude scale of impact
- Nature
- Duration
- Reversibility



The LVIA considers the potential effects of a project upon:

- Individual landscape features and elements;
- Landscape character; and
- Visual amenity and the people who view the landscape.

1.2.2 Identification of Baseline Conditions

Baseline conditions have been identified and assessed through analysis of;

- Up to date digital copies of Ordnance Survey Discovery Series raster and OS vector maps;
- Aerial photography;
- Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA);
- Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA);
- Local Development Plan (Fermanagh and Omagh Council);
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesne; and
- Drawings of the Proposed Development.

Site visits were undertaken to assess the existing environment, to establish the existing visual resource and to identify sensitive receptors, i.e. residential properties, scenic viewpoints. Site visits were also used to consider the potential effects on landscape character and visual impacts arising because of the Proposed Development.

Viewpoints identified in Appendix A; Figure 2.

1.2.3 Identifying Effects

Assessing the significance of an effect is a key component of the LVIA and is an evidence-based process combining professional judgement on the nature of a landscape or visual receptor's sensitivity, their susceptibility or ability to accommodate change and the value attached to the receptor. It is important to note that judgements in this LVIA are impartial and based on professional experience and opinion informed by best practice guidance.

The effects of a proposed development are considered to be of variable duration and are assessed as being of either short-term, medium-term or long-term duration, and permanent or reversible.

For the purposes of this LVIA assessment, duration is identified as being; temporary (less than 1 year), short term (1 to 7 years), medium term (7 to 15 years), long term (15 - 60 years) and permanent (effects lasting over 60 years).

Effects are considered to be long-term during the operational phase of the development, whilst operations and infrastructure works apparent during the construction and initial operating period are considered to be temporary, short-term effects.

The reversibility of an effect is also variable. The effects on the landscape and visual resource that occurs during the construction period such as the use of construction machinery are considered to be reversible.

Where effects arise during the construction period, these are most likely to be as a result of: movement of construction machinery within the landscape; construction of new structures and construction activities within the site boundary all of which are considered to be short term in duration.

To avoid repetition, the duration and reversibility of effects are not reiterated throughout the assessment.

1.2.4 Study Area

Using terrain-modelling techniques combined with the Proposed Development specification a map was created which identified areas from which the Proposed Development may theoretically be visible (refer to Appendix A: Figure 1). This Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is the area within which views of the Proposed

Development can theoretically be obtained, determined by the topography of the area and is representative of a worst-case scenario in line with current guidance.

The ZTV formed the basis for the initial study area associated with the Proposed Development for both landscape and visual impact assessment. It is noted that the ZTV does not consider local features such as; roadside hedgerows, field boundary hedgerows, woodland planting, coniferous forestry or buildings. In practise the actual visibility of the Proposed Development is considerably less in extent than the theoretical one, since individual elements of the proposal are difficult to focus on at long distances and localised changes in topography, hedges, trees and woodland tend to restrict views.

Following site survey and assessment the initial study area, based on the ZTV, was refined by assessing the elements of the Proposed Development, the footprint of the Proposed Development, the receiving landscape and assessing the perceptibility of the elements of the Proposed Development particularly when viewed against surrounding topographical changes and vegetation cover.

1.2.5 Assessment Criteria

The objective of the assessment process is to identify and evaluate the predicted significant effects arising from a proposed development. Significance is a function of the:

- Sensitivity of the affected landscape or visual receptors, determined through consideration of the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the specific proposals and the value attached to the receptor; and
- Secondly its Scale or Magnitude, derived from a consideration of the size/ scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the proposed development.

These definitions recognise that landscapes vary in their capacity to accommodate different forms of development according to the nature of the receiving landscape and the type of change being proposed.

As with any new development, it is acknowledged that, the introduction of a proposed development into the existing landscape or visual context could cause either a deterioration, improvement or neutral impact on the existing landscape or visual resource.

1.2.6 Landscape Impact Assessment

The LVIA firstly assesses how a proposed development would impact directly on any landscape features and resources. This category of effect relates to specific landscape elements and features (e.g. woods, trees, walls, hedgerows, watercourses) that are components of the landscape that may be physically affected by the proposed development, such as the removal or addition of trees and alteration to ground cover.

The LVIA then considers impacts on landscape character at two levels. Firstly, consideration is given to how the landscape character is affected by the removal or alteration of existing features and the introduction of new features. This is considered to be a direct impact on landscape character.

Secondly, the indirect impacts of a proposed development on the wider landscape are considered. The assessment of impacts on the wider landscape is discussed using the surrounding character areas identified in the relevant landscape character assessments. It is acknowledged there is an overlap between perception of change to landscape character and visual amenity, but it should be remembered that landscape character in its own right is generally derived from the combination and pattern of landscape elements within the view.

The significance of effects on landscape features and character is determined by considering both the sensitivity of the feature or landscape character and the magnitude of impact.

Consideration of the sensitivity of the landscape resource against the magnitude of impact caused by the proposed development is fundamental to landscape and visual assessment and these two criteria are defined in more detail below.

1.2.7 Landscape Sensitivity

The determination of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor is based upon an evaluation of the elements or characteristics of the landscape likely to be affected. The evaluation reflects such factors as its quality, value, contribution to landscape character and the degree to which the particular element or characteristic can be replaced or substituted.

GLVIA 3 at paragraph 5.39 states that 'landscape receptors need to be assessed firstly in terms of their sensitivity, combining judgments of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape.

Susceptibility is defined by GLVIA 3 at paragraph 5.40 as 'the ability of the landscape receptor (whether it be the overall character or quality/ condition of a particular landscape type or area, or an individual element and/ or feature, or a particular aesthetic and perceptual aspect) to accommodate the proposed development without due consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies'.

The value of a landscape receptor is determined with reference to the presence of relevant landscape designations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and their level of importance. For this assessment, landscape value is categorised as:

- Very High: Areas of landscape acknowledged through designation such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or other landscape based sensitive areas. These are of landscape significance within the wider region or nationally;
- High: Areas that have a very strong positive character with valued and consistent distinctive features that gives the landscape unity, richness and harmony. These are of landscape significance within the district;
- Medium: Areas that exhibit positive character, but which may have evidence of alteration/degradation or erosion of features resulting in a less distinctive landscape. These may be of some local landscape significance with some positive recognisable structure; and
- Low: Areas that are generally negative in character, degraded and in poor condition. No distinctive positive characteristics and with little or no structure. Scope for positive enhancement.

As previously discussed, landscape sensitivity is influenced by several factors including but not limited to susceptibility to change, value and condition. To assist with bringing these factors together judgements regarding susceptibility and value have been used which define the sensitivity of the landscape resource as being either, negligible, low, medium, high or very high. **Table 1** defines the criteria that have guided the judgement as to the overall sensitivity of the Landscape Resource.

Assessments of susceptibility and value of a particular landscape resource may be different and professional judgement will always be used to conclude on the judgement of sensitivity. For example, value may be high, and susceptibility may be low, and a professional judgement will be made to determine whether sensitivity is high, low or in between, supported by narrative explanation.

Table 1: Landscape Sensitivity

Definition	Sensitivity	
Landscape resource susceptibility	Landscape resource value	
Exceptional landscape quality, no or limited potential for substitution. Key elements / features well known to the wider public. Little or no tolerance to change	Nationally / internationally designated/valued landscape, or key elements or features of national/ internationally designated landscapes. Little or no tolerance to change.	Very High
Strong/ distinctive landscape character; absence of landscape detractors.	Regionally/ nationally designated/ valued countryside and landscape features.	High
Low tolerance to change.	Low tolerance to change.	
Some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors.	Locally' regionally designated/ valued countryside and landscape features.	Medium
Medium tolerance to change.	Medium tolerance to change.	
Absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors.	Undesignated countryside and landscape features.	Low
High tolerance to change	High tolerance to change	
Absence of positive landscape characteristics. Significant presence of landscape detractors.	Undesignated countryside and landscape features.	Negligible
High tolerance to change	High tolerance to change	

1.2.8 Magnitude of Landscape Effect

The effect on landscape receptors and the overall judgement of the magnitude of landscape effect is based on combining judgements on '*size or scale, the geographic extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility*' (GLVIA3, paragraph 5.48),

Direct resource changes on the landscape character in the study area are brought about by the introduction of a new development and its impact on the key landscape characteristics. The changes caused to landscape character because of the Proposed Scheme are evaluated in terms of their size or scale, geographical extent and duration and reversibility. Judgements regarding the magnitude of landscape impact are indicated in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Magnitude of Landscape Impact

Definition	Magnitude of Impact
Total loss or addition or/ very substantial loss or addition of key elements / features / patterns of the baseline, i.e., pre-development landscape and/ or introduction of dominant, uncharacteristic elements with the attributes of the receiving landscape	Large
Partial loss or addition of or moderate alteration to one or more key elements / features / patterns of the baseline, i.e., pre-development landscape and / or introduction of elements that may be prominent but may not necessarily be substantially uncharacteristic with the attributes of the receiving landscape.	Medium
Minor loss or addition of or alteration to one or more key elements / features / patterns of the baseline, i.e., pre-development landscape and or introduction of elements that may not be uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape.	Small
Very minor loss or addition of or alteration to one or more key elements / features / patterns of the baseline, i.e., pre-development landscape and/or introduction of elements that are not uncharacteristic with the surrounding landscape approximating to a 'no-change' situation.	Negligible
No loss, alteration or addition to the receiving landscape resource	No change

1.2.9 Visual Impact Assessment

As outlined in GLVIA 3 (Paragraph 6.1) 'An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity'. The assessment of effects on views is an assessment of how the introduction of a proposed development will affect views within the study area. The Assessment of visual effects therefore needs to consider:

- Direct impacts of a proposed development upon views of the landscape through intrusion or obstruction;
- The reaction of viewers who may be affected, e. g. residents, walkers, road users; and
- The overall impact on visual amenity.

Viewpoints have been selected to meet the following criteria:

- A balance of viewpoints from where main directions of view are towards the Proposed Development;
- A range of views of the proposed development covering the extent of the study area. A proportion representing areas known to be available to the community where people may frequently congregate; and
- Locations of interest e.g. settlements.

1.2.10 Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

For visual receptors, judgements of susceptibility and value are closely interlinked. For example, the most valued views are likely to be those which people go and visit because of the available view. The value attributed to visual receptors also relates to the value of the view – for example a National Trail is nationally valued for its access, not necessarily for its views.

Paragraph 6.32 of the GLVIA refers to the susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and states that susceptibility is mainly a function of "the occupation or activity of different people experiencing the view at particular locations" and "the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations."

Other factors affecting visual sensitivity include:

- The location and context of the viewpoint;
- The expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor; and
- The importance of the view.

Judgements on the overall visual sensitivity are provided in **Table 3** below and the overall sensitivity of the visual resource is based on combining judgements on the sensitivity of the human receptor (for example resident, commuter, tourist, walker, recreationist or worker, and the numbers of viewers affected) and judgements on the visual resource value (for example views experienced from residential properties, workplace, leisure venue, local beauty spot, scenic viewpoint, commuter route, tourist route or walkers' route).

Table 3: Visual Resource Sensitivity

Definition	Sensitivity	
Visual resource Susceptibility	Visual resource value	
Views of remarkable scenic quality, of and within internationally designated landscapes or key features or elements of nationally designated landscapes that are well known to the wider public. Little or no tolerance to change.	Observers, drawn to a particular view, including those who have travelled to experience the views. Little or no tolerance to change	Very High
Views from residential property. Public rights of way, National Trails, Long distance walking routes and nationally designated countryside/ landscape features with public access. Low tolerance to change.	Observers enjoying the countryside from their homes or pursuing quiet outdoor recreation are more sensitive to visual change. Little tolerance to change	High
Views from local roads and routes crossing designated countryside / landscape features and 'access land' as well as promoted paths.	Observers enjoying the countryside from vehicles on quiet/ promoted routes are moderately sensitive to visual change.	Medium
Medium Tolerance to change.	Medium tolerance to change	
Views from workplaces, main roads and undesignated countryside / landscape features.	Observers in vehicles or people involved in frequent or infrequent repeated activities are less sensitive to visual change.	Low
High tolerance to change.	High tolerance to change	
Views from within and of undesignated landscapes with significant presence of landscape detractors.	Observers in vehicles or people involved in frequent or frequently repeated activities are less sensitive to visual change.	Negligible
High tolerance to change.	High tolerance to change	

1.2.11 Magnitude of Visual Effects

The magnitude of impact on the visual resource results from the scale of change in the view, with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view, and changes in the view composition. Important factors to be considered include; the proportion of the view occupied by a proposed development, distance of the viewer from the proposed development and duration of the view. Other vertical features in the landscape and the backdrop to the proposed development will all influence resource change. Judgements regarding the magnitude of visual impact are provided in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Magnitude of Visual Impact

Definition	Magnitude
Complete or very substantial change in view dominant involving complete or very substantial obstruction of existing view or complete change in character and composition of baseline, e.g., through removal of key elements	Large
Moderate change in view: which may involve partial obstruction of existing view or partial change in character and composition of baseline, i.e., pre-development view through the introduction of new elements or removal of existing elements. Change may be prominent but would not substantially alter scale and character of the surroundings and the wider setting. Composition of the view would alter. View character may be partially changed through the introduction of features which, though uncharacteristic, may not necessarily be visually discordant	Medium
Minor change in baseline, i.e., pre-development view - change would be distinguishable from the surroundings whilst composition and character would be similar to the pre change circumstances.	Small
Very slight change in baseline, i.e., pre-development view - change barely distinguishable from the surroundings. Composition and character of view substantially unaltered.	Negligible
No alteration to the existing view	No change

1.2.12 Significance of Effects

The purpose of this LVIA is to determine, in a transparent way, the likely significant landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development. It is accepted that, due to the nature and scale of development, the Proposed Development could potentially give rise to some notable landscape and visual effects.

GLVIA3 identifies that '...... a final judgment is made about whether or not each effect is likely to be significant. There are no hard and fast rules about what effects should be deemed 'significant' but LVIAs should always distinguish clearly between what are considered to be significant and non-significant effects'.

Significance can only be defined in relation to each particular development and its specific location. The relationship between receptors and effects is not typically a linear one. It is for each LVIA to determine how judgements about receptors and effects should be combined to derive significance and to explain how this conclusion has been arrived at.

As a general guide it is considered that the following are likely to be considered effects of the greatest significance:

• Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over and extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes; or

• Irreversible negative effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in view, on recognised and important viewpoints or scenic routes, large-scale change which introduces non-characteristic, discordant or intrusive elements into the view.

The identification of significant effects would not necessarily mean that the effect is unacceptable in planning terms. What is important is that the likely effects on the landscape and visual resources are transparently assessed and understood in order that the determining authority can bring a balanced, well-informed judgement to bear when making the planning decision.

The significance of effects on landscape, views and visual amenity have been judged according to a six-point scale: Substantial, Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible or None as presented in **Table 5**, which contains a description of the Significance of Effect Criteria.

Significance of Effect	Landscape Resource	Visual Resource
None	Where the project would not alter the landscape character of the area.	Where the project would retain existing views.
Negligible	Where proposed changes would have an indiscernible effect on the character of an area.	Where proposed changes would have a barely noticeable effect on views/visual amenity.
Minor	Where proposed changes would be at slight variance with the character of an area.	Where proposed changes to views, although discernible, would only be at slight variance with the existing view.
Moderate	Where proposed changes would be noticeably out of scale or at odds with the character of an area.	Where proposed changes to views would be noticeably out of scale or at odds with the existing view.
Major	Where proposed changes would be uncharacteristic and/or would significantly alter a valued aspect of (or a high quality) landscape.	Where proposed changes would be uncharacteristic and/or would significantly alter a valued view or a view of high scenic quality.
Substantial	Where proposed changes would be uncharacteristic and/or would significantly alter a landscape of exceptional landscape quality (e.g., internationally designated landscapes), or key elements known to the wider public of nationally designated landscapes (where there is no or limited potential for substitution nationally).	Where proposed changes would be uncharacteristic and/or would significantly alter a view of remarkable scenic quality, within internationally designated landscapes or key features or elements of nationally designated landscapes that are well known to the wider public.

Table 5: Significance of Effect Criteria

For the purposes of this assessment those effects indicated, in **Table 6** below, as being Substantial or Major to Substantial are regarded as being significant. Effects of 'Minor to Moderate' and lesser significance have been identified within the assessment, though are not considered significant.

For those effects indicated as being of 'Moderate' or 'Moderate to Major' the assessor has exercise professional judgement in determining if the effect is considered to be significant, taking account of site specific or location specific variables which are given different weighting in each instance according to location.

Table 6: Significance of effects matrix

Magnitude of	Sensitivity				
Impact	Negligible	Low	Medium	High	Very High
No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change	No Change
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible to Minor	Negligible to Minor	Minor	Minor
Small	Negligible to Minor	Negligible to Minor	Minor	Minor to Moderate	Moderate to Major
Medium	Negligible to Minor	Minor	Moderate	Moderate to Major	Major to Substantial
Large	Minor	Minor to Moderate	Moderate to Major	Major to Substantial	Substantial

A conclusion that an effect is 'significant' should not be taken to imply that the Proposed Development is unacceptable. Significance of effect needs to be considered with regard to the scale over which it is experienced and whether it is beneficial or adverse.

1.3 Receiving Environment

1.3.1 General Overview

The Proposed Development is located approximately 4km north-east of Dromore, 6km north-west of Fintona and 9km south-west of Omagh, within the townland of Shannaragh, County Tyrone.

The site for the Proposed Development is approximately 8 hectares in size and is comprised of portions of five agricultural fields accessed from Skreen Road, immediately north-west of the existing Dromore Main Substation.

The Proposed Development site is comprised entirely of arable pastoral farmland, with small to medium sized fields well defined by managed mixed species hedgerows, and hedgerows with maturing trees which provide containment. The Proposed Development site lies within a landscape characterised by rounded drumlins, which form a gently undulating landform, with lands associated with the Proposed Development gently rising from east to west.

The drumlin landscape surrounding the Proposed Development site, forms a degree of enclosure which is further enhanced by the presence of field boundary hedgerows and hedgerows with trees. Whilst woodland forms a minor element within the landscape surrounding the Proposed Development site, mixed species and pockets of coniferous woodland are found immediately north and south-west of the site, which provide further enclosure and textural interest within available views.

Immediately south-east of the Proposed Development site lies the Dromore Main Substation facility, with larger scale pylons carrying overhead lines visible within the landscape. Further verticality is provided through timber poles, of varying heights and forms, carrying overhead lines with overhead lines often perceived as an elevated horizon above the horizons formed by landform, whilst single wind turbines add further interest and movement within the landscape. Transport routes are generally well integrated into the landscape, with roadside hedgerows often screening and focusing views along travel direction. Scattered residential properties and farmsteads are generally located along the well-integrated road network, with large scale agricultural buildings and feed silos forming distinct visual draws.

1.3.2 Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment

In recognising the importance of sustaining regional identity, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), commissioned the Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment (NIRLCA), which resulted in the identification of distinct regional character areas within Northern Ireland.

The assessment provides a strategic overview of the Northern Ireland landscape and subdivides the countryside into 26 Regional Landscape Character Areas (RLCAs) based upon information on people and place and the combinations of nature, culture and perception which make each part of Northern Ireland unique and has been developed to meet commitments set out in Northern Ireland's Landscape Charter.

A review of the NIRLCA indicates that the Proposed Development is in one RLCA namely: Omagh Basin RLCA 4.

RLCA 4 – Omagh Basin

The key characteristics identified in the NIRLCA are as follows;

- Low lying landscape of pastoral drumlin farmland, framed by uplands on all sides. Drumlins are most obvious to the south and west becoming less of a characterising factor towards the east in the Camowen Valley which is broad and shallow.
- Watercourses draining the adjacent uplands converge within the low-lying basin, combining to form the Strule at Omagh.
- A populated area with several villages and a dispersed settlement pattern, linked by main roads and a dense network of multiple smaller back roads. Omagh, the county town, is located at the focal point of roads and rivers.
- A wholly pastoral landscape, with generally rectilinear fields of varying size, united by a strong pattern of hedges and ash trees, which lend a wooded character despite the limited woodland cover.
- There are numerous lowland peat bogs forming flat areas between drumlins. Though many have been cut for fuel a number are protected for their intact plant communities.
- Drumlins, dense hedgerow and smaller roads combine in places to act to create a sense of confinement at times. In areas of peat bog there is a distinctly remote character.
- Skylines of the adjacent high ground, and the hills of the Sperrins AONB in particular, provide a backdrop to many of the views out of the RLCA.

1.3.3 Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000

The Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA 2000) contains landscape briefs for each of the 130 landscape character areas in Northern Ireland surveyed in 1999. It provides a baseline description of the landscape at a point in time based upon local patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural and ecological features. This base information is still a valuable resource and has informed the 26 regional landscape character areas of the NIRLCA. However, there has been substantial development in both rural and urban areas of Northern Ireland since the NILCA 2000 was surveyed which has impacted on many of its local landscape character areas.

A review of the NILCA 2000 indicates that the Proposed Development is located within one Landscape Character Areas (LCA); 22 Omagh Farmland

Omagh Farmland LCA (22)

The Omagh Farmland landscape is a drumlin lowland landscape which extends from Omagh to Fintona and includes the river valley landscapes of the Camowen River to the north and the branching river systems of Drumragh River, Ballynahatty Water and Quiggery Water, which wind amongst the drumlins, to the south. The

regional town of Omagh is sited at the confluence of the Camowen, Strule and Drumragh Rivers, within a natural bowl-shaped valley which is enclosed to the north by the summit of Mullaghcarn.

The landform in this area is relatively broad, with the rivers flowing close to the foot of the Sperrins. To the south of Omagh, the drumlins become the dominant influence on landform, with the sandstone ridges to the east of Fintona and the uplands of West Tyrone forming a distant backdrop. The drumlins are packed quite densely to form a deeply undulating lowland landscape with a distinctive character. Narrow river valleys tend to follow and widen slight gaps between the drumlins and minor tributaries wind around the small hills. There are often patches of marsh in low-lying areas between the drumlins. The drumlins are predominantly pasture but have a diverse, small-scale landscape pattern. Typically, each drumlin is divided evenly by straight hedgerows which continue right over the ridge of each hill.

This pattern is repeated on most drumlins but is complicated by many small copses, isolated trees and woodlands. These form varied patterns giving each drumlin an individual identity and the landscape as a whole, a dynamic, secretive character. Farms generally nestle in sheltered sites halfway up the slopes of the drumlins and are linked by tortuous narrow winding lanes. However, the principal communication routes are often straight and deeply undulating as they cross the grain of the landscape.

The overall capacity to absorb development is considered to be high-medium in this LCA and is considered an area with a medium sensitivity to change.

The key characteristics, identified by NIEA, of the LCA are as follows:

- Lowland landscape densely packed with drumlins which create deeply undulating terrain with rounded slopes and a dynamic, quirky character.
- Numerous small, winding streams, with peaty marsh on some floodplains and occasional small, rounded loughs.
- Diverse, small-scale field pattern, with fields forming an even, geometric patchwork over the drumlins, but becoming irregular in shape on the flatter land in between; broader more open field pattern near Omagh.
- Dense hedgerows, many hedgerow trees and small deciduous woodlands; often wire fencing on marginal farmland.
- Numerous farms, typically sited half-way up drumlin slopes; many small villages and settlements, generally at road junctions.
- Principal routes tend to be straight and deeply undulating, minor roads are tortuous; straight roads across small, marshy floodplains are embanked.

Within the assessment for the LCA, NIEA state;

In relation to the Proposed Development site, the most sensitive areas to change are the river corridors and their associated wetlands are the most sensitive areas within this landscape; many of the inter-drumlin hollows support valuable fenland habitats. Local skylines and ridges are often prominent and relatively sensitive, particularly if there is a striking landscape feature - a clump of trees, a farmhouse or even an attractive field pattern on the ridgetop.

1.3.4 Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan Strategy 2030 – Landscape Character Areas

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council adopted a Local Development Plan Strategy on the 16^{th of} March 2023.

The Proposed Development would fall within one Landscape Character Area under this Strategy, LCA 4 - Omagh Basin, described as: -

The Omagh Basin is framed by the outlying projections. It is a low lying basin made up mainly of pastoral drumlin farmland at the heart of Co. Tyrone where three rivers meander through the rolling landscape converge to form the river Strule which then flows on to the Foyle Valley. Some of the marginal areas with loughs and peat bogs with other areas planted in conifer.

1.4 Landscape Designations

This section reviews relevant landscape designations in Northern Ireland. A brief explanation of these has been given below:

1.4.1 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

These are designated either under the Amenity Lands Act (Northern Ireland) 1965 or the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. They cover huge areas of land, embracing a range of landscape types including limestone cliffs, sweeping moorlands and important geological landforms. They also include farmland, forest, lakes, coastline and settlement. They are generally subject to planning conditions.

The Proposed Development is located approximately 20km south of the Sperrins AONB.

Site survey and assessment has established that due to intervening topographical changes and vegetation cover which lie between the Sperrins AONB and the Proposed Development site, it is predicted that the AONB will not experience any direct or indirect effects because of the Proposed Development.

As such the Sperrins AONB designation has not been carried forward for further assessment within this LVIA.

1.4.2 Historic Parks and Gardens

Country houses, some of which are listed buildings, set in landscaped parkland or within demesnes, are an important part of the landscape. NIEA has identified a number of these parks, gardens, and demesnes that it considers represents a significant historic and landscape resource. Any development that is likely to have an adverse impact on the planned layout, including views in and out of quality or character of these areas will normally be refused planning permission.

There are no Historic Parks and Gardens (HPG) located adjacent to the Proposed Development site.

A review of the information available has identified that the nearest HPG, Aughentaine Estate, is located approximately 14km south-east of the site of the Proposed Development.

Site survey and assessment has established that due to intervening topographical changes and vegetation cover which lie between the identified HPG and the Proposed Development site, it is predicted that the HPG will not experience any direct or indirect effects because of the Proposed Development.

As such the HPG designation has not been carried forward for further assessment within this LVIA.

1.4.3 Environmental Designations

Cranny Boy Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) (ASSI 124) an area of lowland raised bog lies approximately 900m to the east of the site of the Proposed Development.

Due to intervening topographical changes and vegetation cover between the ASSI and the Proposed Development site, the ASSI is not predicted to experience any significant effects because of the Proposed Development.

As such this designated site is not carried forward for further assessment.

1.4.4 The Ulster Way

The Ulster Way is a nationally recognised long-distance footpath that was designated under the Access to the Countryside (NI) Order 1983. The Ulster Way is protected and maintained by the relevant District Councils through which it passes and is promoted as a national walking route by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

Following a review of the information available, it has been identified that the Proposed Development is not located within proximity to any of the designated Ulster Way footpaths.

1.4.5 Way Marked Trails

There are no way marked walking trails within the study area in close proximity to the Proposed Development.

1.5 Proposed Development

The proposal is for the of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), DNO substation building, control building, auxiliary transformer, grid compliance equipment, CCTV & lighting columns, security fencing, ancillary works, access track, entrance upgrades, hardstanding, widening along the Skreen Road and associated works. Access to the site will be from the Skreen Road via two entrances, one primary route for construction and secondary for emergency vehicles.

In summary, the Proposed Development involves securing planning approval and constructing a battery energy storage system comprising:

- 116 no. Battery Storage Enclosure (BSE);
- 21 no. Power Conversion Systems with Single MV Skid and Apron Slab;
- 1 no. 110kv DNO Substation Compound with DNO Substation Building;
- 3 no. BESS Substation Buildings;
- 4 no. Auxiliary Transformer;
- 2 no. Lv Distribution Equipment;
- 1 no. 110kv BESS Substation Compound;
- 17 no. Aggregation Panel with LV Pillar;
- 1 no. Pre-insertion resistor;
- Capacitor Bank;
- 1 no. Harmonic Filter and Resistor;
- 4 no. Spares Container;
- Lighting
- CCTV Column

In addition, access tracks will connect the BESS development to Skreen Road to the east via two tracks.

1.6 Landscape Effects

The assessment of landscape effects follows the methodology previously described in Section 1.2 and considers those effects which are predicted to occur during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

In order to avoid repetition, an assessment of construction phase impacts and predicted operational phase impacts is included within the following landscape assessments.

1.6.1 Description of the Sources of Impact

The assessment of landscape effects follows the methodology previously described in Section 1.2 and considers those effects which are predicted to occur during the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

The assessment of construction phase effects relates to the following identified activities:

- Construction works associated with the formation of the battery storage facility, substation and associated infrastructure development;
- Delivery of materials to working areas; and
- Localised site clearance and reinstatement.

The construction phase of the Proposed Development will result in additional built elements being introduced into the landscape. The operational phase of the Proposed Development will result in new built form being visible within the surrounding landscape.

An assessment of landscape and visual impacts during both construction and operation is provided below.

Table 7: Omagh Farmland (LCA 22); Predicted Impacts

Omagh Farmland	Omagh Farmland (LCA 22)			
Sensitivity	The Proposed Development is wholly contained within this LCA and therefore those portions of the LCA which lie within the site boundary will be directly affected. Landscape features such as field boundary hedgerows, tree planting on boundaries and other areas of vegetation marking internal boundaries will be retained as part of the Proposed Development, with effects being limited to a change in land use for those portions of the site being utilised for the Proposed Development. Indirect effects are predicted to occur within close proximity to the site boundary though the wider LCA will remain unaltered.			
	Key characteristics which, together with field work, have informed an understanding of the susceptibility of this landscape, particularly at a local level, to the Proposed Development include:			
	 Gently undulating topography providing localised enclosure. 			
	 Varied field pattern scale with field boundaries well defined by hedgerows and hedgerows with trees. 			
	 Timber poles of varying size and scale carrying overhead lines present in the landscape 			
	 Larger scale pylons carrying overhead lines seen radiating from the substation facility to the immediate east of Skreen road. 			
	 Scattered operational wind turbines visible within the landscape, forming visual draw within views. 			
	 Localised influence of built form, including large agricultural buildings Local road networks generally absorbed within the LCA through combination of screening by vegetation and localised topographical changes. 			
	Overall, the character of the LCA within the study area associated with the Proposed Development is partially enclosed in nature, with field boundary hedgerows, hedgerows with trees and scattered instances of mixed species woodland together with topographical changes and undulations provide a localised sense of enclosure. Timber poles, larger scale pylons carrying overhead lines and scattered operational wind turbines are a noticeable feature.			
	Taking account of the above characteristics and the influence of existing manmade features within the study area, the susceptibility of the LCA to the type of development			

Omagh Farmland (LCA 22)				
	proposed is judged to be medium. The LCA only comprises a small portion of the Sperrins AONB, and this is to the north of Omagh. Overall, the value of the LCA is judged to be medium.			
	Based on the susceptibility and value attached to this RLCA, the overall sensitivity of the RLCA is judged to be medium .			
Magnitude of Change	Direct impacts on this LCA will arise from the physical construction of the Proposed Development, resulting in the introduction of new manmade elements into the existing landscape. The existing vegetation within the Proposed Development site boundary will be retained which aids in integrating the Proposed Development within the surrounding landscape context.			
	New built form and associated ancillary features will require construction equipment and activities that will be locally conspicuous during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. It is considered that construction activities will have a localised, temporary, short-term effect as the surrounding undulating landscape and vegetation cover adjacent to existing localised road networks will quickly absorb such activities.			
	Localised portions of the LCA adjacent to, but beyond the site boundary of the Proposed Development are predicted to experience indirect effects only because of the formation of the new features, though the predicted effects to the north and east are restricted in extent by existing, retained vegetation.			
	The predicted magnitude of change associated with the construction stage of the Proposed Development, including the construction of ancillary infrastructure and security fencing are localised and medium during the construction phase, restricted to land contained within the site boundary.			
	During the operational phase, new buildings, battery storage facility, substation and security fencing will be perceived as a minor alteration locally, though generally not obvious within the wider context due to its low development form which is readily absorbed and screened by a combination of topographical changes and vegetation cover. The predicted magnitude of change in the landscape resource, during the operational phase of the Proposed Development is localised and small during the operational phase, prior to the establishment of mitigation planting.			
Significance of Landscape Effect during Construction Phase	Moderate, temporary, short-term assessed as locally significant effects are predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. Remaining portions of the LCA outside of the Proposed Development boundary are predicted to experience no significant indirect effects.			
Significance of Landscape Effect during Operational Phase.	Minor localised, long-term, reversible, assessed as not significant landscape effects are predicted to be experienced during the operational phase of the Proposed Development prior to establishment of mitigation planting. Predicted effects during the operational phase are limited in extent by existing vegetation cover on boundaries of the Development Site. Additional built form will become less apparent in the landscape as mitigation planting on boundaries establishes and matures. Remaining portions of the LCA beyond the development site boundary are predicted to experience no significant indirect effects.			

1.6.2 Landscape Designation Impacts

As described in Section 1.4 above when AONB, Historic Parks and Gardens and Walking Trails and environmental designations were assessed it has been found that due to separation distance, intervening topographical changes and intervening vegetation cover no significant effects are predicted to occur for any of the identified landscape designations.

Landscape Character / Designation	Predicted Construction Phase Landscape Effects	Predicted Operational Phase Landscape Effects
Omagh Farmland LCA (22)	assessed as locally significant effects are predicted to be experienced during the construction	Minor localised, long-term, reversible, assessed as not significant landscape effects are predicted to be experienced during the operational phase of the Proposed Development prior to establishment of mitigation planting.
Sperrins AONB	No Change	No Change
Cranny Bog ASSI	No Change	No Change
Historic Parks & Gardens	No Change	No Change
The Ulster Way	No Change	No Change
Way Marked Trails	No Change	No Change

Table 8: Summary of Predicted Landscape Effects

1.7 Visual Effects

To assist the assessment of visual effects associated with the Proposed Development, a series of 8 representative viewpoints have been selected to illustrate the existing visual context of the site and the Proposed Development and have been used as an aid to the visual impact assessment.

All of the viewpoints have been located on publicly accessible roads, footways and verges within the study area (refer Appendix A: Figure 1 - Viewpoint Location Map) associated with the Proposed Development.

Viewpoints have been selected to meet the following criteria:

- A balance of viewpoints from where main directions of view are towards the Proposed Development;
- A range of views of the proposed development covering the extent of the study area. A proportion representing areas known to be available to the community where people may frequently congregate; and
- Locations of interest e.g. settlements.

Representative views towards the Proposed Development from each of the identified locations are presented in Appendix B which should be read in conjunction with the following assessments.

To avoid repetition, an assessment of the predicted construction phase impacts and predicted operational phase impacts are included within each of the following viewpoint assessments.

Viewpoint 1 – Skreen Road			
Grid Ref	051548, 528559	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Vp 01 – Skreen Road
Direction of View	West	Approx. Distance from Development	300m

Table 9:	Viewpoint	1 – Skreen	Road
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Description of existing view and potential receptors	This viewpoint is located on the Skreen Road, approximately 300m from the main portion of the development site. The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Vp 01 – Skreen Road; Existing View) is generally panoramic in nature,
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Viewpoint 1 – Skreen R	oad
	 though partially restricted at close distance by existing roadside vegetation across the view at close-distance. The foreground of the view is comprised of arable pastoral fields, with field boundary hedgerows and a small copse of trees visible at mid distance across the central portion of the view. Horizons are partially elevated by further hedgerows and mature trees visible at distance beyond mid-distance vegetation. Timber poles, of varying size and scale, carrying overhead lines are visible throughout the view at varying distances with overhead lines often perceived as an elevated horizon. The view is considered to be representative of peripheral views experienced primarily by road users traveling south on Skreen Road, though the view is also considered to be experienced by recreational receptors using the road network and residential receptors in the immediate vicinity.
Sensitivity	Residential and recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the Skreen Road are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel.
	The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium.
	Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, whilst the ground level associated with the Proposed Development is not visible in the view, machinery and vehicles delivering materials to the site will be visible across the central portion of the view, utilising the existing access track. Operations and machinery associated with the main portion of the development site will be generally screened in view by the combination of existing vegetation cover and topographical changes. Where perceived, machinery and construction phase operations will be perceived below intervening vegetation cover to the left of the view, which aids integration. Construction phase activities and vehicular movements will be viewed as a minor addition to the overall view. The magnitude of visual impact during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme is judged to be localised and small as such operations will be perceived within a minor portion of the view, at distance and below and beyond intervening vegetation.
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	During the operational phase, elements of the Proposed Development will be partially visible, at mid-distance within a minor portion of the overall view available from this location. Viewed at below and beyond intervening vegetation cover, the Proposed Development, will be perceived as a minor addition to the view, with the character of the view remaining largely unaltered. Existing elements of the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance views remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be negligible .
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	Localised minor , temporary, assessed as not significant, effects predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	Localised negligible to minor , long term, reversible effects assessed as not significant, predicted to be experienced during the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development prior to successful establishment of proposed boundary planting. Following the successful establishement of planting the significance of visual effect is considered to reduce to negligible, long term, reversible, assessed as not significant.

Table 10: Viewpoint 2 – Mullawinny Road

Viewpoint 2 – Mullawinny Road			
Grid Ref 052	2039, 527867	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Vp 02 – Mullawinny Road.

Direction of View	North-west Approx. Distance from 1km Development		
Description of existing view and potential receptors	 This viewpoint is located adjacent to the grassed verge forming the western edge of the Mullawinny Road, approximately 1km south-east of the Proposed Development site. The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Vp 02 – Mullawinny Road; Existing View) is restricted in nature by a combination of topographical changes and intervening vegetation cover. The immediate foreground is comprised of arable pastoral agricultural land which is gently undulating in nature, and which rises from north to south. Arable pastoral lands are further glimpsed amongst and beyond intervening vegetation within the central portion of the view at mid-distance, with distant horizons formed by more elevated lands associated with the south-eastern Sperrins. Large scale pylons carrying overhead lines are visible, to varying degrees, at mid-distance across the ventral portion of the view. Upper canopies of mature trees within the view punctuate and locally elevate perceived horizons. The view is considered to be representative of views experienced by transient road users traveling north and south on the Mullawinny Road and views available to recreational receptors on the Mullawinney Road and from scattered residential receptors in the immediate vicinity. 		
Sensitivity	Residential and recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the Mullawinney Road are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium. Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .		
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, ground level operations and machinery movements associated with the Proposed Development will not be visible within the view available from this location due to screening effects of intervening topographical changes. Overall, the magnitude of change during the construction phase of the Proposed Development is judged to be equivalent to No Change .		
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	The Proposed Development will generally not be perceived within the view due screening effects of intervening topographical changes and vegetation cover. Whe visible beyond intervening vegetation, visible portion of the Proposed Development wind be readily perceived and not be visible from this view. Existing elements of the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance views remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase judged to be equivalent to No Change scenario.		
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	No Change		
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	No Change		

Table 11: Viewpoint 3 – Cavan Road

Grid Ref	052039, 527867	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Vp 03 – Cavan Road.
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Direction of View	North-east	Approx. Distance from	450m
		Development	
Description of existing view and potential receptors	the Cavan Road, approxin The existing view available Existing View) is restricted intervening vegetation cov The immediate foreground	adjacent to the grassed verge f nately 450m south-west of the from this location (refer to Apped d in nature by a combination o er. d is comprised of rough grazin yond intervening roadside hedge	Proposed Development site endix B, Vp 03 – Cavan Road f topographical changes and ng land, with arable pastora
	rising lands. Existing horiz hedgerows and punctuat elements, such as pylons visibility of a single reside varying distances within th The view is considered to users traveling east and	cons, at mid-distance are eleval ed by scattered maturing tre , are absent from the view, th ential property and timber pole	ted further by field boundary ses. Large scale man-made hough the view does contain s carrying overhead lines at experienced by transient roac ews available to recreationa
Sensitivity	Residential and recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the Cavan Road are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium. Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .		
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, ground level operations and machinery movements associated with the Proposed Development will not be visible within the view available from this location due to screening effects of intervening topographical changes. Overall, the magnitude of change during the construction phase of the Proposed Development is judged to be equivalent to No Change .		
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	The Proposed Development will generally not be visible within the view due to screenin effects of intervening topographical changes and vegetation cover. Existing elements the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance view remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be equivalent to No Change scenario.		
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	No Change		
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	No Change		

Table 12: Viewpoint 4 – Lisgarty Road

Viewpoint 4 – Lisgarty Road			
Grid Ref	050452, 529760	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Vp 04 – Lisgarty Road.
Direction of View	South-east	Approx. Distance from Development	1.2km

Viewpoint 4 – Lisgarty Road

Description of existing view and potential receptors	This viewpoint is located at a gated field entrance adjacent to the eastern edge of the Lisgarty Road, approximately 1.2km north-west of the Proposed Development site. The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Vp 04 – Lisgarty Road; Existing View) is generally panoramic in nature, though partially restricted by upper tree canopies at mid-distance across the central portion of the view. The immediate foreground is comprised of semi-improved grazing land, with arable pastoral agricultural land visible beyond, amongst and below intervening vegetation cover to the right of the view, on undulating lands at mid-distance. Distant horizons formed by more elevated lands are visible, though punctuated by upper tree canopies. Large scale man-made elements such as scattered wind turbines and pylons are perceived across the whole of the view, forming minor points of visual interest. The view is generally of a well vegetated landscape, with no large-scale farm buildings or smaller scale residential dwelling visible in the view.
Sensitivity	Residential and recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the Lisgarty Road are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium. Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, ground level operations and machinery movements associated with the Proposed Development will not be visible within the view available from this location due to screening effects of intervening vegetation. Overall, the magnitude of change during the construction phase of the Proposed Development is judged to be equivalent to No Change.
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	The Proposed Development will generally not be visible within the view due to screening effects of intervening vegetation cover. Existing elements of the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance views remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be equivalent to No Change scenario.
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	No Change
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	No Change

Table 13: Viewpoint 5 – Clanabogan Road

Viewpoint 5 – Clanabogan Road			
Grid Ref	050391, 530094	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Vp 05 – Clanabogan Road.
Direction of View	South-east	Approx. Distance from Development	1.5km

Viewpoint 5 – Clanabog	an Road
Description of existing view and potential receptors	This viewpoint is located on the southern edge of the Clanabogan Road, approximately 1.5km north-west of the Proposed Development site. The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Vp 05 – Clanabogan Road; Existing View) is partially restricted in nature by existing vegetation cover at close-distance which forms the eastern boundary of the road network. Whilst the view is partially restricted in nature, arable pastoral lands are glimpsed amongst and within the strongly enclosing framework of hedgerows and hedgerows with trees. Scattered tree planting provides further visual containment within the view. Timber poles carrying overhead lines are visible across a central portion of the view at mid-distance, with overhead lines perceived as an elevated horizon line above underlying vegetation cover. A single residential property is partially visible within the central portion of the view at mid-distance. The view is considered to be representative of views experienced by transient road users traveling north and south on the Clanabogan Road and from the residential
	receptors in the immediate vicinity.
Sensitivity	Residential receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium. Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, ground level operations and machinery movements associated with the Proposed Development will not be visible within the view available from this location due to screening effects of intervening vegetation. Overall, the magnitude of change during the construction phase of the Proposed Development is judged to be equivalent to No Change .
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	The Proposed Development will generally not be visible within the view due to screening effects of intervening vegetation cover. Existing elements of the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance views remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be equivalent to No Change scenario.
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	No Change
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	No Change

Table 14: Viewpoint 6 – Glennan Road

Viewpoint 6 – Glennan Road			
Grid Ref	051800, 529225	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Vp 06 – Glennan Road.
Direction of View	South-west	Approx. Distance from Development	700m
Description of existing view and potential receptors	This viewpoint is located at a gated field entrance adjacent to the southern edge of the Glennan Road, approximately 700m north-east of the Proposed Development site. The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Vp 06 – Glennan Road; Existing View) is generally panoramic in nature, though partially restricted by tree canopies on more elevated land at mid-distance across the central portion of the view.		

Viewpoint 6 – Glennan Road		
	The immediate foreground is comprised of arable pastoral grazing land on gently undulating landform, with arable pastoral agricultural land visible beyond, amongst and below intervening vegetation cover, on undulating lands at mid-distance. Distant horizons formed by more elevated lands are visible, though generally screened by intervening vegetation across the central portion of the view. Large scale man-made elements such as wind turbines and pylons are not visible in the view, though large scale agricultural buildings are visible at closer distance to the left of the view. The view is generally of a well vegetated arable landscape, with timber poles carrying overhead lines generally perceived at lower elevation against a well vegetated backdrop. The view is considered to be representative of views experienced by transient road users traveling on the Glennan Road, views available to recreational receptors on the local road network and from the residential receptors in the immediate vicinity.	
Sensitivity	Residential and recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the Glennan Road are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium. Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .	
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, ground level operations and machinery movements associated with the Proposed Development will not be visible within the view available from this location due to screening effects of intervening topography and vegetation. Overall, the magnitude of change during the construction phase of the Proposed Development is judged to be equivalent to No Change .	
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	The Proposed Development will not be visible within the view due to screening effects of intervening topography and vegetation cover. Existing elements of the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance views remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be equivalent to No Change scenario.	
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	No Change	
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	No Change	

Table 15: Viewpoint - Entrance A – Skreen Road

Grid Ref	051405,528364	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Entrance A
Direction of View	North-west	Approx. Distance from Development	250m

view and potential receptors recepto	1	
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Viewpoint – Entrance A – Skreen Road		
	The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Entrance A – Skreen Road; Existing View) is constrained and restricted by topographical changes within the immediate foreground, with lands rising from the viewpoint location to elevated portions across the central portion of the view. The immediate foreground is comprised of arable pastoral land, utilised for silage, with field boundary well defined by mature hedgerow with tree to the left of the view. Central portions of the view are more open in nature, with upper portions of a single tree visible above the landform. Existing timber poles, of varying scale, are visible above the perceived horizon and form minor points of visual interest. It is noted that to the rear of this viewpoint location, the Mid Antrim Substation facility is perceived together with large scale pylons. The view is considered to be representative of oblique views experienced by transient road users traveling north and south on the Skreen Road and recreational receptors on the local road network.	
Sensitivity	Recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the local roads are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the views experienced are available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium. Overall, considering the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium.	
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	Temporary construction phase activities associated with the formation of the access track will be visible, to the left, within a small portion of the view. Temporary ground level construction phase activities associated with the main portion of the Proposed Development will not be apparent within the view due to screening effects of intervening topographical changes. Construction phase operations associated with construction of new timber poles and overhead lines will be visible above horizons, though generally viewed as a minor addition to the view. Overall, the magnitude of change associated with the construction phase is judged to be small .	
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	During the operational phase, elements of the Proposed Development will be visible, at mid-distance and close-distance within portions of the view available from this location. Viewed above horizon lines, the Proposed Development, will be perceived as a minor addition to the view, with the character of the view remaining largely unaltered. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be negligible .	
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	Localised Minor , temporary, assessed as noty significant, effects predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.	
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	Localised negligible to minor , long term, reversible effects assessed as not significant, predicted to be experienced during the operational phase of the Proposed Development.	

Table 16: Viewpoint - Entrance B – Skreen Road

Viewpoint – Entrance B Skreen Road			
Grid Ref	051481, 528485	Existing View Figure Number	Appendix B; Entrance B
Direction of View	North-west	Approx. Distance from Development	250m

Viewpoint – Entrance E	
Description of existing view and potential receptors	This viewpoint is located on the Skreen Road, at the gated access which forms the existing access to lands associated with the proposed development, approximately 250m from the main portion of the development site. The existing view available from this location (refer to Appendix B, Entrance A – Skreen Road; Existing View) is generally panoramic in nature, though partially restricted at close distance by existing roadside vegetation to the right of the view. The foreground of the view is comprised of arable pastoral fields, with field boundary hedgerows and a small copse of trees visible at mid distance across the central portion of the view. Horizons are partially elevated by further hedgerows and mature trees visible at distance beyond mid-distance vegetation. Timber poles, of varying size and scale, carrying overhead lines are visible throughout the view at varying distances with overhead lines often perceived as an elevated horizon. The view is considered to be representative of peripheral views experienced primarily by road users traveling south on Skreen Road, though the view is also considered to be experienced by recreational receptors using the road network and residential receptors in the immediate vicinity.
Sensitivity	Residential and recreational receptors are judged to be of a high susceptibility to change in their views, whilst transient receptors on the Skreen Road are judged to be of a low susceptibility to change as their focus is on the direction of travel. The viewpoint does not represent a recognised stopping place and does not form part of a recognised tourist route. However, the view experienced at this location is also considered to be available to residential receptors in the vicinity, and the overall value of the view available is judged to be medium.
	Overall, taking into account the receptor susceptibility and the value of the view the sensitivity is judged to be medium .
Magnitude of Change – Construction Phase	During the construction phase, whilst the ground level associated with the Proposed Development is not visible in the view, machinery and vehicles delivering materials to the site will be visible across the central portion of the view, utilising the existing access track. Operations and machinery associated with the main portion of the development site will be generally screened in view by the combination of existing vegetation cover and topographical changes. Where perceived, machinery and construction phase operations will be perceived below intervening vegetation cover to the left of the view, which aids integration. Construction phase activities and vehicular movements will be viewed as a minor addition to the overall view. The magnitude of visual impact during the construction phase of the Proposed Scheme is judged to be localised and small as such operations will be perceived within a minor portion of the view, at distance and below and beyond intervening vegetation.
Magnitude of Change – Operational phase	During the operational phase, elements of the Proposed Development will be partially visible, at mid-distance within a minor portion of the overall view available from this location. Viewed at below and beyond intervening vegetation cover, the Proposed Development, will be perceived as a minor addition to the view, with the character of the view remaining largely unaltered. Existing elements of the view will retain visual prominance, with, middle distance and longer distance views remaining unaffected. Overall, the magnitude of visual impact during the operational phase is judged to be negligible .
Significance of Visual Effect during Construction Phase	Localised minor , temporary, assessed as not significant, effects predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
Significance of Visual Effect during Operational Phase	Localised negligible to minor , long term, reversible effects assessed as not significant, predicted to be experienced during the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development prior to successful establishment of proposed boundary planting. Following the successful establishement of planting the significance of visual effect is considered to reduce to negligible, long term, reversible, assessed as not significant.

Table 17 below summarises the predicted significance of visual effect for each of the previously assessed viewpoints.

Viev	wpoint	Predicted Construction Phase Visual Impacts	Predicted Operational Phase Visual Impacts
1	Skreen Road	Localised minor , temporary, assessed as not significant, effects predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.	Localised negligible to minor , long term, reversible effects assessed as not significant, predicted to be experienced during the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development prior to successful establishment of proposed boundary planting.
2	Mullawinny Road	No Change	No Change
3	Cavan Road	No Change	No Change
4	Lisgarty Road	No Change	No Change
5	Clanabogan Road	No Change	No Change
6	Glennan Road	No Change	No Change
7	Entrance A – Skreen Road	Localised minor , temporary, assessed as not significant, effects predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.	Localised negligible to minor , long term, reversible effects assessed as not significant, predicted to be experienced during the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development.
8	Entrance B – Skreen Road	Localised minor , temporary, assessed as not significant, effects predicted to be experienced during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.	Localised negligible to minor , long term, reversible effects assessed as not significant, predicted to be experienced during the Operational Phase of the Proposed Development prior to successful establishment of proposed boundary planting.

Table 17: Summary of Predicted Visual Effects

1.7.1 Residential Properties

As part of the of visual effects assessment associated with the Proposed Development, an assessment of the predicted visual impacts on residential properties that occur within 500 m of the Proposed Development has also been undertaken.

There are several residential properties located along Skreen Road, Cavan Road and Clanabogan Roads. However, properties at the later two are located between 1km – 1.5km from the proposed site. Properties at these locations are a mix of 2 storey and single storey dwellings with variations in orientation also noted. Existing vegetation and intervening topographical changes screens potential views of the Proposed Development, such that it is considered that these properties will not experience significant visual impacts as a consequence of the Proposed Development. The predicted significance of effect for properties during the operational stage will be local-minor to negligible, long term, reversible and are assessed as not significant, predicted prior to successful establishment of planting. Following the successful establishement of planting visual effects are judged to reduce to a minor-negligible and not significant visual effect.

1.8 Mitigation

1.8.1 Landscaping Aims and Objectives

Mitigation measures are those taken to help reduce the impacts arising from any visually intrusive or insensitive elements within existing landscape setting. The below text sets out the aims of proposed landscape mitigation but the role of the landscape architect in design evolution must also be noted. Only when the layout was deemed robust and acceptable in these terms was mitigation proposed (refer to the Landscape Mitigation Plan that accompanies the application (Drawing Number 02933.5.01)).

Landscape Aims

- To supplement the existing landscape features, such as hedgerows, hedgerows with trees to aid in integrating the Proposed Development and associated infrastructure physically and visually into surrounding landscape; and
- To provide suitable screening to minimise the visual intrusion, particularly in views from the residential receptors and transient receptors on the local road networks to reduce significant effects regarding the visual impact of the proposal and associated structures on sensitive receptors.

General Objectives

- Retention of existing boundary hedgerows, trees, shelterbelt planting and roadside vegetation on peripheral and internal boundaries in accordance with BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction Recommendations.
- Larger sized trees and shrubs to be planted within localised areas in order to reduce visual impacts and provide instant impact.
- Mitigation should be in keeping with the existing landscape. Therefore, mixed species hedgerows and areas of mixed species woodland are considered acceptable and appropriate to the landscape.
- Selection of locally appropriate deciduous tree, hedge and shrub species will be made to ensure successful plant establishment and to maintain and increase biodiversity whilst providing visual screening of the proposed development year-round.
- Strengthening of existing vegetated internal boundaries, through management regimes for hedgerows and / or planting of locally appropriate hedge species to provide continuity in extent of hedgerow.

1.8.2 Planting

Plant Mixes

Select Standard Tree Planting

Visual impact to be provided comprising locally appropriate tree species such as *Alnus glutinosa* (Alder), *Betula pubescens* (Birch) and *Sorbus aucuparia* (Rowan) to match existing within the area. Final planting locations will be carefully chosen to maximise visual screening of the Proposed Development within views predicted to experience significant visual effects.

Hedgerow Mix

Hedgerow enhancement will be provided by planting species such as; *Ilex aquifolium* (Holly), *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn), *Ligustrum vulgare* (Privet) and *Prunus spinosa* (Blackthorn) within existing hedgerows and as new hedgerows along field boundaries defined by post and wire fencing. New hedgerows will be planted with 4Nr. native species per 1m length, creating new species rich hedgerows.

Seeding Mixture

A mix of flower and grass species will surround the BESS compound.

1.8.3 Monitoring and Maintenance

Maintenance of the landscape works will be an integral part of the on-going site management. This will include a defects liability period during which any defective plant material (as stated above) is to be replaced. Litter picking and weed control shall be carefully monitored during the early growing seasons of the landscape maintenance contract. Contractors will comply with all health and safety standards, in particular regard to maintenance works during the operational phase of the proposed BESS.

1.9 Conclusion

The Proposed Development is wholly located within on landscape character area, which has been identified from the Northern Ireland Landscape Character Assessment 2000 (NILCA) as Landscape Character Area (LCA) 22 – Omagh Farmlands. This LCA is a drumlin landscape utilised extensively for agricultural purposes and has a diverse landscape pattern with fields well defined by well-maintained hedgerows and hedgerows with mature trees. The predicted significance of landscape effect for LCA 22 during the operational phase is localised, minor and assessed as not significant as predicted effects are limited in extent by the enclosed nature of the surrounding landscape, with topography, field boundary hedgerows and scattered mature trees restricting the identified impacts to those area of the LCA contained within the site boundary of the Proposed Development. Remaining portions of the LCA beyond the development site boundary are predicted to experience no significant indirect effects.

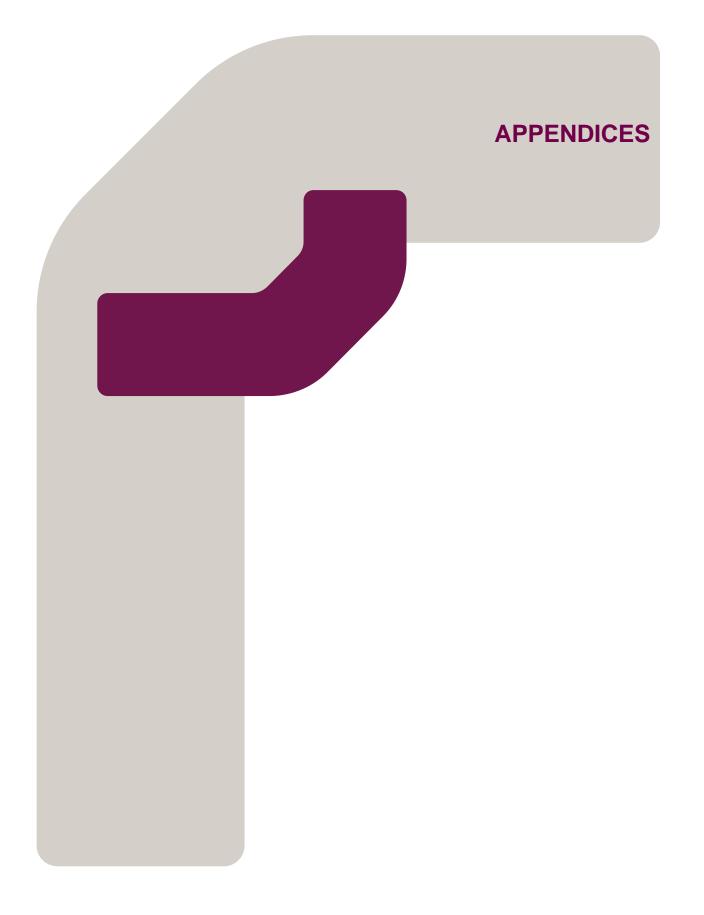
The Proposed Development has been established to not have any significant effect on any landscape designations including; AONB's; Historic Parks & Gardens; Ulster Way; or Way Marked Trails; due to distance from these features and/or intervening topography and vegetation.

A total of 8 viewpoints have been assessed, for both construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development.

Of the viewpoints assessed, three viewpoints have been predicted to experience localised minor, temporary effects during the construction phase with remaining viewpoints predicted to experience no significant effects during the construction phase. The assessment of the operational impacts associated with the Proposed Development has identified localised negligible to minor, long-term and not significant effects for three of the viewpoints with remaining viewpoints predicted to experience.

An assessment of effects on residential properties has taken place and properties in close proximity to the Proposed Development, along Cavan Road are predicted to experience localised moderate to major significant visual effects during the operational phase prior to the successful establishment of mitigation planting that is an integral part of the Proposed Development. With mitigation integrated to the Proposed Development Moderate and not significant effects are predicted during the operational phase of the Proposed Development for these properties. The remaining residential properties assessed along the Skreen Road are not predicted to experience significant effects which will decrease further with planting in place.

Overall, it is considered that the surrounding landscape and its visual resources has the ability to accommodate the changes associated with this type of development.



Appendix A

LVIA Figures

Appendix B

Photomontages