

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

## Proof of Evidence – Effects on Landscape Character and Appearance

Appeal by Mrs Claire Chamberlain

LPA Reference: 22/02241/FUL

PINS Reference: APP/P3040/W/23/3330045

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# Robert Browne Proof of Evidence

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1.1 This evidence has been compiled by Robert Browne, Director at Wynne-Williams Associates, a firm of Chartered Landscape Architects, registered with the Landscape Institute.
- 1.1.2 I hold a BSc (Honours) degree in Geography, an MA in Landscape Architecture, and I am also a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute (CMLI). I have 8 years' experience in both planning and design projects across the commercial, residential, education, and care sectors. I specialise in landscape planning work and regularly produce landscape and visual impact assessments (LVIAs), townscape and visual impact assessments (TVIAs), landscape character assessments (LCAs), site appraisals including Green Belt Assessments, and provide expert evidence for planning appeals on behalf of both appellants and Local Authorities. My work covers a range from scales varies from sites including a single proposed dwelling to advising on the effects of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).
- 1.1.3 I understand my duty to the Inquiry and have complied with and will continue to comply with that duty. The evidence that I have prepared and provide for this Inquiry is true. My evidence has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance and code of practice of the Landscape Institute. I confirm that the opinions given are my true and professional opinions.

## 1.2 Scope of my Evidence

- 1.2.1 My involvement with the appeal scheme began in January 2023, when I was appointed by Rushcliffe Borough council (RBC) to advise on the original planning application, 22/02241/FUL. My original commission was to review landscape related information submitted and advise whether the landscaping proposals illustrated on the submitted landscape masterplan would be sufficient to mitigate the landscape and visual effects of the development in the long term. My findings were issued as a Landscape Review report in March 2023.
- 1.2.2 In March 2024, I was informed that an appeal had been lodged against refused planning permission and I was appointed by RBC to prepare evidence for this Inquiry.

- 1.2.3 In a decision notice dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023, RBC refused permission for “Installation of renewable energy generating solar farm comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays, together with substation, inverter stations, security measures, site access, internal access tracks and other ancillary infrastructure, including landscaping and biodiversity enhancements”. The site is located on Land East of Hawksworth and Northwest of Thoroton, Shelton Road, Thoroton, Nottinghamshire.
- 1.2.4 The Decision Notice sets down two reasons for refusal of the application. My evidence relates to Reason 1 only:
- 1.2.5 **Reason for Refusal 1** – “The magnitude of the scale and nature of the ground mounted solar proposals would have a significant adverse impact on landscape character and visual amenity, contrary to Policy 22 (Development in the Countryside), Policy 34 (Green Infrastructure, Landscape, Parks and Open Spaces) and Policy 16 (Renewable Energy) of LPP2 which both seek to ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact and that any adverse effects can be adequately mitigated and paragraphs 155 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to support the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy provided the adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts)”.
- 1.2.6 I have reviewed the relevant application documents and applicable policy documents, and I have made multiple site visits to appraise the appeal site and its environs in terms of landscape character and visual impact. My evidence provides my professional opinion on the potential effects of the appeal scheme on the existing landscape character and appearance.

### 1.3 Guidance Used in Compiling my Evidence

- 1.3.1 I have used the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (C.D 3.21) in the preparation of my evidence.
- 1.3.2 I have also used Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note TGN 02-21: ‘Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations’ (C.D 3.26) to inform my assessment of landscape value for the site and surroundings.

## 1.4 Structure of my Evidence

### 1.4.1 My evidence is structured as follows.

**Section 2** considers the planning policy context in relation to landscape issues.

**Section 3** explains the methodology used for assessing the impact of the development.

**Section 4** presents the existing landscape setting to the site and its character.

**Section 5** sets down the effects of the proposals on landscape as a resource and character.

**Section 6** considers the visual effects of the proposals.

**Section 7** is a summary and conclusion to my evidence.

## 2 Planning Policy Context

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section I consider the relevant landscape related policies at national and local level.

### 2.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.2.1 The areas of the NPPF (December 2023) relevant to landscape, character, and appearance with regards to this appeal are listed below:

2.2.2 Paragraph 135(c)

2.2.3 Paragraph 160(a)

2.2.4 Paragraph 180(b)

### 2.3 Local Planning Policies

2.3.1 Local planning policies relevant to this appeal related to landscape character and appearance, are listed below.

#### 2.3.2 Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy 2014

Policy 10 – Design and Enhancing Local Identity

### 2.3.3 Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies 2019

Policy 16 – Renewable Energy

Policy 22 – Development within the Countryside

Policy 34 – Green Infrastructure and Open Space Assets

## 3 Methodology

- 3.1.1 'Development' is defined in the GVLIA3 as 'any proposal that results in a change to the landscape and/or the visual environment'. My evidence considers both the landscape character and the visual environment and the impact that the proposed development would have on both.
- 3.1.2 The GLVIA3 methodology requires 'establishing the baseline landscape and visual conditions (which) will, when reviewed alongside the description of the development, form the basis for the identification and description of the landscape and visual effects of the proposal' (para 3.15 page 32).
- 3.1.3 The landscape baseline is defined with the aim to 'provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected – its constituent elements, its character and the way that this varies spatially, its geographic extent, its history, its condition, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value attached to it' (para 3.15 page 32).
- 3.1.4 I have reviewed the existing studies which seek to establish the baseline landscape character and sensitivities for the site and the surrounding area. I have also undertaken a site visit to verify the extent to which the site is typical of these studies and the degree to which the development would impact on the existing landscape. This evidence sets out the results of these reviews in Section 4.
- 3.1.5 The visual baseline study has the 'aim to establish the area in which the development may be visible, the different groups of people who may experience views of the development, the places where they will be affected and the nature of the views and visual amenity at those points.' (para 3.15 page 32).

3.1.6 GLVIA3 defines the value of a given landscape as 'The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society' (para 5.19 page 80) and provides a range of factors that can help in the identification of valued landscapes. However, the Landscape Institute have subsequently published a detailed Technical Guidance Note on Assessing Landscape Value Outside of National Designations (TGN 02/21) in February 2021. This guides my methodology for assessing the landscape value of the site, which in turn forms part of my landscape sensitivity opinion of the site. Landscape value is considered in Section 4.

3.1.7 GLVIA3 also provides guidance on assessing the significance of landscape effects. This requires the consideration of the sensitivity of landscape receptors (defined aspects of the landscape that have the potential to be affected by the proposal).

The sensitivity of a landscape is defined in GLVIA3 as the combination of the site and its surroundings' susceptibility and value. Susceptibility is the 'ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and /or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies' (pages 88 and 89 para 5.40). I consider the susceptibility and sensitivity of the site and its surroundings in Section 4.

3.1.8 Where possible, my assessments of potential landscape and visual effects have been determined using the criteria and definitions from the methodology provided within the Appellant's submitted LVIA. The aim of basing my assessments on this methodology is to provide consistency in the terminology and scales of effects used within the Inquiry. This is intended to aid the Inspector in their consideration of the evidence.

## 4 Existing Landscape Character

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In this section I consider the existing baseline studies which have been undertaken for the site and surrounding area, the extent to which the site is typical of those studies, as well as the value and susceptibility of the landscape of the appeal site and its surroundings.

### 4.2 Landscape Character Baseline Assessments

4.2.1 The site is located within the study area of several landscape character assessments ranging from a national to local scale. Each study provides baseline descriptions of the landscape character.

#### 4.2.2 **Natural England National Character Area (NCA) 48 Trent & Belvoir Vales (C.D. 3.28)**

At a national scale, the appeal site lies within NCA 48 Trent & Belvoir Vales. This overview assessment covers a linear parcel of land from Nottingham in the southwest to Gainsborough in the north.

4.2.3 Due to the broad scale of this assessment, not all of the key characteristics and descriptive narrative can be observed in the area immediately surrounding the site. However, it is still useful for understanding the wider context of the appeal site. The Appellant's LVA includes a short extract from the general summary of the character area and two of the four Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO). It fails to note the relevance of the remaining SEOs, which highlight the character importance of sustainable agricultural practices and flood plains. The remaining SEOs are listed below:

- SEO 1: Maximise the use of sustainable agricultural practices that protect and enhance ecological networks in order to help safeguard the long-term viability of farming in the area while benefiting biodiversity, landscape character, carbon storage as well as water quality, availability and flow.
- SEO 3: Enhance the rivers and their flood plains for their ecological, historical and recreational importance, their contribution to biodiversity, soil quality, water

availability and in regulating water flow and the important role they play in underpinning the character of the area.

4.2.4 The Appellant's LVA also fails to identify any of the listed key characteristics of relevance to understanding the context of the area. These include:

- A gently undulating and low-lying landform in the main, with low ridges dividing shallow, broad river valleys, vales and flood plains.
- Agriculture is the dominant land use, with most farmland being used for growing cereals, oilseeds and other arable crops. While much pasture has been converted to arable use over the years, grazing is still significant in places, such as along the Trent and around settlements.
- A regular pattern of medium to large fields enclosed by hawthorn hedgerows, and ditches in low-lying areas, dominates the landscape.
- Extensive use of red bricks and pantiles in the 19th century has contributed to the consistent character of traditional architecture within villages and farmsteads across the area. Stone hewn from harder courses within the mudstones, along with stone from neighbouring areas, also feature as building materials, especially in the churches.
- A predominantly rural and sparsely settled area with small villages and dispersed farms linked by quiet lanes, contrasting with the busy market towns of Newark and Grantham, the cities of Nottingham and Lincoln, the major roads connecting them and the cross-country dual carriageways of the A1 and A46.
- Immense coal-fired power stations in the north exert a visual influence over a wide area, not just because of their structures but also the plumes that rise from them and the pylons and power lines that are linked to them.

#### 4.2.5 East Midlands Region Landscape Character Assessment 2010 – 4A Unwooded Vales (C.D 3.29)

This is a regional-scale assessment, commissioned by the East Midlands Landscape Partnership, providing an overview of landscape character typologies within the East Midlands. The Appellant's LVA fails to reference this document.

4.2.6 Despite the strategic nature of the East Midlands assessment, the site and surroundings display a large number of the highlighted characteristics from the relevant typology, 4A Unwooded Vales. Prominent characteristics from this typology observed in the vicinity of the appeal site include:

- Low hills and ridges gain visual prominence in an otherwise gently undulating landscape;
- Complex drainage patterns of watercourses that flow within shallow undulations often flanked by pasture and riparian habitats;
- Limited woodland cover; shelter belts and hedgerow trees gain greater visual significance and habitat value as a result;
- Productive arable and pastoral farmland, with evidence of increasing reversion to arable cropping in recent times;
- Regular pattern of medium sized fields enclosed by low and generally well maintained hedgerows and ditches in low lying areas; large modern fieldscapes evident in areas of arable reversion; and
- Sparsely settled with small villages and dispersed farms linked by quiet rural lanes.

4.2.7 Other relevant extracts from text describing the Unwooded Vales include:

- "The vast majority of the Vales retain a deeply rural and tranquil character, with farms and small nucleated villages located throughout areas of productive farmland, linked by narrow winding lanes and roads. Despite low levels of woodland cover, local landform, hedgerows and shelter belts create visual containment and give the Vales landscape an intimate character." (Page 138).

- “The Unwooded Vales landscape character type is also perceived as being relatively sparsely settled, with villages, hamlets and farms widely distributed throughout the rural landscape. These are often relatively small and nucleated, with surrounding belts of trees integrating them into their landscape setting, the skyline often only being punctuated by the church spire or tower which can be seen from some distance away” (Page 141).
- “The Unwooded Vales Landscape Character Type has a strong agricultural character, with wide areas retaining a sense of rural tranquillity. This is particularly evident where the vale landscape is intact, with farmland interspersed with small villages and hamlets” (Page 141).

#### 4.2.8 **Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment 2009 – SN06 Aslockton Village Farmlands (C.D 3.30)**

This county level assessment identifies the appeal site to fall within the South Nottinghamshire Farmlands Regional Character Area (RCA). The RCA is then subdivided further into smaller Draft Policy Zones (DPZ), with the appeal site located wholly within SN06 Aslockton Village farmlands. The Appellant’s LVA correctly includes almost the full list of key characteristics provided within the character assessment, as well as separately highlighting the importance of views to church spires expressed within the report. However, the LVA does not highlight other relevant elements from the character assessment:

- “The landscape has a strong rural tranquil character which feels remote from urban centres” (under the heading of condition)
- “The character strength of the area is STRONG. The area has a relatively uniform character of arable fields, linear blocks and clumps of woodland and small distinctive rural villages” (under the heading of landscape strength)

#### 4.2.9 In a section outlining management actions relating to the landscape, the report includes the following:

- Conserve the consistent distinctive character of small villages throughout the area
- Conserve the prominence of churches within village skylines

- Any developments along village fringes should encourage the use of red brick and pantile roofs and make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness within each individual village.

#### **4.2.10 Melton and Rushcliffe Landscape Sensitivity Study: Wind Energy Development 2014 – South Nottinghamshire Farmlands: Aslockton Village Farmlands (C.Ds 3.32-3.32.3)**

Jointly commissioned by Melton Borough Council and RBC in 2014, the aim of this study was to understand how best to accommodate future wind energy development across both boroughs. Although the report details sensitivity to wind turbines specifically, it also provides general comments on landscape sensitivity of relevance to the appeal site and surroundings. It is correctly referenced within the Appellant's LVA. Focusing on the same unit of land identified within the 2009 Greater Nottingham LCA, the 2014 study locates the appeal site within the Aslockton Village Farmlands. A summary of key sensitive features and views includes:

- Narrow winding rural lanes.
- Rural, remote and tranquil character.
- Prominence of church spires.
- Distinctive historic villages in wooded settings.

4.2.11 In addition, Figure 5.25 identifies the Church of St Mary and All Saints in Hawksworth (Grade II\* Listed) and the Church of St Helena in Thoroton (Grade I Listed) as 'secondary landmarks' for their tower and spire respectively. Accompanying text outlining the importance of church spires and towers as secondary landmarks states, "Churches form local skyline landmarks across much of the study area, in fact they are a particularly distinctive feature of the landscape of these two Boroughs. These churches contribute to the historic character and scenic quality of the Boroughs and it is desirable to conserve them as landmark features" (Page 15).

#### **4.2.12 Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2022 (C.D 8.1)**

Although primarily focused on the Hawksworth Conservation Area as a heritage asset, this document provides some useful baseline character description, as well as information on key views. Relevant extracts include:

- “The surrounding flat landscape allows for views across the landscape that has been divided into large arable fields” (Page 3)
- “The rich farmland and adjacent fields make a considerable contribution to the village scene” (Page 4)

**4.2.13** Appendix 2 is a map showing the Conservation Area boundary, with a series of ‘significant views’ indicated by magenta-coloured arrows. The main map shows significant views out of the village, with the inset illustrating significant views into the Conservation Area. The proposals have the potential to change views highlighted at the northern edge of the village, looking northeast into appeal Field 1. Change is also possible from a view to the south of Hawksworth Manor, looking southeast towards Field 8. An arrow in the inset also suggests that views from Bridleway BW1, looking south-west towards the northern edge of the Conservation Area across Field 1 are significant. This view will also be affected.

#### **4.2.14 Thoroton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2022 (C.D 8.2)**

Similar to the Hawksworth document, the Thoroton report outlines relevant character description, stating “Part of the special character of Thoroton is its setting – on the approach, there are no built structures surrounding the village and only road signs indicating a slower speed suggest that a village is nearby” (Page 5).

**4.2.15** This document also contains a map showing ‘significant views’, included as Appendix 2. The view from the northern end of the village, looking out north-west towards development Fields 8 and 9, is included. In addition, the view from the north-west looking towards the Church of St Helena is also highlighted. Both views are predicted to change as a result of the appeal scheme.

## 4.3 Observed Landscape Character

- 4.3.1 The baseline landscape character and sensitivity studies provide useful contextual descriptions and guidelines for development. However, to fully appreciate the existing character, it is also important for me to outline the additional characteristics I have observed during my site visits.
- 4.3.2 The appeal site comprises nine agricultural fields of varying size on land between the villages of Hawksworth and Thoroton, covering approximately 94.2ha. Each of the nine fields are currently in use for arable production, with topography varying from c.17m to 26m AOD. The site itself is distinctly rural with very few elements of urban influence. Existing electricity pylons traverse north-south through Fields 5, 6, and 8, with low level electricity poles also running across parts of Fields 4, 5, 6, and 9. The pylons are slightly at odds with the existing character of the site, but not to the extent that they undermine the intrinsically rural perception of the landscape.
- 4.3.3 Fields are internally separated by existing hedgerows and tree lines of varying condition. Multiple woodland clusters and linear shelterbelts exist within and directly adjacent to the red line boundary, providing strong vertical features on the rural skyline. A series of drainage ditches also run along some field boundaries, including 'The Gutter' which separates Field 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- 4.3.4 A public right of way (PRoW), Hawksworth Bridleway 1 and 6, crosses the full width of the northern portion of the site, providing recreational access to appreciate the undulating rural land. The varied topography of the route and changes in surrounding vegetation provide a series of changing views towards both settlements of Hawksworth and Thoroton. An elevated part of the bridleway in Field 5 offers scenic views towards the spire of the Grade I Listed Church of St Helena in Thoroton.
- 4.3.5 Externally, field boundaries predominantly consist of mature hedgerows with intermittent individual trees, these are gappy in places. Hedgerows separate the appeal site from rural lanes along the eastern, western, and part of the southern boundaries. National Cycle Network Route 64 runs through Thoroton and northwards along the eastern site boundary. A series of PRoWs connect with the wider right of way network surrounding the site. These

include Bridleway Thoroton BW3 to the east, Thoroton footpath FP2 and Hawksworth BW7 to the south, as well as Hawksworth FP3 connecting to FP2 to the west.

- 4.3.6 The settlements of Hawksworth and Thoroton are both largely contained within designated conservation areas. The existing architecture, scale of buildings, as well as modest local road network combine to provide a sense of time depth, with each settlement appearing to have an historic character and minimal recent development. The undeveloped arable land of the appeal site forms an important part of the setting to both settlements, strengthening the historic integrity of each village within the wider rural landscape.

## 4.4 Landscape Receptors

- 4.4.1 GLVIA3 defines landscape receptors as components of the landscape that are likely to be affected by the proposed development, such as "overall character and key characteristics, individual elements or features, and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects" (Page 86, paragraph 5.34).

- 4.4.2 Relating to this appeal, I consider the landscape receptors to be:

- The character of the site itself
- The character of the Hawksworth settlement edge
- The character of the Thoroton settlement edge
- The character of SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands

- 4.4.3 Contrary to GLVIA3 guidance, the Appellant's LVA does not explicitly identify landscape receptors. Assessments in the LVA sometimes mention the character of the site itself and sometimes refer to the wider landscape character area. This offers a less thorough approach and makes it difficult to directly compare findings.

## 4.5 My Assessment of Landscape Value

- 4.5.1 To assess the value of the appeal site and surrounding landscape, I have used the latest guidance from the Landscape Institute, TGN 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (C.D 3.26). It is important to note that the Appellant's LVA does not reference or utilise this guidance.

4.5.2 The technical note stresses that: “When assessing landscape value of a site as part of a planning application or appeal it is important to consider not only the site itself and its features/elements/characteristics/qualities, but also their relationship with, and the role they play within, the site’s context” (paragraph 2.4.5 Table 1 notes).

4.5.3 Below I have assessed the site and surroundings against the indicators of landscape value identified in TGN 02-21:

#### **4.5.4 Natural Heritage**

Existing woodland clusters and shelterbelts within and around the appeal site are an important feature of natural heritage. They are a valued natural capital asset and contribute to the wider rural setting of Hawksworth and Thoroton.

#### **4.5.5 Cultural Heritage**

The settlements of Hawksworth and Thoroton display clear evidence of historical interest including many listed buildings and boundary features that contribute positively to the landscape. The spire of the Church of St Helena in Thoroton is particularly noticeable against the backdrop of the rural skyline. The two settlements with their undeveloped rural surroundings act to provide a sense of time depth.

#### **4.5.6 Landscape Condition**

The appeal site is in moderate physical condition, with some areas showing signs of active landscape management. Existing hedgerows are gappy in places, but are mostly intact.

#### **4.5.7 Associations**

I can find no evidence of associations between notable people, events, or the arts and the appeal site or surroundings.

#### **4.5.8 Distinctiveness**

As outlined previously, the site and surroundings display multiple elements of the characteristics highlighted in the local and regional landscape character assessments. In addition, the site makes a crucial contribution to the rural settings and distinctive character of Hawksworth and Thoroton. Each settlement has a strong sense of place.

#### **4.5.9 Recreational**

There is direct public access across the appeal site in the form of Hawksworth Bridleways 1 and 6, this PRoW crosses numbered Fields 1, 4, and 5 and shows signs of regular use. National Cycle Network Route 64 also runs along the eastern boundary. Other PRoWs offer surrounding connections to other parts of the wider rural landscape.

#### **4.5.10 Perceptual (Scenic)**

The site itself has many pleasant aesthetic elements that can be experienced from the bridleway traversing the northern fields. The route offers changing visual interest through undeveloped arable fields and a short section of woodland. Various intermittent views towards Hawksworth and Thoroton are available from the undulating topography providing further visual interest.

#### **4.5.11 Perceptual (Wildness and Tranquillity)**

The arable landscape of the appeal site and surroundings displays many signs of human management in the form of agriculture and therefore cannot be described as wild. However, many of the PRoWs in the area offer a strong sense of tranquillity.

#### **4.5.12 Functional**

Woodland clusters, shelterbelts, and existing hedgerows make a contribution to the healthy functioning of the landscape, offering considerable green infrastructure and visual amenity. Much of the appeal site also provides an important function as productive arable land.

#### **4.5.13 Summary assessment of landscape value**

The Appellant's LVA methodology fails to reference TGN 02-21: Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations, but instead relies on factors outlined in Box 5.1 of GLVIA3. Whilst this approach is somewhat outdated, it can still provide some useful considerations of value. Nevertheless, the LVA methodology does provide an acceptable descriptive scale for assessing landscape value in Table 1-1 of its methodology.

4.5.14 Considering the elements of value outlined above and using the descriptive scale included within the Appellant's LVA methodology, I assess the site itself to hold medium landscape

value. Although the site itself does not hold any national landscape designations, it forms an important part of the character setting to Hawksworth and Thoroton.

- 4.5.15 I do not consider it as a 'valued landscape' for the purpose of NPPF Paragraph 180(a). However, it is important to stress the value that local people place on the site. This is illustrated by the considerable number of objections raised by local residents and the mobilisation of the Rule 6 Party.
- 4.5.16 The distinct character integrity of Hawksworth and Thoroton hold a slightly higher landscape value, which is reflected in the Conservation Area designations. I therefore assess the character of each settlement edge to hold medium to high landscape value.
- 4.5.17 Considering the elements of landscape character identified within SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands in the baseline studies, as well as more local elements highlighted in my appraisal, I assess the DPZ to hold medium landscape value.
- 4.5.18 Despite not utilising TGN 02-21, the Appellant's LVA assesses landscape value of the site to be medium. There are no other comparable value assessments offered for the two settlement edges or the wider landscape character area.

## 4.6 Susceptibility to Change and Character Sensitivity

- 4.6.1 GLVIA3 defines susceptibility to change as 'ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies' (pages 88 and 89 para 5.40).
- 4.6.2 From review of the baseline landscape character assessments and my own fieldwork observations, I consider the susceptibility of identified landscape receptors to the appeal scheme below. Each rating uses the definitions from Table 1-3 of the Appellant's LVA methodology:
- Site itself – high susceptibility
  - Hawksworth settlement edge – high susceptibility
  - Thoroton settlement edge – high susceptibility

- SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands – high susceptibility

4.6.3 The susceptibility of the appeal site is affected by its existing lack of intrusive development and its proximity to settlements with strong character integrity. The agricultural land use, undulating topography, woodland features, and lack of built development on site give the land a strong rural character. I have also highlighted the role that the site performs in the setting of the two villages. These finely balanced elements are vulnerable to the introduction of development on the scale proposed by the appeal scheme, which would cause a considerable change in the landscape baseline. With this in mind, it is necessary to assess the susceptibility of the site itself and the two settlement edges as high.

4.6.4 I also assess the susceptibility of SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands to the proposed development to be high. The baseline studies stress the existing rural character of the DPZ. The proposals have the potential to undermine this at a localised level.

4.6.5 GLVIA3 explains that the process for assessing landscape sensitivity requires a combined judgement of susceptibility and value. I assessed the landscape value of each receptor in Section 4.5 of this proof. Below I have combined the value and susceptibility assessments for each receptor to give a sensitivity assessment:

- Site itself – medium sensitivity
- Hawksworth settlement edge – medium to high sensitivity
- Thoroton settlement edge – medium to high sensitivity
- SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands – medium sensitivity

4.6.6 The Appellant's LVA assesses the site and surroundings to hold medium susceptibility to the proposals, with minimal justification provided. Considering the lack of existing character detractors and the scale of the proposed scheme, it is difficult to see how this assessment has been reached.

4.6.7 Whilst the LVA offers a medium assessment of landscape sensitivity for the site itself, which is agreed, the report fails to assess the sensitivity of other relevant landscape receptors. Once again this is a less thorough approach and fails to highlight the adjacent settlement edges of both villages as more sensitive to the proposals.

## 5 Landscape Effects of the Proposals

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In this section, I consider the landscape character effects of the appeal proposals on the site and surrounding area.

### 5.2 Magnitude of Landscape Effects

5.2.1 I have reviewed the relevant submitted drawings, statements, and strategies that detail the proposed appeal scheme. Outlined below are predicted key changes to the landscape as a resource and also elements of identified landscape character.

5.2.2 The proposals represent a considerable reduction in the agricultural land which forms a rural setting to Hawksworth and Thoroton, with undeveloped arable fields replaced by intrusive built form and associated infrastructure. This would equate to the total loss of a key landscape characteristic and would be detrimental to the character of the settlement edge to both villages. The introduction of solar arrays and associated infrastructure would introduce an uncharacteristic and dominant built influence to the area.

5.2.3 With the exception of facilitating a new access in Field 8, existing trees and hedgerows along site boundaries are set to be retained and strengthened in places. Proposed planting within the scheme includes 2.5km of new hedgerow and multiple areas of woodland planting. There is also an area of wildflower meadow proposed within Field 5. In addition, there are proposed biodiversity enhancement features including bird boxes, bat boxes, hedgehog houses, herptile hibernacula, invertebrate hotels, and bee banks. These features represent a beneficial landscape effect in places.

5.2.4 When considering the magnitude of landscape effects, GLVIA3 states that effects should be assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility (para 5.48, page 90). Each element is considered below.

#### 5.2.5 Size or scale

The Appellant's LVA states "the Proposed Development Site comprises nine fields covering a total area of c. 94.24hectares (ha), although only 37.7ha of this area is required to

accommodate the solar arrays themselves, with the remaining area being used for ancillary infrastructure and mitigation and enhancement measures" (Page 16, paragraph 4.2). Whilst this calculation may discount land between the solar arrays from land required to accommodate the development, it is not possible to discount that land from the area of perceived character change. Ultimately, the vast majority of the appeal site will undergo substantial change in coverage from arable land to supporting solar arrays for energy generation.

5.2.6 The area of the proposed appeal scheme is considerably larger than the existing built development area within either of the adjacent villages. This would be at odds with the existing pattern of land use and would introduce development at a speed and scale unprecedented within the local area.

#### 5.2.7 Geographical extent

Within the site itself landscape effects will be significant, with a considerable alteration from the baseline characteristics across the full site. In terms of the immediate surroundings, there will be a notable change in the character of the separate Hawksworth and Thoroton settlement edges, eroding the established rural setting to each village. Landscape effects will be restricted to a local level, however, with limited effects on the wider DPZ (SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands) as a whole.

#### 5.2.8 Duration and reversibility

Predicted landscape effects will not be permanent, as the solar farm will have an operational lifespan of 40 years. Therefore, effects should be considered to be long-term, but reversible. Effects will be amplified during construction due to the increase in activity and the temporary presence of uncharacteristic machinery and stockpiles of materials. It is unclear whether proposed planting adjacent to bridleways BW1 and BW6 will be removed following the conclusion of operational activity, or if the narrow corridor will remain permanently. Therefore, there is potential for the change in field patterns and loss of open character within Fields 1, 2, 4, and 5 to be permanent.

5.2.9 Using the descriptors from Table 1-8 of the Appellant's LVA, I have summarised my predicted magnitude of landscape effects on each identified receptor below.

5.2.10 Table 1: Magnitude of Landscape Effects

		Landscape baseline			Assessment timeframe		
		Value	Susceptibility to the proposals	Sensitivity to the proposals	During construction	At completion	10 Years following completion
Landscape Receptor	Site itself	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	High
	Hawksworth settlement edge	Medium to high	High	Medium to High	High to medium	Medium	Medium
	Thoroton settlement edge	Medium to high	High	Medium to High	High to medium	Medium	Medium
	SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

5.2.11 The Appellant’s LVA assess the magnitude of landscape effect for the wider landscape character area to be medium at completion, reducing to low over time. Whilst I agree with this assessment for SN06, the LVA does not provide a predicted magnitude of landscape effect for the site itself, nor does it consider effects on the adjacent settlement edges.

### 5.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

5.3.1 The table below summarises my landscape effects significance assessments for identified receptors across varying temporal scales. This is based upon the matrix in Table 1-10 in the Appellant’s LVA methodology. Assessments combine an understanding of the sensitivity of each receptor to the proposals with the predicted magnitude of change. When applying the matrix, the Appellant’s LVA methodology states, “this matrix approach, while helpful, is not a prescriptive tool, as at times the table may not provide a clear correlated value, which is where professional judgment plays an important role in determining the overall degree of effect” (Page 12, paragraph 1.38). I agree with this approach and have exercised professional judgment where necessary.

5.3.2 Table 2: Significance of Landscape Effects

		Assessment timeframe		
		During construction	At completion	10 Years following completion
Landscape Receptor	Site itself	Major adverse	Major to moderate adverse	Major to moderate adverse
	Hawksworth settlement edge	Major to moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
	Thoroton settlement edge	Major to moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
	SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands	Moderate adverse	Minor adverse	Minor adverse

5.3.3 For the site itself, the Appellant’s LVA assesses a moderate adverse effect at Year 1, with the prediction reducing to a moderate to minor adverse level by Year 10. It is my opinion that this underestimates the level of effect at Year 1 and overestimates the effect of mitigation measures by Year 10. The level of effect on the two settlement edges is not assessed.

5.3.4 My colleague Emily Temple deals primarily with planning policy. However, when considering these assessments of landscape effects against the relevant planning policy, it is my opinion that the appeal scheme conflicts with both local and national policy. The proposals do not make a positive contribution to the sense of place, they do not reinforce valued local characteristics, nor do they conserve the setting to the Hawksworth and Thoroton Conservation Areas. This places the scheme in conflict with LPP1 Policy 10 and the guidance provided for DPZ SN06 Aslockton Village Farmlands. The inappropriate siting of the solar farm and identified level of landscape effects also conflicts with LPP2 Policy 16. By failing to be sympathetic to the local character and landscape setting, the appeal scheme is in conflict with NPPF Paragraph 135, sub-section C. It is also my opinion that the scheme fails to address the predicted landscape character impacts, placing it in conflict with NFFP

Paragraph 160, sub-section A. In addition, the proposals do not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as required by NPPF Paragraph 180, sub-section B, as well as LPP2 Policy 22.

## 6 Visual Effects of the Proposals

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 In this section, I examine the potential visual effects of the appeal proposals. I visited the site in February 2023 and May 2024 to make my own observations and carry out my own visual impact assessment in accordance with GLVIA3.

### 6.2 Receptors and Visual Sensitivity

6.2.1 When considering the sensitivity of visual receptors, GLVIA 3 states:

“It is important to remember at the outset that visual receptors are all people. Each visual receptor, meaning the particular person or group of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint, should be assessed in terms of both their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views” (Page 113, paragraph 6.31).

6.2.2 It continues to identify visual receptors most sensitive to change as being:

- Residents at home
- People engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape
- Visitors to heritage assets where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience
- Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area

6.2.3 The guidance states that “travellers on road, rail or other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category”.

6.2.4 GLVIA3 identifies less sensitive receptors to be (para 6.34, page 114):

- People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape
- People at work

6.2.5 Using the descriptors in Table 1-7 of the Appellant’s LVA methodology, the receptors with high sensitivity to visual effects of the appeal scheme are:

- Residents at home at the northern end of Main Road in Hawksworth
- Residents at home at the northern end of Main Street in Thoroton
- People using Hawksworth bridleways BW1 and BW6 crossing the appeal site
- People using Hawksworth footpath FP3 south of Hawksworth

6.2.6 Receptors judged to hold medium sensitivity to visual effects of the appeal scheme are:

- People in vehicles along the local road network
- Cyclists along National Cycle Network Route 64

6.2.7 There are no visual receptors identified in the low sensitivity category.

6.2.8 I visited and assessed all 8no. viewpoints from the Appellant’s LVA, as well as the 7no. additional viewpoints provided in the Appellant’s Landscape and Visual Appeal Response (LVAR).

## 6.3 Magnitude and Significance of Visual Effects

6.3.1 Using the descriptors included within Table 1-9 of the Appellant’s LVA methodology, I have assessed the magnitude of change to identified visual receptors. I have also used the matrix in Table 1-10 in the same methodology to assess the significance of visual effects on each receptor during construction (winter), at completion (winter), and at 10 years post completion (summer). Once again, I have exercised professional judgement where necessary when utilising the significance matrix. A summary of visual effects on each receptor group is provided below.

### **6.3.2 Visual effects on residents at the northern end of Main Road in Hawksworth**

For residents living in several houses at the northern end of Main Road in Hawksworth, the proposals represent a high level of change from existing views of undeveloped agricultural land to an expanse of solar arrays. This would cause the widespread loss of characteristic features and the blanket addition of built form into the view and would be particularly apparent from upper floor windows. Visual effects will be more prominent during construction due to the presence of large machinery, and stockpiles of materials. The high level of predicted change combined with high sensitivity of the receptors leads to a predicted major adverse visual effect during construction. This will reduce to a major to moderate adverse level by Year 1.

6.3.3 Although mitigation planting will slightly soften the appearance of the new development over time, the proximity of receptors to the site will mean that the appeal scheme will continue to be prominent within the view. Mitigation planting will also partially change the composition of the view, with the loss of characteristic views to wider countryside. Therefore, moderate adverse effects are predicted to remain by Year 10. It is important to note that views from these receptors are in a similar position to a 'significant view' identified in Appendix 2 of C.D 8.1. Therefore, the view holds value in perceiving the rural setting of Hawksworth.

6.3.4 The Appellant's LVA gives an assessment of major to moderate adverse effects during construction and at Year 1. There is minimal disagreement between parties on this. The LVA states that visual effects will reduce to a moderate to minor adverse level by Year 10 following establishment of proposed planting, but I disagree. Mitigation planting will reduce views to open countryside from ground level and will not be effective in screening development from upper floor windows.

### **6.3.5 Visual effects on residents at the northern end of Main Street in Thoroton**

Residents living in a collection of properties at the northern end of Main Street in Thoroton, including two properties at Manor farm Cottages situated slightly further north, may experience a medium level of change during construction. Construction activity, including the temporary compound, and new solar arrays will be apparent from upper floor windows.

The separation provided by the offset field left undeveloped south of Field 9, as well as some screening from existing boundary vegetation will limit effects to a major to moderate adverse significance during construction, reducing to moderate adverse at Year 1. By Year 10 proposed woodland planting at the southern end of Field 9 will screen elements of development within parts of Fields 6, 7, 8, and 9, however solar arrays on sloping topography in Field 5 will still intrude on views. I predict moderate adverse visual effects to remain by Year 10 for these residents. The view looking north-west from the northern edge of Thoroton is identified as a 'significant view' in Appendix 2 of C.D. 8.2 This further emphasises the importance of the view in appreciating the setting of the village.

6.3.6 The LVA submitted by the Appellant assesses visual effects for these receptors to be moderate adverse during construction and at Year 1, reducing to minor adverse by Year 10. Once again it is my opinion that this overestimates the effectiveness of proposed mitigation. The sloping topography of the appeal site means that elements of development will still intrude on higher contours.

**6.3.7 Visual effects on people using Hawksworth bridleways BW1 and BW6 crossing the appeal site**

People using bridleways BW1 and BW6 crossing Fields 2, 4, and 5 of the appeal site currently experience varied rural views across the undulating topography and through clusters of woodland to the settlements of Hawksworth and Thoroton. During construction PRow users will have unmitigated short distance views to construction activity across much of the recreational route. This high level of change would represent a major adverse significance of visual effect. In an attempt to mitigate visual effects, the proposals are to plant a corridor of hedgerows either side of the bridleway for the majority of the route. This will change the existing views of open countryside to a narrow tunnel of hedgerow. Although this may reduce some visibility to parts of the solar arrays, the loss of longer distance views represents a considerable reduction in visual amenity. It also prevents walkers from appreciating their location within the landscape in relation to the two settlements and perceiving the undulating topography. In particular, scenic views from higher ground in Field 5, towards the spire of the Church of St Helena in Thoroton, will be interrupted by solar arrays at lower levels and potentially screened all together by proposed planting eventually. This is also true

for the view to Belvoir Castle in the far distance. Planting will have minimal effect by Year 1, causing major adverse visual effects to remain. This will reduce to a major to moderate adverse level by Year 10 following establishment.

6.3.8 It is important to note that BW1 and BW6 are bridleways actively used by people on horseback. Whilst representative viewpoints in the Appellant's LVA have been taken in accordance with the latest Landscape Institute guidance note on photography (TGN 06/19) the LVA makes no mention of allowance for people on horseback viewing the scheme from a greater height. This has the potential to further reduce the effectiveness of mitigation planting.

6.3.9 The Appellant's LVA assesses visual effects on people using the bridleways to be slightly lower during construction and at Year 1 (major to moderate adverse), further reducing to a moderate to minor adverse level by Year 10. This is justified by the predicted screening effect of mitigation hedgerows. Whilst it is agreed that close distance views to hedgerow will be an improvement on potential views to solar arrays, this assessment does not account for the loss of longer distance views to open countryside. It therefore fails to appreciate the full level of adverse effects.

#### **6.3.10 Visual effects on people using Hawksworth footpath FP3 south of Hawksworth**

Hawksworth footpath FP3 runs southeast away from Hawksworth Manor. People using the recreational route will experience some visual change due to proposed solar arrays and substation compound situation in Field 8 on higher ground. Construction activity and new built form is likely to cause a medium level of change resulting in major to moderate adverse visual effects. This will reduce to a moderate adverse effect after construction has ceased in Year 1. Proposed management of existing hedgerow along the western boundary of Field 8 to a taller height will further reduce this to a moderate to minor adverse effect by Year 10.

6.3.11 Assessment in the LVA states a minor adverse visual effect during construction and at Year 1, reducing to no change by Year 10. It is my opinion that this neglects the potential additional intrusion caused by the substation compound.

### **6.3.12 Visual effects on people in vehicles along the local road network**

Visual change for people in vehicles along the country lanes adjacent to the appeal site will be restricted by existing boundary vegetation, as well as the fact that people experiencing the views will be moving at a reasonable speed. Some aspects of construction activity may be seen from vehicles leading to a medium level of change in places where vegetation is gappy. This represents a moderate to minor adverse significance of effect. This will reduce to a minor adverse effect by Year 10.

6.3.13 The assessment of effects on people in vehicles along the local road network is broadly in line with my findings.

### **6.3.14 Visual effects on cyclists along National Cycle Network Route 64**

Despite National Cycle Network Route 64 running adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site, the Appellant's LVA does not identify cyclists as a visual receptor. I predict cyclists will experience the same level of visual change as identified for vehicle users above. However, as they are likely to be travelling at lower speeds, cyclists may be more aware of the solar development. Whilst I do not believe this makes enough difference to alter the significance assessments to those predicted for vehicle users, views from the promoted cycle route should be recognised separately.

### **6.3.15 Summary of visual effects**

Although the proof of Emily Temple deals primarily with planning policy, I have considered my assessment of visual effects against the relevant local and national policy. The identified adverse impact on views to the surrounding countryside and scenic views towards the spire of the Church of St Helena in Thoroton places the scheme further at odds with LPP1 Policy 10 and the guidance provided for DPZ SN06 Aslockton Village Farmlands. Visual effects arising from the proposals, particularly those identified to be moderate adverse or greater provide further conflict with LPP2 Policy 16 and effects on PRoWs at odds with LPP2 Policy 34. The failure of the scheme to adequately mitigate visual effects also conflicts with NFFP Paragraph 160, sub-section A. Failing to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside does not meet the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 180, sub-section B, as well as LPP2 Policy 22.

## 7 Conclusion and Summary

- 7.1.1 The appeal is against refusal of planning permission for the “Installation of renewable energy generating solar farm comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays, together with substation, inverter stations, security measures, site access, internal access tracks and other ancillary infrastructure, including landscaping and biodiversity enhancements”. The site is located on Land East of Hawksworth and Northwest of Thoroton, Shelton Road, Thoroton, Nottinghamshire. The site is currently undeveloped and is in use for agriculture. Planning permission for the scheme was refused for two reasons, with this evidence relating to Reasons 1 only.
- 7.1.2 My involvement with the appeal scheme began in January 2023, when I was appointed by Rushcliffe Borough council (RBC) to advise on the original planning application, 22/02241/FUL. My findings were issued as a Landscape Review report in March 2023. In March 2024, I was informed that an appeal had been lodged against refused planning permission and I was appointed by RBC to prepare evidence for this Inquiry. I have reviewed the relevant application documents and applicable policy documents, and I have made multiple site visits to appraise the appeal site and its environs in terms of landscape character and visual impact. My evidence provides my professional opinion on the potential effects of the appeal scheme on the existing landscape character and appearance. My methodology adheres to guidance set out in GLVIA3, as well as Landscape Institute TGN 02-21.
- 7.1.3 I have established the planning context for the appeal by identifying the relevant national and local planning policies. My evidence also considers the relevant baseline landscape character documents ranging from a national to a local scale, as well as character observations made on site. It is my opinion that the area displays many of the characteristics identified within the baseline studies, in particular the local landscape character assessment. I have identified the relevant landscape receptors to the appeal scheme and assess the site itself to hold high susceptibility, the Hawksworth and Thoroton settlement edges to each hold high susceptibility, and the wider local character area SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands to hold a high susceptibility to change.

- 7.1.4 Using Landscape Institute TGN 02-21, I have assessed the landscape value of the site and surroundings. Although the site itself does not hold any national landscape designations, it forms an important part of the character setting to Hawksworth and Thoroton. However, I do not consider it as a 'valued landscape' for the purpose of NPPF Paragraph 180(a).
- 7.1.5 For each receptor I have assessed the sensitivity to the appeal proposals by combining the identified landscape value and susceptibility. The site itself was assessed to hold medium sensitivity, with medium to high sensitivity assessed for the two settlement edges and SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands.
- 7.1.6 I have considered the predicted magnitude and significance of landscape change that would result from the appeal scheme. The proposals represent a considerable reduction in the agricultural land which forms a rural setting to Hawksworth and Thoroton, with undeveloped arable fields replaced by intrusive built form and associated infrastructure. This would equate to the total loss of a key landscape characteristic and would be detrimental to the character of the settlement edge to both villages. The introduction of solar arrays and associated infrastructure would introduce an uncharacteristic and dominant built influence to the area. Within the site itself landscape effects will be significant, with a considerable alteration from the baseline characteristics across the full site. In terms of the immediate surroundings, there will be a notable change in the character of the separate Hawksworth and Thoroton settlement edges, eroding the established rural setting to each village. Landscape effects will be restricted to a local level, however, with limited effects on the wider DPZ (SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands) as a whole. Predicted landscape effects will not be permanent, as the solar farm will have an operational lifespan of 40 years. Therefore, effects should be considered to be long-term, but reversible. Effects will be amplified during construction due to the increase in activity and the temporary presence of uncharacteristic machinery and stockpiles of materials.
- 7.1.7 By Year 10, the significance of landscape effects was assessed to be major to moderate adverse for the site itself, moderate adverse for the Hawksworth and Thoroton settlement edges, and minor adverse for SN06: Aslockton Village Farmlands.

- 7.1.8 When considering visual effects of the appeal scheme, there is disagreement on the level and significance of visual effect to receptors. It is my opinion that the Appellant's LVA underestimates the predicted visual effects of the appeal scheme and overestimates the effectiveness of proposed mitigation. I predict major to moderate adverse visual effects on users of bridleways BW1 and BW6, which cross Fields 2, 4, and 5 of the appeal site. In an attempt to mitigate visual effects on users of the PRoW, the proposals are to plant a corridor of hedgerows either side of the bridleway for the majority of the route. This will change the existing views of open countryside to a narrow tunnel of hedgerow. Although this may reduce some visibility to parts of the solar arrays, the loss of longer distance views represents a considerable reduction in visual amenity. It also prevents walkers from appreciating their location within the landscape in relation to the two settlements and perceiving the undulating topography. In particular, scenic views from higher ground in Field 5, towards the spire of the Church of St Helena in Thoroton, will be interrupted by solar arrays at lower levels and potentially screened all together by proposed planting eventually. This is also true for the view to Belvoir Castle in the far distance.
- 7.1.9 I predict moderate visual effects to remain for residential receptors at the northern end of Hawksworth by Year 10. From here, the proposals represent a high level of change from existing views of undeveloped agricultural land to an expanse of solar arrays. This would cause the widespread loss of characteristic features and the blanket addition of built form into the view and would be particularly apparent from upper floor windows. This view is recognised as a 'significant view' within the Hawksworth Conservation Area Appraisal and holds value in perceiving the rural setting of the village. Moderate visual effects are also predicted for residents at the northern end of Thoroton, which also represents a 'significant view' in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal. From this viewpoint solar arrays on sloping topography in Field 5 will be prominent above proposed mitigation planting.
- 7.1.10 Visual effects on walkers along footpath FP3 south of Hawksworth are predicted to be moderate to minor adverse by Year 10, with effects on vehicle users and cyclists along the local road network assessed as minor adverse.
- 7.1.11 It is my opinion that by failing to be sympathetic to the local character and landscape setting, the appeal scheme is in conflict with NPPF Paragraph 135, sub-section C. It is also my opinion

that the scheme fails to address the predicted landscape character and visual impacts, placing it in conflict with NFFP Paragraph 160, sub-section A. In addition, the proposals do not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as required by NPPF Paragraph 180, sub-section B.

- 7.1.12 In reference to local planning policy, it is also my opinion that the proposals do not make a positive contribution to the sense of place, they do not reinforce valued local characteristics, nor do they conserve the setting to the Hawksworth and Thoroton Conservation Areas. This places the scheme in conflict with LPP1 Policy 10 and the guidance provided for DPZ SN06 Aslockton Village Farmlands. The inappropriate siting of the solar farm and identified level of landscape effects also conflicts with LPP2 Policy 16. The identified adverse impact on views to the surrounding countryside and scenic views towards the spire of the Church of St Helena in Thoroton places the scheme further at odds with LPP1 Policy 10. Visual effects arising from the proposals, particularly those identified to be moderate adverse or greater provide further conflict with LPP2 Policy 16 and effects on PRoWs at odds with LPP2 Policy 34.
- 7.1.13 For the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal scheme would result in development that would significantly and demonstrably harm the landscape setting, character and appearance of the site, as well as the settlement edges of Hawksworth and Thoroton.

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