

Chapter 06: Landscape and Visual Impact

Environmental Impact Assessment
Report for:

Westfield Substation Extension

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6. Landscape and Visual Amenity

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This chapter has been completed by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP). It considers impacts on landscape and visual amenity by outlining the existing and baseline conditions at the site and in the surrounding area, it reviews the relevant policy framework, considers the impacts of the Proposed Development on the identified baseline conditions and, where necessary, proposes mitigation measures.
- 6.1.2 Landscape and visual amenity effects are independent but related issues. Landscape effects relate to changes to the landscape fabric and the features contained within the landscape character; visual effects relate to the appearance of such changes within views and the resulting effect on visual amenity.
- 6.1.3 The landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) (**Technical Appendix 6.1**) examines the current on-site landscape and visual baseline conditions and evaluates the site in its broader context with reference to sensitive visual receptors, landscape designations and published landscape character. The assessment process involves an ongoing analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects of the evolving development proposals and, where 'significant' impacts cannot be avoided through an iterative design process, recommends additional mitigation measures.
- 6.1.4 The Cumulative Assessment as contained in detail within the LVIA at **Technical Appendix 6.1 (TA 6.1)** is summarised within **Chapter 12**.

6.2 The Scope of Assessment and Consultation

Scope of Assessment

- 6.2.1 The purpose of the LVIA is to *“identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people’s views and visual amenity”* (GLVIA, 2013), as part of the EIA process.
- 6.2.2 The assessment considers two separate but inter-linked environmental topics:
- Landscape character: which is the physical make up and condition of the landscape itself, and arises from a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of physical and social elements, aesthetic factors, and perceptual aspects; and
 - Visual amenity: which has to do with the number, distribution and character of views towards, from or within the site.
- 6.2.3 In undertaking the assessment, the following have been undertaken:
- A thorough review and analysis of relevant designations, planning policies, and background documents;
 - Assessed the existing (baseline) condition and character of the site and its setting (including the area for the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL and the temporary SuDS);

- Assessed the existing visual (baseline) context, especially any key views to and from the site;
- Described the landscape aspects of the Proposed Development that may influence any landscape or visual effects;
- Provided an analysis of the likely landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development (including 33kV undergrounding and the temporary SuDS), which is determined by combining the magnitude of the predicted change with the assessed sensitivity of the identified landscape and visual receptors. The nature of any predicted effects is also identified (i.e. positive/negative, permanent/reversible), as is the significance and temporal nature;
- Assessed the cumulative effects in accordance with the approach described in **Chapter 12**; and
- Provided a summary and conclusion.

6.2.4 This chapter is supported by the following figures:

- **Figure 6.1:** Westfield Substation Extension Location;
- **Figure 6.2:** Site Context and Local Character;
- **Figure 6.3:** Planning Designations and Environmental Context;
- **Figure 6.4:** Landscape Character;
- **Figure 6.5:** Topography;
- **Figure 6.6:** Zone of Theoretical Visibility and Viewpoint Locations;
- **Figure 6.7:** Photoviewpoints;
- **Figure 3.2:** Illustrative Landscape Strategy; and
- **Figure 3.3:** Illustrative Cross-Section.

Consultation

6.2.5 Under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 a request for a Scoping Opinion was submitted to Fife Council (FC) in July 2024, and a Scoping Opinion provided by FC in September 2024. No specific comments or feedback on landscape and visual matters were received in the response, but the Scoping Opinion confirmed that landscape and visual amenity should be scoped into the EIAR, and as such, an LVIA undertaken. It also confirmed the approach proposed in the scoping report was acceptable, and set out that night time effects had been scoped out of further assessment.

6.2.6 The Pre Application consultation with the Council (see **Technical Appendix 2.2**) included a number of requirements for the LVIA, in particular a ZTV out to 2km and photomontages, visualisations, wireframes and viewpoint assessments. The LVIA complies with this by providing wireframe visualisations and an assessment using agreed viewpoints. It was agreed with FC that photomontages were not required in this instance.

6.2.7 Further consultation was undertaken with FC to present the proposed representative viewpoints to be used in the assessment, and these were agreed via email in July 2024. A copy of this is provided in **Technical Appendix 6.1**.

6.3 Assessment Methodology and Significance Criteria

6.3.1 The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the following:

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition (LI/IEMA, 2013) (GLVIA3);
- Landscape Institute Draft Technical Guidance Note (dTGN) 05/23 Notes and Clarifications on aspects of the 3rd Edition Guidelines on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) (2023);
- Landscape Institute TGN 02/19 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA);
- NatureScot (2021) Assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of onshore wind energy developments;
- Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook – ‘Appendix 2 - Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment’ (Scottish Natural Heritage 2018);
- Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and The Countryside Agency 2002);
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TNG) 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (September 2019); and
- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note (TNG) 02/21 Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (2021).

Establishing the Baseline

6.3.2 The first stage of the assessment is to establish the baseline conditions of the site and surrounding area, which includes identifying the landscape character and key features of the landscape and whether any landscape designations affect the site. Sources examined for the desktop study have included:

- National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (February 2023);
- Fife’s Local Development Plan – FIFEplan (September 2017);
- Making Fife’s Places Supplementary Guidance (2018);
- Low Carbon Fife Supplementary Guidance (2019);
- Scottish Natural Heritage National Landscape Character Assessment (1998);
- Scottish Natural Heritage 2019 Landscape Character Type map and LCT Descriptions (2019) – this documentation has superseded the 1998 assessment;
- Local Ordnance Survey (OS) Maps; and
- Aerial Photographs.

6.3.3 Site appraisal has been undertaken during the assessment process, the purpose of which is:

- To confirm the extent of study areas for the landscape and visual assessments, respectively;
- To confirm status of baseline conditions identified by the desktop;

- Confirm the landscape character areas within the study area and compare these to the actual baseline condition; and
- Identify the Primary Visual Envelope of the site and record key viewpoints from within this, which will be used to inform the landscape and visual assessment of the Proposed Development.

Future Baseline (2030)

- 6.34 A number of assumptions are made to define the 'no development' scenario or future baseline of the site. The future landscape and visual baseline in this location would largely depend on natural processes, climate and land management practices. However, in terms of other developments, the nearby EGL4 development would change the immediate locality due to the scale of the proposed converter station.
- 6.35 The site's existing topography would remain unchanged without development. However, the visual perception of these landforms could change due to vegetation growth or removal, or a change in farming practices.
- 6.36 Conventional tillage practices, especially on slopes or in areas that experience heavy rainfall, can accelerate soil erosion. This can lead to the loss of topsoil, which is the most fertile layer, reducing the land's long-term agricultural productivity. Intensive farming tends to deplete soil nutrients, especially if monoculture practices are used. This may impact on future vegetation growth and potential perceptions on pastoral landscape.
- 6.37 It is assumed that current land management and natural processes will continue, and therefore, the future baseline of the site will remain largely unchanged.
- 6.38 The impact of climate change on the landscape and visual resource is assessed through the consideration of a potential future baseline if the Proposed Development was not pursued. Whilst it is unlikely that completely new direct impacts would arise as a result of climate change based on the current conditions, the geographic spread or scale of potential impacts might be changed when considered against the future baseline conditions. Considerations to the future baseline condition in landscape visual terms include:
- Changes to temperature and precipitation; the extent of change predicted would be likely, in time, to change the landscape around us, in a number of ways. However, it is unlikely that the subtle changes would lead to wholesale change to the future landscape baseline within the lifetime of the Proposed Development;
 - The site's existing topography would remain unchanged without development. However, the visual perception of these landforms could change due to vegetation growth or removal; and
 - Vegetation on-site would change with natural succession. These changes might include certain tree species or grassland becoming more dominant/prevalent but given the character of the site itself, which contains hedgerow boundaries with trees, these changes would not have a prominent impact. With the potential loss of old or mature trees within the site, their removal may alter the skyline openness, and visibility of the site, if they weren't replaced.

- 6.3.9 It is expected, that with continued baseline conditions and management in conjunction with natural processes change to the character of the site will be low. For visual effects, the future baseline under a climate change scenario would not lead to any greater, or different, effects to those predicted.

Proposed Representative Viewpoints

- 6.3.10 **Figure 6.6** provides the location of the representative viewpoints, which have supported the LVIA, overlaid upon a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) diagram. This ZTV illustrates the worst-case potential visibility based on the maximum height parameters that are illustrated on **Figure 3.5**.

Undertaking the Assessment

- 6.3.11 The second stage of the landscape and visual assessment seeks to describe and make a judgement on:
- The effects on the Landscape Character: The effects which may arise as a result of the Proposed Development on discrete character areas and/or character types comprising features that may possess a particular quality or merit, as they sit within the EIA study area; and
 - Visual Effects: Effects that may arise as a result of the Proposed Development on views from visual receptors, such as users of local rights of way and Core Paths, and upon the amenity value of the views from surrounding receptors.
- 6.3.12 An assessment of any residual effects, which may arise following the incorporation of mitigation measures, is undertaken and the significance of these effects stated.
- 6.3.13 The final output of the exercise has been to provide text and illustrative material which:
- Establishes the baseline conditions at a point at which the site will become available for the Proposed Development;
 - Assesses the landscape and visual sensitivity to change to the type of development proposed;
 - Assesses the landscape impact of the Proposed Development on the site and relevant surrounding area;
 - Assesses the visual effects of the Proposed Development on visual receptors in the surrounding area;
 - Identifies areas of landscape and visual concern and/or benefit in relation to the construction and operation of the Proposed Development;
 - Advises on any proposals to mitigate potential significant adverse effects; and
 - Identifies the residual impacts of the Proposed Development and their significance in EIA terms.
- 6.3.14 **Table 6.1** defines the matrix that has been used to identify the level of effects to landscape and visual receptors. The detailed methodology for the assessment of effects is included **Technical Appendix 6.1**. This includes full definitions of sensitivity and magnitude of change, and the criteria used to assess them.

Table 6.1: Level of Effects Matrix

Overall Sensitivity	Overall Magnitude of Change				
	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Very High	Very Substantial	Substantial	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate
High	Substantial	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor
Medium	Major	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor
Low	Major/ Moderate	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible
Very Low	Moderate	Moderate/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Negligible	Negligible

6.3.15 In some cases, the magnitude of change may be less than very low or ‘imperceptible’. Any imperceptible magnitude of change would result in a negligible effect. Where there is no change identified, there would be no effect.

6.3.16 Effects of moderate or higher are generally considered to be **significant**, and those of moderate/minor or lower are considered **not significant**. In certain cases of moderate effects, where additional factors may arise, a further degree of professional judgement may be applied when determining whether the overall change in the view will be significant or not. For example, in cases where a moderate effect is experienced by a high or very high sensitivity receptor, this may be considered to be significant. Similarly, where a moderate effect is experienced by a very low sensitivity receptor, this may not be considered significant. Where this occurs, further explanation is given within the assessment.

Geographical Scope

6.3.17 To establish the baseline and potential limit of significant effects, the study area has been considered at two geographical scales:

- First, a broad ‘study area’ was adopted, based mainly on desk-based study, allowing the geographical scope of the assessment to be defined based on the likely extent of views to/from the site, extent of landscape effects and the site’s environmental planning context; and
- Second, following initial analysis and subsequent fieldwork, the broad study area was refined down to the land that is most likely to experience landscape effects. The extent of this detailed study area is 3km from the site boundary, although occasional reference may be made to features beyond this area where appropriate. This detailed study area is illustrated on **Figure 6.1**.

Temporal Scope

6.3.18 The evaluation of effects will be considered for construction, Year 1 and Year 15 of the operation of the Proposed Development. The evaluation of residual effects at Year 15 allows for the

consideration of the screening effects of screen planting that will be incorporated as mitigation for the Proposed Development.

Assessment Limitations and Assumptions

- 6.3.19 The methodology and approach follow best practice guidance. The field assessment was undertaken by a qualified landscape architect during September 2024 and various months in 2025, and 2026 when weather conditions were generally fair to good. A site assessment has been undertaken in the late summer months to minimise the risk of adverse weather conditions curtailing views of the site. Therefore, existing vegetation was still in leaf and may have obscured views of the site. However, this assessment is based on the worst-case scenario of winter views when vegetation is not in leaf.

6.4 Legislation and Policy Context

National Planning Framework NPF4 (adopted 2023)

- 6.4.1 Policies that are specific to the site in landscape and visual terms are summarised below.

- **Policy 1 – Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises** establishes the overarching requirement that all development proposals contribute to the climate and nature crises objectives. This provides important context for the interpretation of all other NPF4 policies;
- **Policy 2 – Climate Mitigation and Adaptation** requires development to be sited and designed to minimise emissions and energy use, support climate resilience, and respond to current and future climate risks;
- **Policy 4 – Natural Places** seeks to protect, restore and enhance natural assets, making best use of nature-based solutions. The policy emphasises safeguarding biodiversity, valued natural features and landscapes;
- **Policy 5 – Soils** requires development proposals to protect soil quality and manage land sustainably, ensuring that disturbance to high-quality soils is minimised and appropriately mitigated;
- **Policy 6 – Forestry, Woodland and Trees** emphasises the protection and enhancement of existing woodland and individual trees, requiring proposals to minimise loss and to deliver compensatory planting where removal is unavoidable;
- **Policy 7 – Agriculture** seeks to protect prime agricultural land and support sustainable agricultural land use, ensuring that development does not compromise future agricultural productivity unless justified;
- **Policy 11 – Energy** intends to encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. The policy requires project design and mitigation to demonstrate how significant landscape and visual impacts will be addressed;

- **Policy 14 – Design, Quality and Place** supports development proposals that align with the six qualities of successful places: Healthy, Pleasant, Connected, Distinctive, Sustainable and Adaptable; and
- **Policy 20 – Blue and Green Infrastructure** aims to protect and enhance blue and green infrastructure and their networks, ensuring multifunctional benefits for people and nature.

FIFEplan

6.4.2 The site lies within the district boundary of Fife. The FIFEplan was adopted in September 2017 and includes general development policies, to which the development proposals will be tested. Policies that are relevant to the site in landscape and visual terms are summarised below.

- **Policy 1 – Development Principles** states that *“development proposals will be supported if they conform to relevant Development Plan policies and proposals, and address their individual and cumulative impacts. Such development proposals must meet one of the points in Part A and conform to all applicable requirements in Parts B and C”*. Part B of the policy states that *“development should be appropriate for its locations and safeguard the character and qualities of the landscape”*. Part C of Policy 1 states that *“development proposals must be supported by information or assessments to demonstrate that they will comply with the following relevant criteria and supporting policies”*;
- **Policy 7 – Development in the countryside** states that in all cases of development in the countryside, on landscape and visual matters, the development must *“be of a scale and nature compatible with surrounding uses”*, and *“be located and designed to protect the overall landscape and environmental quality of the area”*;
- **Policy 10 – Amenity** states that *“Development will only be supported if it does not have a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of existing or proposed land uses. Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not lead to a significant detrimental impact on amenity”*; and
- **Policy 13 – Natural Environment and Access** states that *“Development proposals will only be supported where they protect or enhance natural heritage and access assets including:..., designated sites of local importance”* such as Local Landscape Areas, vegetation that has landscape value, and landscape character and views.

Making Fife’s Places Supplementary Guidance

6.4.3 The Making Fife’s Places Supplementary Guidance (MFPSG) was adopted in 2018 and sets out FC’s expectation for the design of development in Fife. Appendix B of the document provides details and guidance on landscape site appraisals for development. The document lists 11 actions that a landscape appraisal in Fife should follow – the LVIA complies with this.

Fife’s Low Carbon Supplementary Guidance

6.4.4 The Low Carbon Fife Supplementary Guidance (2019) supports sustainable development in Fife by setting expectations for reducing carbon emissions and improving energy performance in new proposals. The guidance requires developments to incorporate low-carbon design measures, consider opportunities for district heating, and demonstrate how layout and building form minimise

energy use. It also highlights that measures such as renewable energy technologies, SuDS and green infrastructure should be sensitively integrated to avoid adverse landscape and visual impacts, ensuring low-carbon solutions are appropriately designed within their site and wider setting.

6.5 Baseline Conditions

- 6.5.1 This section provides an assessment of the 'baseline' (existing) conditions in respect of the character of the site and its landscape context. It summarises any relevant published landscape assessments that contribute to a better understanding of the landscape context.

Current Landscape Baseline (2025)

National Character Assessment

- 6.5.2 At the national level, landscape character within the site and study area is defined as Landscape Character Types (LCT) by the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) National Landscape Character Assessment. The original 1998 study was superseded in 2019 by the SNH '2019 Landscape Character Type map and associated Landscape Character Type Descriptions' study, which updated the character descriptions and mapping.

- 6.5.3 As shown in **Figure 6.4**, the site is located within 'LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys'. The LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys Location and Context is described as:

"The Lowland Hills and Valleys Landscape Character Type forms a series of low hills and valleys predominantly of boulder clay with outcrops of bedrock, the valleys closely associated with the main river systems and a number of burns draining to the coast. They form an expansive area including much of lowland Fife, running the length of the study area between the volcanic uplands and Foothills and the coastal systems, and comprising separate areas: North West Cupar, East Cupar, Tarvit Mill, Strathmiglo, North and East of Dunfermline, Fordell, West Dunfermline, South Dunfermline, South Oakley, Black Devon, Bluther Burn, Devilla Forest, Cameron, Prior Muir and Falkland".

- 6.5.4 As shown in **Figure 6.4**, there are six non-host LCTs located within 3km of the site, as follows:

- **LCT 182 Upland Hills:** Located approximately 1.2km north-west of the site. LCT 182 is a long, thin LCT, located along the high ground to the north-west of Ballingry. Connectivity between the site and LCT are divorced by the settlement of Ballingry and the surrounding hill slopes. Some intervisibility is possible from panoramic locations on the edge of the LCT, where views of Ballingry, the existing substation, and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility (which is located in the broader Fife Energy Park), are also experienced. Key characteristics include *"Extensive, panoramic and elevated views across substantial distances and many other landscape types"*, so LCT 182 will be assessed further for potential impacts arising from the Proposed Development;
- **LCT 183 Hill Slopes:** Located approximately 1km north-west of the site. LCT 183 is a long, thin LCT, located along the rising slopes of the high ground to the north-west of Ballingry. The edge of the LCT runs along the settlement boundary of Ballingry, so connectivity between the site and LCT are very limited. Some minor intervisibility is possible from locations on the edge of the LCT, where breaks in the woodland occurs. However, views of Ballingry, the existing substation, and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility are also experienced. Although it is

unlikely that the Proposed Development would have any discernible effects on the character of LCT 183, due to its proximity and elevation it is assessed within the LVIA;

- **LCT 185 Pronounced Hills and Crags:** Located approximately 1.2km north-east of the site. LCT 185 is a large LCT, located on the northern side of the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility. Several fields, reservoirs, and the infrastructure associated with the wider Fife Energy Park (which includes the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility) are located between the site and LCT, so intervisibility and connectivity between the site and LCT are limited. Key characteristics include “*Some extensive views across other Landscape Character Types*”, so LCT 185 will be assessed further for potential impacts arising from the Proposed Development;
- **LCT 191 Lowland Loch Basins:** Fife: Separated into two areas across the Study Area, the area to the west is located approximately 1.25km from the site. This area is a small, isolated part of the LCT, located on the west side of the settlement of Ballingry, so intervisibility and connectivity between the site and LCT are very limited. A second area of LCT 191 is located approximately 0.2km north of the site. It is a long, thin and small area, sandwiched between three LCTs within the Study Area. Agricultural fields and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility are located between the site and the northerly part of the LCT, restricting connectivity, with intervisibility also limited by vegetation. Although the primary characteristics of this LCT are the Loch basins, with little emphasis on the relationship to the wider landscape outside of the LCT, or reference to important views associated with the site. Its proximity means it is assessed within this LVIA;
- **LCT 383 Rugged Lowland Hills:** Located approximately 1.5km north-west of the site. LCT 383 is a long, thin LCT, located on the northern hill slopes of the high ground to the north-west of Ballingry. Intervisibility and perceptual connectivity between the site and LCT are *de minimis*, limited to small pockets of theoretical visibility in the extreme south-eastern tip and one area in the centre. Due to the leevatd nature of the LCT it is assessed in the LVIA; and
- **LCT 390 Lowland Basins:** Located approximately 0.5km north of the site. LCT 390 is a large, expansive LCT. Connectivity between the site and LCT are separated by surrounding fields, as well as another LCT. Intervisibility is predominantly obscured by topography, with very limited intervisibility experienced on the most southernly edge of the LCT. Due to proximity, this LCT is assessed within the LVIA.

The Site Character

- 6.5.5 Site visits were conducted in 2024 and 2025 to assess the site conditions. The parts of the site not within the existing substation comprise predominantly agricultural land, including arable fields surrounded by hedgerows and fencing. There is a patch of rough grassland near the existing substation, and large overhead line towers are present in the eastern and southern parts of the site. The site is heavily influenced by electrical infrastructure in the form of the neighbouring substation and the network of OHLs.
- 6.5.6 The landscape quality varies, with the arable land being intensively farmed and poor in biodiversity, while field boundaries feature some vegetation. The eastern parts of the site comprise an existing substation, with the boundary to the open parts of the site formed by metal palisade fencing. Existing field boundaries with vegetation comprise the boundaries to the south and north-west, and a grass verge along the northern edge adjacent to a road.

- 6.5.7 Surrounding land use includes a mix of arable and pasture farmland, with smaller fields, a quarry and the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility. The topography is generally flat at approximately 85m aOD but the landscape gradually rises to ridgelines and higher points to the south and west. Overall, the 'non substation' parts of the site comprise an agricultural landscape on the edge of industrial and residential development, with limited visibility due to surrounding topography.
- 6.5.8 The area required for undergrounding of the 33kV OHL and the temporary SuDS comprises agricultural land, a small area of trees at the northern end and crosses a farm access track. The route also crosses a ditch and a watercourse between field parcels.

Identified Landscape Receptors

- 6.5.9 Landscape receptors have been identified that will be potentially impacted by the proposals and therefore appraised as part the assessment. Landscape receptors can include the constituent elements of the landscape (landscape features and fabric) and the character of the landscape in different areas. It also includes a consideration of the aesthetic and perceptual factors, which contribute to landscape character. The landscape receptors identified include those within the site and within the detailed 'Study Area'. They are summarised as follows.

Landscape Features and Fabric

- Arable farmland within the site;
- Rough grassland within the site;
- Arable and pasture farmland surrounding the site;
- Internal treed hedgerows;
- Hedgerows and vegetation along the boundaries of the site; and
- Topography.

Landscape Character

Host Landscape Character Areas

- 6.5.10 The landscape character of the site is considered representative of the host LCT (LCT 186), in particular the presence of open farmland with a variable pattern of post and wire fences and hedgerows with trees, as well as roadside planting. The subtlety of the landform influences the extent of visibility to and from the site, and the presence of woodland, settlement, and roadside planting within the wider Study Area also adds to the changing visibility across the landscape.
- 6.5.11 There are several notable landscape detractors in the immediate vicinity of the site, including a substation and associated overhead lines, and infrastructure associated with the Fife Energy Park to the north. The presence of industrial development and dense settlement within the LCT alters not only the visual experience of the landscape but also effects the smells and sounds of the landscape, impacting the perceptual experiences in and around the site.

Non-Host Landscape Character Areas

- 6.5.12 The site is located outside of LCT 182, with the boundary of the LCT over 1km from the site, and the settlement of Ballingry in the space between. Therefore, the majority of the key characteristics of the LCT are unrelated to the site, and the site does not form part of the setting to the LCT. One of the

key characteristics focuses on views from the LCT *“Extensive, panoramic and elevated views across substantial distances and many other landscape types”*. The eastern edge of the LCT affords these panoramic views, which includes the site, as well as views of the existing substation and Fife Energy Park.

- 6.5.13 Located approximately 1km north-west of the site, LCT 183 is a long, thin LCT, located along the rising slopes of the high ground to the north-west of Ballingry. The edge of the LCT runs along the settlement boundary of Ballingry, so connectivity between the site and LCT are very limited. Some minor intervisibility is possible from locations on the edge of the LCT, where breaks in the woodland occurs. However, views of Ballingry, the existing substation, and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility are also experienced.
- 6.5.14 The site is located outside of LCT 185, with the boundary of the LCT over 1km from the site, and the Fife Energy Park in the space between. Therefore, the majority of the key characteristics of the LCT are unrelated to the site, and the site does not form part of the setting to the LCT. One of the key characteristics focuses on views from the LCT *“Some extensive views across other Landscape Character Types”*. The western edge of the LCT affords these extensive views, which somewhat includes the site, as well as views of the top of the existing substation and Fife Energy Park.
- 6.5.15 LCT 191 is separated into two areas across the Study Area, the area to the west is located approximately 1.25km from the site. This area is a small, isolated part of the LCT, located on the west side of the settlement of Ballingry, so intervisibility and connectivity between the site and LCT are very limited. No impacts on this part of the LCT is predicted so it is not considered further.
- 6.5.16 A second area of LCT 191 is located approximately 0.2km north of the site. It is a long, thin and small area, sandwiched between three LCTs within the Study Area. Agricultural fields and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility are located between the site and this northerly part of the LCT, restricting connectivity, with intervisibility also limited by vegetation. The primary characteristics of this LCT are the Loch basins, with little emphasis on the relationship to the wider landscape outside of the LCT.
- 6.5.17 Located on elevated ground to the north-west of the site, from LCT 383, there is very limited theoretical intervisibility from this LCT, with this limited to the extreme south-eastern part and a small patch in the LCT’s interior. There will be limited actual change, which would be evident in the context of existing industrial and energy infrastructure.
- 6.5.18 Located approximately 0.5km north of the site. LCT 390 is a large, expansive LCT. Connectivity between the site and LCT are separated by surrounding fields, as well as another LCT. Intervisibility is predominantly obscured by topography, with very limited intervisibility experienced on the most southernly edge of the LCT.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 6.5.19 The sensitivity of a landscape resource is the product of the inherent value attached to the landscape and its susceptibility to the type of development proposed in a particular location. The overall sensitivity of the landscape character receptors to be assessed are summarised in **Table 6.2**. Further detail is provided within **Technical Appendix 6.1**.

Table 6.2: Landscape Character Receptor Summary

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
The site and its Immediate Context	Medium	Medium/Low	Medium
Host LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys	Medium/Low	Low	Medium/Low
Non-host LCT 182 Upland Hills	High	Low	Medium
Non-host LCT 185 Pronounced Hills and Craggs	Medium	Very Low	Low
Non-host LCT 183 Hill Slopes	High	Low	Medium
Non-host LCT 191 Lowland Loch Basins - Fife	Low	Low	Low
Non-host LCT 383 Rugged Lowland Hills	Medium/High	Low	Medium
Non-host LCT 390 Lowland Basins	Medium	Medium	Medium

Current Visual Baseline (2025)

- 6.520 Visual amenity (as opposed to ‘visual character’ previously described above) is not about the visual appearance of the site, but has to do with the number, distribution and character of views towards, from or within the site. An analysis of visual amenity allows conclusions to be reached about who may experience visual change, from where and to what degree those views will be affected by the Proposed Development. This section identifies those visual receptors which have been subject to detailed consideration in the assessment of effects.
- 6.521 The assessment of visual amenity begins with a computer-generated zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV), which indicates areas that may experience visual change based solely on digital landform height data, without considering buildings or vegetation. This ZTV (as shown on **Figure 6.6**) is refined through a field assessment conducted by an experienced Landscape Architect, identifying a zone of primary visibility (ZPV) where views of the Proposed Development are typically open and clear. Beyond the ZPV is a zone of filtered visibility, where the proposal may be perceptible but not immediately obvious.
- 6.522 The extents of the ZPV are as follows:
- **North:** The infrastructure and vegetation associated with the Fife Energy Park, alongside the level change between the site and adjacent B9097 road and the vegetation along this road, heavily obscures views of the site, limiting views to adjacent receptors;
 - **East:** Views from the east are curtailed by the existing substation and vegetation associated with the B9097, as well as surrounding woodland. Limiting views to adjacent receptors;
 - **South:** Views from the south are predominantly screened by the local ridgeline with plantation running along the hill-top, limiting views of the site to receptors within 1km of the site; and

- **West:** To the west, a gentle increase in topography towards the settlement of Ballingry limits views to receptors within 1km.

6.5.23 Within the ZPV and wider area, the people ('receptors') likely to experience visual change can be considered as falling into a number of discernible groups.

Users of Long Distance Walking Routes

6.5.24 **Long Distance Walking Routes (LDWR)** are designed routes across the countryside and generally expand across large distances, connecting several settlements and landmarks. People using LDWRs are predominantly using the routes for the purposes of walking within the rural landscape, with views experienced from the LDWR an important aspect to the enjoyment of walking the route.

6.5.25 **Fife Pilgrim Way (including Core Paths R410, R519, R520, R817):** The Fife Pilgrim Way LDWR was formed in 2019 and connects West Fife with East Fife via routes used by medieval pilgrims. The LDWR passes through the southern section of the Study Area, entering from the west, below Ballingry, and from the east, on the edge of Fife Energy Park (**Figure 6.6**). The route includes several Core Paths, and for the purposes of this assessment, Core Paths that share the route with the Fife Pilgrim Way are assessed under the LDWR route. The LDWR is separated in seven sections along its route, providing individual segments for walkers to complete. The section that passes through the Study Area is 'Section 3: Crosshill to Glenrothes', which is 14km in length and starts on the settlement edge of Crosshill, and terminates in Glenrothes. **Photo viewpoints EDP 7, 8, 9 and 10** show a range of views from this route. The route is assessed in terms of the sections affected (east and west) and overall.

Core Path Users

6.5.26 Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, everyone has the statutory right of access to all land and inland waters (unless specifically excluded by the Act), and although there are no footpaths or bridleways marked on the 1:25,000 scale map (public rights of way (PRoW) are unaffected by the Act), local councils have a duty to produce Core Path plans which represent those paths that councils consider to be key in their areas.

6.5.27 The Core Paths within, or in proximity, to the Study Area are shown on **Figures 6.3 and 6.6**. Within the Study Area there are a number of Core Paths, and those deemed to potentially experience views of the site are reviewed below.

6.5.28 **Core Path R580 (Old Railway Route)** is located approximately 150m north-west of the site. The Core Path starts and terminates on the edge of Ballingry, providing part of a circular route on the eastern edge of the settlement. Partial views of the site are experienced from the closest section of the Core Path, where topography levels out and field boundaries are formed by post and wire fencing. Users of the Core Path also experience views of the existing substation, OHL, and Fife Energy Park (**Photoviewpoint EDP 1**). Views from the Core Path closer to Ballingry experience more elevated views towards the site, but these are partially obscured by vegetation and landform (**Photoviewpoint EDP 2**).

6.5.29 **Core Path R581 (Old Drove Road Link)** is located approximately 0.5km west of the site. It is a short Core Path, connecting Core Path R580 and R817.

- 6.5.30 **Core Path R583 (Vane Farm) Core Path R828 (Dunmore Fort Spur)** is located 2.2km north-west of the site on high ground in the Lomond Hills Regional Park. The majority of the Core Path is located within woodland, so views east are sporadic and filtered. A 250m section runs through a clearing that affords expansive views east across the landscape. Elevated views of the site are experienced from this section of the Core Path, which includes views of Ballingry, the existing substation, and the Fife Energy Park (**Photoviewpoint EDP 11**).
- 6.5.31 **Core Path R828 (Dunmore Fort Spur)** is located 1.8km north-west of the site on high ground in the Lomond Hills Regional Park. The Core Path is a 580m length of path that connects R583 and Dunmore Fort and runs along a ridgeline. Panoramic views of the wider landscape are afforded from this Core Path. Elevated views of the site are experienced from this Core Path, which includes views of Ballingry, the existing substation, and the Fife Energy Park (**Photoviewpoint EDP 12**).

Road Users

- 6.5.32 **The B9097** runs adjacent to the site's northern boundary, connecting settlement to the south of the site with the M90 Motorway, to the north of the site. The road is elevated above the site, and an embankment of vegetation separates the road from the site. Views of the main part of the site are predominantly screened due to the site being located on lower ground, roadside vegetation, and the existing substation (**Photoviewpoint EDP 5**). Views towards the site open up from the road to the north, where it rises with the landform (**Photoviewpoint EDP 4**).
- 6.5.33 **The B920** runs through the centre of Ballingry, before leaving the settlement to the north-west of the site. Oblique views towards the site are afforded from the section of the B920 outside of the settlement, although sporadic roadside vegetation breaks up these views (**Photoviewpoint EDP 2**).
- 6.5.34 **The Unnamed Road (B920 to Auchmuirbridge)** is located approximately 1.3km north of the site, connecting the B920 to Auchmuirbridge. The road is located on higher ground, affording sporadic expansive views west across the landscape. The vegetation associated with the B9097 and landform obscure views of the site from the Unnamed Road (**Photoviewpoint EDP 6**).

Residential Dwellings/Groups

- 6.5.35 For the purposes of the LVIA, residential receptors have been grouped where they share similar locational characteristics and potential viewing experiences of the site. These receptor groups are defined as follows:
- **Group A – Ballingry (eastern settlement edge):** The settlement edge of Ballingry occupies elevated ground to the west of the site;
 - **Group B – Middleburn Cottages:** A small group of residential receptors located to the north of the site, at the junction of the B9097 and B920, on elevated ground;
 - **Group C – Western boundary receptors (south of B9097):** A group of residential receptors located adjacent to the western boundary of the site, from where relatively open views across the site are available;
 - **Group D – Capledrae:** A small group of residential receptors located on the northern side of the B9097, to the north-east of the existing substation; and

- **Group E – Pitkinny Forest (farmstead receptors):** A group of residential receptors associated with a farmstead complex located to the south of the site, on elevated ground to the north of Pitkinny Forest.

6.5.36 A precautionary approach has been adopted whereby all residential receptor groups are considered to be of high sensitivity to change, reflecting the importance of the wider landscape setting to visual amenity. This approach is applied at the level of receptor groups and settlements, rather than individual properties or internal aspects of dwellings.

Industrial Properties

6.5.37 Several industrial properties are located within the immediate context of the site:

- **Westfield Substation:** Located within the site and adjacent to the site's eastern boundary. Views of the open parts of the site are partially obscured by the existing high security fencing along the boundary of the substation, as well as internal buildings and infrastructure, and the field boundary vegetation in the site, although some views would be available; and
- **Westfield Energy Recovery Facility:** Located adjacent to the northern boundary, Westfield Energy Recovery Facility is an operational development with various infrastructure, dissected by large areas of woodland and trees. Views towards the site are predominantly screened by dense vegetation and the fact that the site sits 6m below road level.

6.5.38 It is unlikely that views of the Proposed Development would result in any significant effects on users of the Energy Recovery Centre or the substation, however they are included in the assessment for completeness.

Representative Viewpoints

6.5.39 A number of viewpoints have been selected that are considered representative of the nature of the views from each of the receptor groups. The selection of the representative viewpoints is based on the principle that the appraisal needs to test the 'worst case' scenario, and in selecting these viewpoints, they have sought to include:

- A range of viewpoints from all points of the compass, north, south, east and west;
- A range of viewpoints from distances at close quarters at the site boundary and up to distant viewpoints at 2.3km and more from the site (up to 4km); and
- Viewpoints from all the above receptor groups.

6.5.40 The representative photoviewpoints are shown on **Figure 6.6** and listed in **Table 6.3** together with an assessment of their sensitivity.

Table 6.3: Summary of Representative Photoviewpoints

PVP No.	Location	Grid Reference	Distance and Direction of View	Reason(s) for Selection and Sensitivity of Receptor
1	View from Core Path R580/01/R580/02 to the west of the site. Also represents other PRoW to the west of the site. Also represents other Public Right of Ways (PRoW) to the west, and CP R581 (northern end).	318549, 697248	459m; north--east	Core Paths Users - Medium Sensitivity
2	View from Core Path R580/03 to the west of the site. Also represents edge of Ballingry settlement	318269, 697350	671m; east-north--east	Core Paths Users - Medium Sensitivity Residents at Ballingry - High Sensitivity.
3	View from B920 Road to the north-west of the site. Also represents views from the edge of Ballingry	318088, 697884	782m; east	Minor Road Users - Medium/Low Sensitivity Residents at Ballingry - High Sensitivity.
4	View from B9097 Road to the north of the site. Also represents general views from the north	318484, 698079	532m; south--east	Minor Road Users - Medium/Low Sensitivity
5	View from B9097 Road to the east of the site. Also represent general views from the east.	319386, 697747	32m; west-south--west	Minor Road Users - Medium/Low Sensitivity
6	View from unnamed road to the north of the site. Also represent general views from the north	319972, 699610	2km; south-south--west	Minor Road Users - Medium/Low Sensitivity
7	View from Core Path R410/02/Fife Pilgrim Way to the east of the site	320377, 699131	3.9km; south--west	Fife Pilgrim Way Users - Medium/High Sensitivity
8	View from Core Path R520/01/Fife Pilgrim Way to the south-east of the site.	320377, 697066	1.1km; west-north--west	Fife Pilgrim Way Users - Medium/High Sensitivity
9	View from Core Path R519/04/Fife Pilgrim Way to the south of the site	319909, 696868	820m; west-north--west	Fife Pilgrim Way Users - Medium/High Sensitivity
10	View from Core Path R817/05/Fife Pilgrim Way to the south-west of the site. Also represents southern end of R581.	318811, 696262	1.2km; north	Fife Pilgrim Way Users - Medium/High Sensitivity
11	View from Core Path R583/01/Forestry Commission Open Land to the north-west of the site	316548, 697817	2.3km; east	Core Path Users in Lomond Hills Regional Park - Medium/High Sensitivity

PVP No.	Location	Grid Reference	Distance and Direction of View	Reason(s) for Selection and Sensitivity of Receptor
12	View from Core Path R828/01/Forestry Commission Open Land to the north-west of the site	316839, 698266	2.1km; east-south-east	Core Path Users in Lomond Hills Regional Park – Medium/High Sensitivity

Summary of Visual Receptors to be Assessed

6.5.41 **Table 6.4** details the visual receptors that experience views of the site and have the potential to experience larger than negligible effects from the type of development proposed.

Table 6.4: Visual Receptor Sensitivity Summary

Receptor	Value	Susceptibility	Overall Sensitivity
Users of the Fife Pilgrim Way LDWR (Including Core Paths R410, R519, R520, R817)	Medium/High	High	Medium/High
Fife Pilgrim Way West	Medium/High	High	Medium/High
Fife Pilgrim Way East	Medium/High	High	Medium/High
Core Path R580 Users	Medium	Medium	Medium
Core Path R581 Users	Medium	Medium	Medium
Core Path R583 Users	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High
Core Path R828 Users	Medium/High	Medium/High	Medium/High
B9097 Road Users	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
B920 Road Users	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
Unnamed Road Users	Medium	Low	Medium/Low
Group A Residents (Properties on the eastern edge of Ballingry)	High	High	High
Group B Residents (Middleburn Cottages)	High	High	High
Group C Residents (Properties south of B9097)	High	High	High
Group D Residents (Capledrae)	High	High	High
Group E Residents (Properties north of Pitkinny Forest)	High	High	High

6.6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

- 6.6.1 **Technical Appendix 6.1** provides a full and robust assessment of all identified landscape and visual receptors relevant to the Proposed Development. It sets out the detailed methodology, baseline analysis, receptor sensitivity and predicted magnitude of change, leading to the significance of effects for each receptor. The appendix therefore forms the primary evidence base for the landscape and visual impact assessment, with this chapter presenting a summary of the key findings.

Construction

Construction Landscape Effects

- 6.6.2 Construction activities, movement of site traffic, lighting, noise and sounds will be ever-present during the construction process and, to a lesser degree, during the works to decommission the existing 275kV substation elements, temporary SuDS works and 33kV cable undergrounding. This is not unusual and will be carefully controlled by a conditioned construction method statement. Recommendations for protection of retained trees and hedgerows – where this is possible – in accordance with relevant British Standards such as BS 5837, will ensure that the rooting areas of retained trees and hedgerows are not adversely affected by the construction process.
- 6.6.3 In this regard the AIA sets out the anticipated tree loss and retention, which is graphically illustrated on the Tree Protection Plan provided as **Figure 3.7** of the EIAR. The assessment below is based upon this tree loss and retention. There is no tree loss anticipated to result from the undergrounding of the 33kV, with felling at the northern end of the cable trench already having been undertaken as part of the SPD works related to the EGL project.
- 6.6.4 As would be expected for any development on a largely greenfield site, there will be a change to the character of the site itself, particularly during the construction phase. Activities would be limited to the site (including the 33kV undergrounding and temporary SuDS sites) and to the surrounding road network, but tranquillity would be notably reduced within these areas at times, albeit the adjacent substation provides a precedent for this type of infrastructure. Indirect effects of the Proposed Development would also be felt – although to a much lesser extent – on the landscape surrounding the site.
- 6.6.5 Internal changes would be typical for substation construction project, and involve activities across the whole site, including the creation of permanent SuDS basins on the southern parts of the site. The project also involves a number of temporary operations (limited to SuDS and the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL). Temporary areas and the 33kV OHL undergrounding works will be fully reinstated following the cessation of the construction phase.
- 6.6.6 There will be a short-term and temporary but high magnitude of change on the site, as construction (and 275kV decommissioning) activities, as well as the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL, will result in an alteration to the site but will not represent a total loss of features or character, resulting in major/moderate adverse and **Significant** effect on the site during construction.
- 6.6.7 The magnitude of change would be short-term and temporary, and reduce to medium for the LCT, resulting in moderate to moderate/minor adverse and **Not Significant** effects on the host Lowland Hills and Valleys LCT. All effects will only extend only for the duration of the construction process.

- 6.6.8 Across all assessed non-host Landscape Character Types (LCTs), the Proposed Development (and associated 33kV undergrounding and temporary SuDS) would result in only limited and largely short-term landscape effects during construction. Although some theoretical visibility is indicated in the ZTV, actual views would be substantially reduced by distance, existing tree cover, industrial context, and intervening landform. Construction-related changes – such as movement, lighting and noise – would be perceptible but localised and temporary. In each case, the magnitude of change ranges from very low to low, combining with low or medium sensitivity to result in effects that are moderate/minor to minor/negligible and consistently **Not Significant**.

Construction Visual Effects

- 6.6.9 The Fife Pilgrim Way (FPW) within the ZTV is considered across two sections: FPW West (FPWW) and FPW East (FPWE), with users of Core Paths assessed as part of the wider long-distance walking route.
- 6.6.10 For FPWW, the route is located within approximately 1km of the Proposed Development, where views are intermittent due to screening by vegetation and landform, but where available, the site is visible in the context of existing electrical infrastructure, including OHLs, substations and the WERF. Receptors using the route have a medium/high sensitivity. During construction, cranes, plant and associated activity, including works related to the decommissioning of the 275kV infrastructure and the 33kV undergrounding, would be visible and audible from some sections of the route. These changes would be temporary and short term, experienced across a moderate geographical extent, and would give rise to a medium magnitude of change. This would result in a moderate to major/moderate and **Significant** effect for users of the most affected sections of FPWW, as illustrated by Photoviewpoints EDP 9 and 10.
- 6.6.11 For FPWE, the route is largely located on lower ground, with the Proposed Development generally screened from view. Where limited elevated views are available, such as at Photoviewpoint EDP 7, the distance to the site means that construction activity would be barely perceptible. Consequently, the magnitude of change would be very low, resulting in a minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.12 Overall, while there would be localised moderate and significant effects for users within parts of FPWW during construction, these would be limited to users of short sections of the route in close proximity to the site. Users of the majority of the FPW would experience little or no change. As such, the overall effect on the route during construction would be low, resulting in a moderate to moderate/minor and **not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.13 For users of Core Path R580 (Old Railway Route), the construction of the electrical infrastructure, buildings, fencing, and latterly, the decommissioning works and landscaping proposals, will change the view variously through the construction stages, whilst cranes and other construction plant will also be noticeable at times (as would the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL), and lead to a high scale of impact of short term duration. This considers the embedded mitigation set out later in this chapter and in **TA 6.1**, but combined with the loss of the trees within the main parts of the site and on its peripheries (which will make changes more visible), the high scale of impact resulting from close range views across the open parts of the site changed from agricultural land to a substation would lead to a high magnitude of change and a locally major/moderate adverse and **Significant** effect for users in those areas at the northern end of the route near Capeldrae (see Photoviewpoints EDP 1

- and 2). The extent of the route impacted to this level would be approximately half the route between Capeldrae and Main Street, Ballingry.
- 6.6.14 For users along the remaining sections of the route a variety of factors would reduce the scale of change and proportion of views affected. This includes the surrounding context, and the extent of vegetation and built form bordering the route and the orientation of views, which would lead to differing scales of impact arising. This in turn would lead to magnitudes of change between very low and medium, and minor to moderate effects, which would generally be **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.15 CP R581 is located approximately 0.5km south-west of the site. Construction impacts for users are likely to be similar to those for CP R580, for which it is assessed at this stage that the construction of the electrical infrastructure, buildings, fencing, and latterly, the decommissioning works and landscaping proposals, will change the view variously, whilst cranes and other construction plant will also be noticeable at times (as would the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL), and lead to a high scale of impact of short term duration. This considers the embedded mitigation set out later in this chapter and in TA 6.1, but combined with the loss of the trees within the open parts of the site and on its peripheries (which will make changes more visible), the high scale of impact resulting from close range views across the open parts of the site being changed from agricultural land to a substation would lead to the potential for a high magnitude of change and a locally major/moderate adverse and **Significant** effect at times for the worst affected parts of the route. Based upon an assumed worst case informed by site assessment this is likely to be experienced by those using the northern half of the route only.
- 6.6.16 The screening along this route as experienced on the ground would mean the magnitude of change for users of the wider route would be lower, with a low magnitude of change and moderate/minor and **not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.17 CP R583 is located 2.2km north-west of the site on high ground in the Lomond Hills RP. The majority of the CP is located within woodland (recently felled but anticipated to be replanted given it is a commercial crop), so views east are sporadic and filtered. Where there are views within the clearing – as illustrated by **Photoviewpoint EDP 11** – there is an open view across the low-lying ground, which includes the existing substation, the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility, the settlement of Ballingry and numerous wind farms and OHL, which mean the changes predicted do not prominently conflict in character terms. Impacts arising from the construction phase (including decommissioning elements and undergrounding of the 33kV OHL) would be visible, and possibly audible, and would lead – given the expanse and variety in the view – to short term impacts which would encompass a small field of view when viewing in just one direction. This would lead to a medium magnitude of change, and a local moderate to major/moderate adverse effect which is **Significant**.
- 6.6.18 Considering effects on users of the overall route, the single view shown by **PVP EDP 11** would be unusual along this vegetated route, and a single view, in a single direction, would not lead to the same magnitude of change when considering users of the route overall (which in itself is quite short). Considering the short term scale of change, and geographical extent of this change, along with the existing characteristics of the view and the proposed change, the magnitude of change would be very low and the effect minor to moderate/minor, and **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.19 CP R828 is located 1.8km north-west of the site on high ground in the Lomond Hills RP. Views would be similar to those from CP R583, and the proposed substation extension, the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL, and decommissioning works of the 275kV elements would be visible in a view which

already contains extensive electrical infrastructure, including the existing substation, OHLs and the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility. Residential development at Ballingry is also visible, as are a number of wind turbines.

- 6.6.20 Changes arising from the construction phase would extend for a short term duration, and be evident across a small part of the view given the distance and orientation of views. The mitigation set out later in this chapter and in TA 6.1 would assist in limiting the impact. The construction phase elements would be visible from the whole route, and would lead – given the expanse and variety in the view – to a low magnitude of change, and a moderate/minor to major/moderate adverse effect which is **Significant**. This would apply to users of the whole of this short route. For users of the B9097, at the construction stage, views from, and the experience of using, the road would be felt extensively, but only locally, with a greater number of vehicles (including HGVs) using the road for a short period. Delays might be experienced, although appropriate controls would mitigate this in line with best practice. At this stage the construction of the substation extension (including decommissioning elements and the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL), including cranes, vehicle movements, earthworks and erection of infrastructure would be visible at close range and across a wide panorama when looking south. The scale of impact would be high, extend for a short-term duration but would be prominent in views and change the character of the immediate landscape noticeably.
- 6.6.21 The magnitude of change for users over a short length of the route would therefore be very high, leading to locally major to major/moderate adverse and **Significant** effects. This level of effect would dissipate as distance from the site increases, and the overall effect on users of the route would be lower due to the lack of visibility of construction elements from the remaining parts of the route – some cranes or higher structures might be visible beyond the immediate site context, but this would be limited and in the context of the OHL features, not uncharacteristic. Overall, the magnitude of change from this receptor would be low and the effect moderate/minor to minor adverse and **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.22 The B920 runs through the centre of Ballingry, before leaving the settlement to the north-west of the site. Oblique views towards the site are afforded from the section of the B920 outside of the settlement, although sporadic roadside vegetation breaks up these views, as shown on **Photoviewpoint EDP 2** (this view being from a CP). In these limited views there would be impacts as predicted for users of CP R580. At the construction stage, changes to the view will be noticeable in some locations where gaps in settlement and vegetation allow, and although the embedded mitigation previously set out would help reduce some impacts, these would remain a medium and short term scale of impact, which would be geographically limited in extent and lead to a worst case medium magnitude of change as a result of changes from an open field to a substation development. Combined with the loss of vegetation within the site (which will make changes more visible), the medium magnitude of change would lead to a moderate to moderate/minor adverse and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.23 These effects would only be evident for users at the very northern end of the route near to the junction with the B9097, with other views restricted where the route runs through Ballingry. With limited, to no, change in these areas, the overall magnitude of change to the route arising from the changes described above would be low and the effect minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.24 These effects would only be evident for users at the very northern end of the route near to the junction with the B9097, with other views restricted where the route runs through Ballingry. With

limited, to no, change in these areas, the overall magnitude of change to the route arising from the changes described above would be low and the effect minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant**.

- 6.6.25 For users of the unnamed road (B920 to Auchmuirbridge) cranes and other high vehicles would potentially be visible, but not extensively so and at a distance of over 1.5km would lead to a low scale of impact, across a small geographical extent and for a short-term duration. This would result in a low magnitude of change and a minor to moderate/minor adverse effect which would be **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.26 Workers at the Westfield Substation would experience clear and direct views of both the decommissioning of the 275 kV elements and the construction of the proposed extension, resulting in a high scale of change over a small geographical extent and short-term duration. This would give rise to a medium magnitude of change and a moderate/minor neutral effect, which is **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.27 Workers at the adjacent Westfield Energy Recovery Facility would experience very limited visibility of construction activity due to intervening features, including tree planting, resulting in a very low magnitude of change and negligible, neutral, and **Not Significant** effects.
- 6.6.28 For residential dwellings, the following construction effects are predicted. These effects arise from changes including activities involving tall vehicles and noise, which would be experienced to differing degrees dependent on property orientation, distance and screening:
- **Group A:** During construction (including 275kV decommissioning), construction activities and plant may be visible from parts of the settlement edge, as would operations related to the undergrounding of the 33kV OHL. These would be perceptible but generally not prominent within the context of existing infrastructure and the distances involved. Construction would introduce temporary change within the site, resulting in a localised alteration to the view over a short-term duration. Taking account of the generally filtered nature of views and the influence of existing infrastructure, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be medium, resulting in moderate/major adverse and locally **Significant** effects. This represents a reasonable worst case, with more limited, or no, effects predicted across the wider settlement or settlement edge;
 - **Group B:** During construction (including decommissioning of the 275kV elements), construction activity and plant may be partially visible, introducing movement and temporary change within the site. This would be perceived in the context of existing infrastructure and at a distance of approximately 800m. While the works would be noticeable, they would not be prominent or out of character with the baseline view, especially given large parts of the site are screened by the adjacent elevated alignment of the B9097 as it runs next to the site, and also partially by the vegetation aligning the road (which is to be retained). Given the extent of visibility, distance, and the influence of existing infrastructure, the magnitude of change during construction is considered to be medium, resulting in major/moderate adverse effects, which would be locally **Significant** in limited instances;
 - **Group C:** During construction, activity within the site would be clearly visible, and the introduction of construction plant and the emerging substation extension would represent a noticeable change from the baseline of open ground. The removal of on-site vegetation would locally increase openness and reduce existing filtering of views towards the current

substation, but the decommissioning works related to the existing 275kV elements of the substation would not represent a notable change. The undergrounding of the 33kV OHL would be a visible aspect of the proposals from this location. While these changes would be evident, they would be experienced in the context of existing infrastructure and would not be uncharacteristic of the receiving landscape. The scale of change would be notable but localised, and temporary in duration. The resulting magnitude of change is considered to be high/medium, leading to major to major/moderate adverse and locally **Significant** effects;

- **Group D:** During construction, limited and intermittent visibility of activity and associated traffic may occur. However, given the extensive screening (see image above), the oblique nature of views and the influence of the existing substation, any change would be minimal and localised to this group as a whole. The magnitude of change at this stage is therefore considered to be low to very low, resulting in moderate to moderate/minor adverse effects, which would be **Not Significant**; and
- **Group E:** These elevated farmstead properties have largely obscured north-facing views due to large agricultural buildings. Construction activity may be faintly perceptible at over 800m distance, but the scale and extent of change would be small. This results in a low to very low/negligible magnitude of change and moderate to moderate/minor, **Not Significant** adverse effects.

Operational

Landscape Effects on the Site

6.6.29 The Proposed Development would involve localised land regrading, alterations to the existing ditch, and the loss of agricultural grassland, along with the removal of vegetation along the northern boundary and a mature internal tree line. The undergrounding of the 33kV OHL and temporary SuDS works would be complete and would be fully reinstated, with only the terminal circa 10m high H-Poles representing residual change. These changes would replace the current agricultural character of the western parts of the site with a substation platform, associated hardstanding, SuDS features and boundary landscaping. While this represents a clear shift in site character, the development remains consistent with the adjacent substation context, and the landscaping scheme – supported by off-site biodiversity enhancements – seeks to compensate for vegetation losses where retention is not possible. At this point the 275kV elements of the existing Westfield Substation will also have occurred and changed the appearance of the eastern parts of the site (within the substation area), although not markedly.

6.6.30 At Year 1, the notable loss of open field and landscape features in the western parts of the site, combined with the introduction of industrial infrastructure (and notwithstanding the minor changes within the existing substation arising from the decommissioning works), would lead to a high magnitude of change and a major/moderate adverse, **significant** effect on the site's fabric and character. By Year 15, the establishment of landscape mitigation on the western and southern boundaries would soften the development, providing better integration with the semi-industrial surroundings. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium, resulting in a moderate adverse, **significant** effect.

Landscape Effects on Landscape Character Areas

- 6.6.31 Naturally, the host LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys containing the site and the immediate context would be subject to the greatest change, although this is predicted to diminish with distance from the site as a result of the presence of intervening landform and features. The Proposed Development would introduce industrial development to a small area of the LCT where existing and proposed industrial/energy development is already present and a prominent feature of the landscape (i.e. the existing substation and OHLs), whilst the related 33kV undergrounding and temporary SuDS works would result in similar short-term change. Through proximity, the site relates to these existing industrial uses, although is also related to the more rural, open, rolling landscape to the south of the site.
- 6.6.32 Based on the above, impact would be medium to long-term, would extend across a small geographical part of the LCT and would represent a permanent change. The magnitude of change at Year 1 for the LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys is assessed as low, resulting in minor to moderate/minor adverse and **not Significant** effect. By Year 15, the impact would be long-term, remain at a small geographical scale, and the magnitude of change would reduce to very low, as the landscape mitigation would have established, softening and integrating the new substation into the surrounding semi-industrial landscape. The resultant effects at Year 15 have been judged to be minor to minor/negligible adverse and **Not Significant** for LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys.
- 6.6.33 Non-Host LCTs are assessed individually below.
- 6.6.34 LCT 182 – Upland Hills: At both Year 1 and Year 15, views of the development would remain distant and limited by landform and tree cover, resulting in a low magnitude of change over a small geographical area. With medium sensitivity, this leads to a moderate/minor, **Not Significant** effect at both stages.
- 6.6.35 LCT 183 – Hill Slopes: Year 1 and Year 15 effects would be similar, with restricted visibility due to vegetation and distance of 1.5–3km. The low magnitude of change across a small area combines with medium sensitivity to produce a moderate/minor, **Not Significant** effect at both timeframes.
- 6.6.36 LCT 185 – Pronounced Hills and Crags: Despite theoretical visibility, actual change would remain very limited due to screening and distance. The very low magnitude of change remains the same at Year 1 and Year 15, leading to a minor/negligible, **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.37 LCT 191 – Lowland Loch Basins (Fife): Given the industrial context and restricted visibility, Year 1 and Year 15 would both experience a low magnitude of change across a very small area. With low sensitivity, this results in a minor, **Not Significant** effect at all stages.
- 6.6.38 LCT 383 – Rugged Lowland Hills: The ZTV illustrates extremely limited theoretical visibility from this LCT, with this limited to the south-eastern parts nearest the site, and a very discrete area in its central parts near Vane Hill – the vast majority of the LCT would be unchanged. This would give rise to a very low magnitude of change at Years 1 and 15, resulting in a minor and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.39 LCT 390 – Lowland Basins: Only minimal visibility occurs from the southern edge of this LCT, giving rise to a very low magnitude of change at both Year 1 and Year 15 across a very small geographical extent. Combined with medium sensitivity, this leads to a minor, **Not Significant** effect at all h stages.

Visual Effects

- 6.6.40 As set out previously, mitigation planting would, over time, help to soften views of the Proposed Development (and the associated 33kV undergrounding) for route users, particularly as a result of the proposed bunding and tree planting, although this would be limited in the short term due to the lack of maturation of the planting and the influence of topography. The decommissioning of the 275 kV elements would also slightly alter the appearance of the existing substation, although this change would not be readily noticeable.
- 6.6.41 For users of FPWW at Year 1 on the most affected sections of the route (notably between Photoviewpoints EDP 8, 9 and near EDP 10) would experience a low/medium magnitude of change. This reflects the introduction of additional infrastructure within views, albeit in the context of considerable existing electrical infrastructure, resulting in a moderate and **Significant** effect. However, by Year 15, the establishment of mitigation planting would reduce the prominence of the Proposed Development, leading to a low magnitude of change and a moderate to moderate/minor adverse effect which is **Not Significant**.
- 6.6.42 For users of FPWE, the Proposed Development would remain barely perceptible at this distance during operation, resulting in a very low magnitude of change and a minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant** effect at both Year 1 and Year 15.
- 6.6.43 For users of the route overall, operational effects across the full extent of the Fife Pilgrim Way would be limited due to the extremely small proportion of the route affected. While localised moderate and significant effects may occur at Year 1 within FPW West, these reduce over time, and the overall effect at both Year 1 and Year 15 would be very low, resulting in a minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.44 The Core Paths within, or in proximity, to the Study Area are shown on **Figures 6.3** and **6.7**. The effects on those deemed to potentially experience views of the site are assessed below.
- 6.6.45 Core path R580 is located approximately 150m west of the site, affording partial, close-proximity views of the proposed substation extension, adding to the existing industrial context of the substation, overhead lines (OHL), and the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility. The decommissioning works within the existing substation would be largely screened from view. Views from this route are represented by Photoviewpoints EDP 1 and 2.
- 6.6.46 Year 1: the Proposed Development would be visible adjacent to the existing substation (which would have changed in appearance slightly due to the decommissioning of the 275kV elements), and in the context of prominent OHL infrastructure (electricity towers and conductors), wind turbines and also the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility (including a chimney which is clearly visible in PVPs EDP 1 and 2). In such views the presence of the Proposed Development would not be uncharacteristic, but would be openly visible, particularly in views like that shown for PVP EDP 1 (and the wireframe for this viewpoint at Appendix EDP 5 of **TA 6.1**). For users in locations with open views, this leads to a high magnitude of change and a locally major adverse and **Significant** effect.
- 6.6.47 However, for the route overall, due to varied screening and the existing industrial context, the magnitude of change is considered low, resulting in a major/moderate and **Significant** effect. Such effects would only be evident where the substation was available in open, previously rural views (albeit with existing detractors), with users on the majority of the route experiencing lesser scales of

- change, with an overall magnitude of change of low, and an effect of moderate/minor and **Not Significant** on the route overall.
- 6.6.48 Year 15: the proposed landscaping will have matured, filtering and softening the substation's context alongside the retained vegetation along the site's western boundary for users with open views. The magnitude of change in those areas most susceptible to an impact, i.e., the northern end of the route near to PVPs EDP 1 and 2, would reduce to high/medium, leading to a major/moderate to moderate and **Significant** long-term effect. Views from the Core Path closer to Ballingry would see users experience more elevated views towards the site, but these are partially obscured by vegetation and landform (Photoviewpoint EDP 2).
- 6.6.49 Therefore, on balance for users of the Core Path as a whole the magnitude of change at Year 15 is considered to be low/medium and the effect moderate to moderate/minor and **Not Significant**. This results from a minor loss or alteration to one key characteristic, this being the open rural view (albeit with detractors) away from the settlement.
- 6.6.50 Core Path R581 is located approximately 0.5km south-west of the site. Views toward the site are generally heavily filtered by vegetation and landform, including the decommissioning works within the existing substation.
- 6.6.51 Year 1: Similar to R580, the visible substation extension would not be uncharacteristic in the view (existing OHL, wind farms, Westfield Energy Recovery Facility). For users in the most open and proximate sections (likely the northern end), the magnitude of change would be high, resulting in major/moderate adverse and **Significant** effects. However, due to the assumed screening along the majority of the route, the overall magnitude of change is low, leading to a moderate and **Not Significant** effect. Such elevated effects would only be evident where the substation was visible for users in open, previously rural views (albeit with detractors), and as for the construction effects, users of the majority of the route would experience lesser scales of change, with an overall magnitude of change of low, and an effect of moderate/minor and **Not Significant** on the route overall.
- 6.6.52 Year 15: The matured landscaping would lessen the visual change, slightly filtering and softening the context. For users with the most open views, the magnitude of change reduces to medium, resulting in a moderate adverse and **Significant** effect. On balance for users of the Core Path as a whole the magnitude of change at Year 15 is considered to be low and the effect moderate/minor and **Not Significant**. This results from a minor loss or alteration to one key characteristic, this being the open rural view (albeit with detractors) away from the settlement. Users of the majority of the route are likely – based on aerial and site review – to have screened or heavily filtered views.
- 6.6.53 Core Path R583 is located 2.2km north-west of the site, largely within woodland, offering only sporadic and filtered views. Where open views occur, the site is seen in the context of existing infrastructure (substation, OHL, Energy Recovery Facility, wind farms).
- 6.6.54 Year 1: The substation extension and decommissioned substation area would be visible but broadly characteristic of the existing baseline, adding to the feel of an energy infrastructure landscape. In the limited open view locations, the magnitude of change is low/medium, resulting in a moderate/minor to major/moderate adverse and borderline **Significant** effect. Considering the whole route, where open views are rare, the overall magnitude of change is very low, leading to a minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant** effect.

- 6.6.55 Year 15: Landscaping maturation would reduce the change. In the limited open view locations, the magnitude of change reduces to low, leading to a moderate to moderate/minor adverse and **Not Significant** long-term effect. Due to the infrequency of open views, the overall magnitude of change for the route is considered very low, resulting in a moderate and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.56 Core Path R828 is a short path located 1.8km north-west of the site, running along a ridgeline and offering panoramic views similar to R583, where the site is seen in a widely industrialised context.
- 6.6.57 Year 1: The substation extension and minor internal substation changes would be visible in a view already containing extensive electrical infrastructure, making the development not uncharacteristic. The scale of change in the wider panoramic view would be small. The magnitude of change is assessed as low to very low, resulting in a moderate to minor adverse and **Not Significant** effect. This level of effect is deemed applicable to users of the whole of this short route.
- 6.6.58 Year 15: The Proposed Landscaping would slightly reduce the scale of impact. The magnitude of change is assessed as very low, leading to a minor to moderate/minor adverse and **Not Significant** effect for users of the entire route.
- 6.6.59 The B9097 runs adjacent to the site's northern boundary and is elevated, offering close-range, prominent views, especially when travelling towards the site from the west.
- 6.6.60 Year 1: The substation extension and reconfigured existing substation will be visible at close range over an increased length (c.300m), despite some screening from retained hedgerow. The new infrastructure replacing agricultural land leads to a high magnitude of change and a moderate to major/moderate adverse and **Significant** effect locally. For the overall route, as elevated effects dissipate quickly with distance, the overall magnitude of change is low, resulting in a moderate/minor to minor adverse and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.61 Year 15: Due to proximity and elevation, the proposed landscaping will not substantially reduce the visible scale of impact locally. The development remains equally visible, though landscaping to the south and west will offer a general softening. This leads to a medium/high magnitude of change and a moderate/minor to major/moderate and **Not Significant** adverse effect locally (on the basis of the low sensitivity of the receptor). For the route overall, which only experiences high effects over a short length, the overall magnitude of change is low, resulting in a moderate/minor to minor adverse and **not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.62 The B920 runs through Ballingry before heading north-west of the site, affording oblique, sporadic views towards the site primarily outside the settlement.
- 6.6.63 Year 1: The Proposed Development will be visible in the context of the existing substation, OHL, and other energy infrastructure, so the change is not uncharacteristic. Open visibility occurs only from limited locations, particularly at the northern end near the B9097 junction. The magnitude of change in these limited spots is medium, leading to moderate/minor to moderate adverse and **Not Significant** effects. Considering the route overall, which is largely restricted by the settlement, the magnitude of change is low, resulting in a minor to moderate/minor and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.64 Year 15: The Proposed Landscaping will have matured, slightly filtering the substation and softening its context. The scale of change reduces slightly, leading to a low magnitude of change and a minor to moderate/minor adverse and **Not Significant** effect in visible locations. As these effects are

- restricted to a very short length of the route, the overall magnitude of change for the entire route is assessed as very low, resulting in a minor to minor/negligible adverse and **Not Significant** effect.
- 6.6.65 The unnamed Road (B920 to Auchmuirbridge) is located approximately 1.3km north of the site on higher ground. Views of the site are significantly obscured by intervening vegetation and landform, with only potential partial visibility of the taller elements (up to 17m).
- 6.6.66 Year 1: The scale of change reduces after the construction phase due to the removal of tall plant. The resulting view is not dissimilar to the existing, which is not uncharacteristic given the baseline. The geographical extent of visibility is very small, leading to a very low magnitude of change and a minor to minor/negligible adverse and **not Significant** effect. This very low level of effect applies to the worst-case views and the entire route.
- 6.6.67 Year 15: Some increased softening from landscaping may occur, but the scale of change and extent remain minimal. This leads to a very low magnitude of change and a minor to minor/negligible adverse and **Not Significant** effect on users of the route overall.
- 6.6.68 For workers at industrial facilities, at Year 1, workers at the Westfield Substation would experience a low magnitude of change, as the proposed extension would appear consistent with the existing substation character, albeit extending into adjacent open land. This would result in a minor/negligible neutral effect which is **Not Significant**. This level of effect would remain unchanged at Year 15 and beyond.
- 6.6.69 For workers at the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility, intervening features would limit visibility of the development, resulting in a very low magnitude of change and negligible, neutral, and **Not Significant** effects at both Year 1 and Year 15.
- 6.6.70 For residential dwellings, the following operational effects are predicted. These effects arise from changes including the introduction into the view of additional electrical infrastructure, albeit in a view in which such features are already a key part:
- **Group A:** This group of properties is located on elevated ground to the west of the site, approximately 600m to 700m distant. Views are generally obscured by landform and vegetation, but where visible, views already contain the existing substation and OHLs.

At Year 1, the Proposed Development would be visible in the foreground of the existing substation, alongside OHL towers, and read as part of the established energy infrastructure landscape that exists. While the absence of mature planting would allow relatively open views in some locations, proposed bunding would provide limited screening. The scale of change would be moderated by the existing context and extent of views, resulting in a low magnitude of change and moderate adverse, **Not Significant** effects in a worst-case scenario. Elsewhere on the settlement edge or the wider settlement, effects would be limited or nil.

By Year 15, established planting, together with bunding and existing vegetation on the western site boundary, would filter and partially screen views, improving integration into the landscape. The magnitude of change would reduce to low/very low, resulting in moderate to moderate/minor adverse effects that are **Not Significant** in EIA terms.
 - **Group B:** Located to the north of the site at the B9097/B920 junction, approximately 0.8km distant. Views are partially screened by roadside vegetation and are dominated by large OHL pylons.

At Year 1, the proposed substation would be visible in association with existing electrical infrastructure and would be partly contained within lower-lying ground beyond the road B9097 corridor. Retained roadside vegetation would continue to filter views, while the loss of some on-site vegetation would partially increase openness. Proposed planting would begin to establish, assisting in integrating the development over time. The scale and extent of change would be limited and experienced within an established infrastructure context. The resulting magnitude of change is considered to be low, leading to moderate adverse effects, which are **Significant**.

By Year 15, mitigation planting would have established, although its influence on views from this receptor group would be limited due to its location. Retained roadside vegetation would continue to provide filtering and contribute to the integration of the development within the landscape. The development would remain perceptible but would be experienced as part of the established infrastructure landscape context. The magnitude of change would reduce to low to very low, resulting in moderate/minor to moderate adverse effects, which would be **Not Significant**.

- **Group C:** This property group are closest to the site, and experience some open views across the site, albeit broken up by sporadic vegetation. Views of the existing substation, OHL towers and Westfield Energy Recovery Facility provide an existing industrial context.

At Year 1, the Proposed Development would be perceptible as a closer component of the wider existing substation complex. Although mitigation planting would not yet be fully established, retained vegetation on the western site boundary and the existing infrastructural context would assist in moderating the perception of change. The development would introduce a visible but not uncharacteristic alteration to the view, with change experienced across a limited horizontal extent considering the grouping as a whole. The magnitude of change is considered to be medium at this point, resulting in major/moderate adverse effects, which would be locally **Significant** in worst-case views, but more limited elsewhere for the group.

By Year 15, mitigation planting would have established and would provide additional filtering and softening of views, helping to integrate the development into the landscape context and partially reinstate the vegetation framework evident in the baseline. While the development would remain visible due to its proximity, it would be experienced as part of the established and mature infrastructure context, set within vegetated confines. The magnitude of change would reduce to medium/low, resulting in moderate to major/moderate adverse effects, which would be locally **Significant** in EIA terms.

- **Group D:** Located on the northern side of the B9097, east of the existing substation. Views are predominantly obscured/fragmented by the existing substation and roadside vegetation, despite the close proximity of the receptor.

At Years 1 and 15, visibility of the Proposed Development would be very limited due to the combined influence of intervening built form, vegetation and the road corridor, which would screen some views due to its elevation. Any change would be barely perceptible. The magnitude of change would be very low (negligible), resulting in moderate/minor adverse effects, which would be **Not Significant**.

- **Group E:** Located to the south of the site, over 800m distant on elevated ground. Views are significantly limited by large agricultural buildings within the farmstead complex.

Year 1 & Year 15: Due to the distance and extensive screening offered by farm buildings, the scale and geographical extent of change would be limited. The resulting magnitude of change is considered to be low to very low/negligible throughout. On a precautionary basis, this would give rise to moderate/minor adverse effects at Years 1 and 15, which would be **Not Significant**.

- 6.6.71 Visual effects on workers at Westfield Substation and the nearby Westfield Energy Recovery Facility are assessed as **Not Significant**. During construction, workers at Westfield Substation would experience a medium magnitude of change associated with decommissioning of the existing 275 kV infrastructure, construction of the substation extension and undergrounding of the 33 kV OHL. This would result in a moderate/minor neutral effect, reducing at Year 1 to a minor/negligible neutral effect as the development would be similar in character to the existing substation. This effect would persist to Year 15 and beyond.
- 6.6.72 Workers at the Westfield Energy Recovery Facility would experience limited change due to its existing industrial context and intervening screening, including tree planting north of the B9097. A very low magnitude of change is anticipated, resulting in a negligible neutral effect. All identified effects would be **Not Significant**.

6.7 Embedded Mitigation

Construction Phase

- 6.7.1 The inherent design mitigation that has been evaluated as part of the construction stage assessment and the decommissioning of the 275kV elements is outlined below and are included within an outline CEMP, which would be secured by a planning condition:
- Lighting will be controlled through the implementation of best practice measures, informed by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 'Guidance Note 1 for the reduction of obtrusive light', including the use of sufficient lighting units for the task in hand to avoid the need for tall, wide beam lighting units and the reduction of fixed lighting outside working hours; and
 - Measures such as minimising the use of artificial lighting, and the use of hoods, cowls and timers to restrict light spill only to where it is required and for as long as it is required.

- 6.7.2 The above measures are considered inherent as they are commonplace and it is not likely that any development would come forward without a CEMP.

Operational Phase

- 6.7.3 The inherent design and mitigation that has been evaluated as part of Operational Phase (Year 1 and Year 15) stage assessment is outlined below and illustrated on the Illustrative Landscape Strategy at **Figure 3.2**:
- The location of the Proposed Development adjacent to the existing substation, and therefore in a landscape context where this type of development is commonplace;
 - Where possible, retain and enhance existing vegetation and trees by incorporating these into the layout and gapping up with native species;

- Provision of landscaping proposals to soften the appearance of the Proposed Development in local views. In particular this includes the following:
 - Two 2m-high landscape bunds proposed west and south of the substation to reduce material removal and filter views;
 - Existing scrub and grassland in the south-west corner will be retained, protected, and enhanced to improve habitat condition;
 - GIS building will be coloured Moorland Green (BS12B21) to integrate with the context; and
 - New hedgerow planting around site peripheries to introduce habitats consistent with the local context.

6.7.4 The above measures have been designed into and follow a best practice approach to design. They are therefore considered inherent design mitigation.

6.8 Consideration of Further Mitigation

6.8.1 Following the identification of a number of residual significant effects, the potential for further mitigation has been carefully considered. At this stage of the design and assessment process, all feasible and practicable mitigation measures have already been incorporated into the project layout and landscape strategy. These embedded measures include the optimisation of infrastructure positioning, the refinement of platform levels, and the inclusion of structural planting aimed at reducing visual prominence and integrating the substation into its surroundings.

6.8.2 An appraisal of possible additional mitigation has been undertaken; however, no further measures have been identified that would materially reduce the level of residual effects without compromising the safe and functional operation of the substation or conflicting with other environmental constraints. Options such as further earthworks, screening structures, or additional planting were evaluated but were found either to have negligible benefit, to introduce new adverse effects, or to be technically unviable within the site context.

6.8.3 Notwithstanding this, opportunities for long-term enhancement will continue to be explored as the detailed design progresses. This includes refinement of planting specifications and careful selection of native species. While these measures will contribute positively to the wider landscape, they are not expected to alter the significance of the assessed effects and are therefore presented as enhancement rather than additional mitigation.

6.8.4 On this basis, a dedicated section on additional mitigation has been included in the LVIA, confirming that although further practicable mitigation has been considered, none is deemed feasible or effective in reducing the identified significant residual effects beyond those already embedded in the design.

6.9 Summary of Residual Effects

6.9.1 For landscape and visual matters, Residual Effects are those defined at operation (with additional mitigation) at Year 15 when the Proposed Development is built, and mitigation planting has matured. Effects during operation at Year 15 are long-term and permanent.

6.9.2 Likely significant effects at Year 15 would be limited to receptors within the site and along its boundaries, and in selected areas in the local landscape as detailed above. This includes the character of the site and its immediate context, users of Core Paths and nearby residential receptors. A summary of the predicted significant and not significant effects on the landscape and visual resource is provided in **Tables 6.5** and **6.6** respectively.

Table 6.5: Summary of Landscape Effect

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Effects		
Construction Stage					
Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Effect		
The site and its Immediate Context	Medium	High	Major/Moderate adverse and Significant		
Host LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys	Medium/ Low	Medium	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse and Not Significant		
Non-host LCT 182 Upland Hills	Medium	Low	Moderate/minor and Not Significant effect.		
Non-host LCT 183 Hill Slopes	Medium	Low	Moderate/minor and Not Significant effect.		
Non-host LCT 185 Pronounced Hills and Craggs	Low	Very Low	Minor/negligible and Not Significant effect.		
Non-host LCT 191 Lowland Loch Basins - Fife	Low	Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.		
Non-host LCT 383 Rugged Lowland Hills	Medium	Very Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.		
Non-host LCT 390 Lowland Basins	Medium	Very Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.		
Operational Stage					
Landscape Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change at Year 1	Level of Effect at Year 1	Magnitude of Change at Year 15	Level of Effect at Year 15
The site and its Immediate Context	Medium	High	Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	Medium	Moderate adverse and Significant
Host LCT 186 Lowland Hills and Valleys	Medium/ Low	Low	Minor to Moderate/ Minor adverse and	Very Low	Minor to Minor/ Negligible adverse and

Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change		Effects	
			Not Significant		Not Significant
Non-host LCT 182 Upland Hills	Medium	Low	Moderate/ minor and Not Significant effect.	Low	Moderate/ minor and Not Significant effect.
Non-host LCT 183 Hill Slopes	Medium	Low	Moderate/ minor and Not Significant effect.	Low	Moderate/ minor and Not Significant effect.
Non-host LCT 185 Pronounced Hills and Craggs	Low	Very Low	Minor/ negligible and Not Significant effect.	Very Low	Minor/ negligible and Not Significant effect.
Non-host LCT 191 Lowland Loch Basins - Fife	Low	Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.	Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.
Non-host LCT 383 Rugged Lowland Hills	Medium	Very Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.	Very Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.
Non-host LCT 390 Lowland Basins	Medium	Very Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.	Very Low	Minor and Not Significant effect.

Table 6.6: Summary of Visual Effects

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Construction	Level of Effect Construction	Magnitude of Change Year 1	Level of Effect at Year 1	Magnitude of Change Year 15	Level of Effect at Year 15
Users of Fife Pilgrim Way LDWR (Including Core Paths R410, R519, R520, R817)							
FPWW	Medium/ High	Medium	Moderate to major/ moderate adverse and Significant	Low/ Medium	Moderate adverse and Significant	Low	Moderate to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant
FPWE	Medium/ High	Very Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant
FPW Overall	Medium/ High	Low	Moderate to moderate/ minor and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant
Users of Core Path R580 (Old Railway Route)							
Northern End	Medium	High	Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	High	Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	High/ Medium	Moderate to major/ Moderate adverse and Significant
Route Overall	Medium	Low	Moderate/minor and Not Significant	Low	Moderate/minor and Not Significant	Low/Medium	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse and Not Significant
Users of Core Path R581 (Old Drove Road Link)							
Northern End	Medium	High	Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	High	Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	Medium	Moderate adverse and Significant
Route Overall	Medium	Low	Moderate/minor and Not Significant	Low	Moderate/minor and Not Significant	Low	Moderate/ minor and Not Significant
Users of Core Path R583 (Vane Farm)							
PVP EDP 11	Medium/ High	Medium	Moderate to Major/ Moderate and Significant	Low/ Medium	Moderate/ Minor to Major/ Moderate and borderline Significant	Low	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse and Not Significant

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Construction	Level of Effect Construction	Magnitude of Change Year 1	Level of Effect at Year 1	Magnitude of Change Year 15	Level of Effect at Year 15
Route Overall	Medium/ High	Very Low	Minor to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to Moderate/ Minor and Not Significant
Users of Core Path R828 (Dunmore Fort Spur)	Medium/ High	Low/Medium	Moderate/ Minor to Major/ moderate adverse and Significant	Low/ Very Low	Moderate to Minor adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to Moderate/ Minor adverse and Not Significant
Users of B9097 Road							
Local to Site (PVP EDP 5)	Medium/ Low	Very High	Major to Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	High	Moderate to Major/ Moderate adverse and Significant	Medium/ High	Moderate/minor to Major/ Moderate adverse and Not Significant
Route Overall	Medium/ Low	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant
Users of B920 Road							
Northern End of Route	Medium/ Low	Medium	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse and Not Significant	Medium	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse and Not Significant	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant
Route Overall	Medium/ Low	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to minor/ negligible adverse and Not Significant
Users of Unnamed Road							
Worst case locations	Medium/ Low	Low	Minor to moderate/ minor adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to minor/ negligible and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to minor/ negligible adverse and Not Significant
Route Overall	Medium/ Low	Very Low	Minor to minor/ negligible adverse and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to minor/ negligible and Not Significant	Very Low	Minor to minor/ negligible adverse and Not Significant
Residents							

Visual Receptor	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change Construction	Level of Effect Construction	Magnitude of Change Year 1	Level of Effect at Year 1	Magnitude of Change Year 15	Level of Effect at Year 15
Group A Residents	High	Medium	Major/ moderate adverse and Significant	Low	Moderate adverse, Not Significant	Low/ Very Low	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse, Not Significant
Group B Residents	High	Medium	Major/ Moderate adverse, Significant	Low	Moderate adverse, Significant	Low/ Very Low	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse, Not Significant
Group C Residents	High	High/Medium	Major to Moderate/ Major adverse and Significant	Medium	Major/ Moderate adverse, Significant	Medium/ Low	Moderate to Major/ Moderate adverse, Significant
Group D Residents	High	Low/Very Low	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse, Not Significant	Very Low to Negligible	Moderate/ Minor to Negligible adverse, Not Significant	Very Low to Negligible	Moderate/ Minor to Negligible adverse, Not Significant
Group E Residents	High	Low/Very Low	Moderate to Moderate/ Minor adverse, Not Significant	Very Low to Negligible	Moderate/ Minor to Negligible adverse, Not Significant	Very Low to Negligible	Moderate/ Minor to Negligible adverse, Not Significant

6.10 Summary

- 6.10.1 The nature of the proposals and topography/juxtaposition of the site and the surrounding landscape provides a notable level of enclosure to the site, and precedent of the kind of development proposed, which limits its zone of influence greatly and as such, significant residual effects are contained within close proximity to the site.
- 6.10.2 In summary, the following receptors are likely to experience significant residual effects during construction:
- The site character and its immediate surroundings (parts of LCT 186);
 - Users of small sections of The Fife Pilgrim Way West (including Core Paths R410, R519, R520, R817) but **not** the route overall;
 - Users of sections of Core Paths R580 and R581, but **not** the routes overall;
 - Users of sections of Core Path R828 and R583 (PVPs EDP 11 and 12) but **not** on the routes overall;
 - Users of sections of the B9097 as the route passes the site, but **not** the road overall; and
 - Residential Groups A to C.
- 6.10.3 During operation the likely residual (Year 1) significant effects would be on the following landscape and visual receptors:
- The site character and its immediate surroundings (parts of LCT 186);
 - Users of short sections of The Fife Pilgrim Way West (including Core Paths R410, R519, R520, R817) but **not** the route overall;
 - Users of sections of Core Paths R580 and R581, but **not** the routes overall;
 - Users of sections of Core Path R583 (PVPs EDP 11) but **not** on the route overall;
 - Users of sections of the B9097 as the route passes the site, but **not** the road overall; and
 - Residential Groups B to C.
- 6.10.4 During operation the likely residual (Year 15) significant effects would be on the following landscape and visual receptors:
- The site character and its immediate surroundings (parts of LCT 186);
 - Users of sections of Core Paths R580 and R581, but **not** the routes overall; and
 - Residential Group C.