

Land East of Hawksworth and
Northwest of Thoroton, Shelton
Road, Thoroton ,Nottinghamshire

Note on the Additional Landscape
and Visual Effects of Proposed
Connection Options

Appeal by Mrs Claire Chamberlain

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This addendum is written in response to a request from Inspector Woolcock in a note dated 14th June 2024. The Inspector states, “The main parties will submit written statements about the effects of the development shown on Figures 12a and 12b”. This refers to additional infrastructure items that will be required to connect the proposed Longhedge Solar Farm to the existing electricity grid.
- 1.2 Figure 12a refers to ‘Client/DNO Substation Plan & Elevation Option 1’. This shows an additional pylon tower measuring 23.3m in height, which will be located adjacent to the new substation in Field 8, connecting to the existing 132kv pylon tower in the northern part of Field 8. This will be referred to as ‘Option 1’.
- 1.3 Figure 12b refers to ‘Client/DNO Substation Plan & Elevation Option 2’. This option would require two additional wooden poles measuring 9m in height. Similarly to Option 1, the poles would be located directly adjacent to the proposed substation in Field 8, with connection shown to the existing 132kv pylon tower in the northern part of Field 8. Within this addendum this will be referred to as ‘Option 2’.
- 1.4 My original evidence regarding the effects of the appeal scheme on the landscape character and appearance of the site and surroundings did not consider the effects of either additional infrastructure item. This addendum assesses the predicted landscape and visual effects of the two connection options.
- 1.5 In order to maintain consistency with my original proof of evidence, my methodology for this assessment uses the criteria and definitions from the methodology provided within the Appellant’s submitted LVIA.

2 Landscape and Visual Baseline

- 2.1 My original proof of evidence considers the landscape and visual baseline for the site and surroundings in detail. It also identifies the relevant landscape and visual receptors that could potentially be affected by the appeal scheme. Due to the location of the additional infrastructure features within the appeal scheme, I consider each of the identified landscape and visual receptors to still be valid in considering effects of

Option 1 and Option 2. I rely on the judgements of value, susceptibility, and sensitivity previously stated for these receptors within my proof of evidence.

2.2 Considering the proposed pylon tower in Option 1 is substantially taller than other elements of the appeal scheme, I have identified additional visual receptors not previously considered to be affected. This includes people using Thoroton Footpath FP2 to the south and Thoroton Bridleway BW3 to the east. A small cluster of residential properties along Longhedge Lane are also additional visual receptors.

2.3 Based on the baseline established within my original evidence, I assess the visual sensitivity of additional receptors to be:

- People using Thoroton Footpath FP2 – high sensitivity
- People using Thoroton Bridleway BW3 – high sensitivity
- Residents along Longhedge Lane – high sensitivity

3 Additional Landscape and Visual Effects of Option 1

3.1 From footpath FP2, south of the appeal site, Option 1 would introduce an additional pylon tower that would be visible along most of the route. In each sequential view, the proposed tower would be viewed alongside the existing towers, visible above existing field boundary hedgerow. This would be a change in the existing regular pattern of pylons and the new tower would appear noticeably shorter and misaligned. Although slightly visually jarring, this would represent a low magnitude of change and not alter the overall balance of features within the view. Applying professional judgement, I assess the predicted visual change for users of FP2 to be minor adverse at Year 1, remaining at the same level by Year 10.

3.2 Bridleway BW3 runs eastwards away from the eastern boundary of the appeal site, towards Longhedge Lane. There is also a small cluster of properties along Longhedge Lane in the vicinity of Shelton Lodge Farm. The existing pylon towers and associated cabling are currently visible side-on, running broadly north-south. Similarly to effects predicted for users of FP2, the new tower would slightly disrupt the rhythm of existing pylons, but would not introduce a new or dominating influence on available views. This would equate to a low magnitude of change and minor adverse level of visual effect

for users of BW3 and residents along Longhedge Lane. These effects are predicted at Year 1, with proposed mitigation not reducing effects by Year 10.

- 3.3 From Bridleway BW6, traversing Field 5 within the appeal site itself, the additional tower would be visible in some views. However, existing trees along the boundary between Fields 5 and 6 would provide some screening, causing the views to be intermittent. This is illustrated by the Appellant's updated visualisation from Viewpoint 6. For users of BW6, Option 1 would lead to a very low additional magnitude of visual change. This would not materially change my original assessment of major adverse visual effects at Year 1, reducing to major to moderate adverse by Year 10.
- 3.4 For visual receptors identified within the western portion of the appeal site and further west, including residents in Hawksworth and users of Bridleway BW1, the Option 1 tower would be almost completely screened by existing woodland clusters. I therefore do not predict any increased level of visual effects arising from the additional tower.
- 3.5 I do not predict a material increase in landscape character effects as a result of Option 1.

4 Additional Landscape and Visual Effects of Option 2

- 4.1 The proposed 9m high wooden poles included within Option 2 are likely to be visible above existing boundary hedgerow in some views from within and around the appeal site. Considering the smaller scale of this change and the presence of such features in the existing low voltage cable route running across parts of Fields 4, 5, 6, and 9, I do not predict more than a very low additional visual change to any identified receptor. For users of FP2 south of the appeal site and some parts of BW6 in Field 5 this would equate to a negligible adverse additional visual change at Year 1 and by Year 10. I predict no further material visual change to other receptors.
- 4.2 No material increase in landscape character effects are predicted as a result of Option 2.

5 Methodology for Visualisations

- 5.1 I have read a response letter from the Environment Agency relating to a query about flood risk on the appeal site, dated 5th July 2024. The letter states that some elements of proposed equipment will need to be raised above predicted flood levels. It is difficult to determine if this has been factored into proposed visualisations of the appeal scheme, including updated visualisations of tower Options 1 and 2. Further information from the Appellant on the methodology used for creating visualisations would be useful to ensure the proposed development is being represented accurately.

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