

Landscape and Visual Technical Note

Prepared for: AGR Solar 4 Limited

July 2026

5463-01-TN01

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Technical Note (LVTN) has been prepared and reviewed by Chartered Landscape Architects at Axis on behalf of AGR Solar 4 Limited, the Applicant.
- 1.1.2 The LVTN reviews the proposed amendments to the approved Priory Farm Solar Array scheme against the findings of the LVIA (dated October 2021) for the approved solar scheme, with consideration to landscape and visual evidence prepared for the Call-in Inquiry in 2023, related to the original 2021 application and the decision made by the Secretary of State.
- 1.1.3 The LVTN reviews whether the proposed amendments, which are described in section 2.0 below, give rise to a material difference in landscape or visual effects when compared to the LVIA for the approved solar scheme.
- 1.1.4 The LVTN has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment¹, 3rd Edition (GVLIA3).
- 1.1.5 This LVTN is supported by the following Appendices:
- i) **Appendix A:** Originally Approved Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev F), Approved Non-Material Amendment Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev N) and Updated Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev O);
 - ii) **Appendix B:** LVIA Figure 8: Viewpoint Locations (no change from the approved application); and

¹ Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 3rd edition 2013. *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*. Abingdon: Routledge

- iii) **Appendix C:** Comparison Photomontages – Originally Consented, NMA I Scheme, and Proposed NMA II Schemes (Year 0 and Year 10).

1.1.6 Updated photomontages included at **Appendix C** have been prepared from the same viewpoint locations, using the same visualisation methodology for the photomontages presented in the LVIA for the approved solar scheme. They relate to Viewpoints 1, 3, 4 and 7 shown on the Viewpoint Locations plan included at **Appendix B**.

2.0 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS AND REVIEW OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

2.1 Proposed Amendments

- 2.1.1 The updated Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev O), which illustrates the proposed amendments to the approved Priory Farm Solar Array scheme, the originally approved Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev F) and the landscape drawing approved pursuant to the previous Non-Material Amendment application (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev N) are included at **Appendix A** for ease of reference and comparison.
- 2.1.2 The following key aspects of the design relevant to the LVIA would remain unchanged:
- i) The site extents and boundary;
 - ii) The fenced development areas; and
 - iii) The height of proposed solar panels (3 m high).
- 2.1.3 The proposed amendments to the approved Priory Farm Solar Array scheme comprise:
- i) A minor 8% increase in density of solar panels;
 - ii) Minor adjustments to the panel areas, with some areas increasing, some reducing and some local reshaping; and
 - iii) Additional ancillary units and buildings alongside proposed tracks running through the centre of the proposed solar array, comprising inverter / transformer units, BESS units, welfare and storage buildings, a new water tank and three new harmonic filters.
- 2.1.4 The ancillary units and buildings referred to above would be lower in height than the proposed solar panels and would be located centrally within the solar array, where they would be largely surrounded by solar panels.

2.1.5 North Hertfordshire Council has confirmed (email dated 26th June 2026) that the ancillary equipment referred to above constitutes a non-material change. Accordingly, the principal landscape and visual consideration arising from the proposed amendments relates to the minor increase in the density and number of solar panels, all of which would remain in the same developed footprint as the approved scheme.

2.1.6 This LVTN therefore considers whether the minor increase in the density and number of solar panels would result in a material change to the landscape and visual effects reported in the LVIA for the approved scheme.

2.2 Review Against the LVIA for the approved scheme

Update to the Landscape Plan

2.2.1 The updated Landscape Plan (Revision O) included at **Appendix A** demonstrates that the proposed increase in the density and number of solar panels does not require any material change to the approved landscape proposals. There would be no change to the approved perimeter landscape proposals or off-site planting, and only a minor amendment to an internal section of proposed hedgerow, where a relatively short length in the north-western field would be replaced by solar panels.

Effects on Landscape Character

2.2.2 The LVIA dated October 2021 for the approved solar scheme, supported by the Landscape Proof of Evidence dated August 2023, concludes that *“the introduction of the Proposed Development would increase the influence of built development across the Site, resulting in a moderate adverse effect, but the pattern of vegetation cover in the landscape around the Site is such that existing tree belts and hedgerows would provide considerable screening of the Proposed Development, greatly reducing the extent over which it would be perceived. The effect on landscape character would not be substantial beyond the Site boundary, with a moderate to minor adverse effect reported, which would not be significant.”*

2.2.3 As described in the previous section (paragraph 2.2.1), approved landscape proposals would not require material change and as such would respond to landscape character as previously set out in the LVIA for the approved solar scheme.

- 2.2.4 At Year 0, the proposed amendments would not materially alter the landscape character effects reported in the LVIA for the approved scheme. The scheme would continue to increase the influence of built development across the Site, resulting in a moderate adverse effect. Importantly, the factors underpinning that judgement would not change as a result of the proposed amendments. The minor increase in the density and number of solar panels would represent only a barely perceptible change to the composition of the solar array and would not affect the overall landscape character judgement.
- 2.2.5 At Year 10, embedded landscape mitigation proposals would be effective, as demonstrated by the updated photomontages provided at **Appendix C**. Accordingly, the proposed amendments would not materially alter the landscape character effects reported in the LVIA for the approved scheme.

Effects on Views

- 2.2.6 The LVIA dated October 2021 for the approved solar scheme, supported by the Landscape Proof of Evidence dated August 2023, concludes that *“In the short-term, major to moderate adverse visual effects would occur from part of the Hertfordshire Way along the northern boundary of the northern part of the Site, and from part of Graveley Lane which passes between the northern and southern parts of the Site. From each of these routes the adverse visual effects relate to where there are gaps in the existing boundary vegetation. In the short-term, these effects would, in EIA terms, be considered significant...Once the proposed mitigation planting has established, and changes to the management of existing hedgerows are effective... the medium- to long-term visual effects to receptors along the Site boundary would reduce to levels which would not be significant.”*
- 2.2.7 The LVIA also reports that *“In the wider study area, the Proposed Development would not generally be clearly visible as a result of landform and the extent of vegetation around settlements, roads, and public rights of way”.*
- 2.2.8 The preparation of the updated photomontages included at **Appendix C** demonstrates that the minor increase in the density and number of solar panels would not materially alter the visual effects reported in the LVIA for the approved scheme. At Year 0, the proposed amendments would comprise only a barely perceptible change in views experienced by local receptors.

2.2.9 At Year 10, the approved landscape and visual mitigation proposals would remain effective. Accordingly, the proposed amendments would not materially alter the visual effects reported in the LVIA for the approved scheme.

2.2.10 The updated photomontages prepared for Viewpoints 1, 3, 4 and 7 demonstrate that:

- i) The proposed amendments do not increase the height of the proposed solar array;
- ii) The amended solar scheme would remain backclothed by the surrounding landscape;
- iii) The proposed amendments would not increase the horizontal extent of the development apparent in the view to any notable extent; and
- iv) The approved mitigation planting would remain effective and, by Year 10, once established, there would be no discernible difference between the approved and amended schemes.

3.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 3.1.1 This Landscape and Visual Technical Note (LVTN), supported by updated photomontages, comprises a review of the landscape and visual implications of the proposed amendments to the approved Priory Farm Solar Array scheme, specifically the minor increase in the density and number of solar panels proposed within the Site.
- 3.1.2 The LVIA dated October 2021 for the approved solar scheme, supported by the Landscape Proof of Evidence dated August 2023, concluded that the approved development would result in no medium and long-term residual significant adverse landscape or visual effects, with residual adverse effects limited to a very localised area in the immediate vicinity of the Site.
- 3.1.3 This LVTN demonstrates that the proposed amendments would not require any substantive change to the approved landscape strategy and would not materially alter the landscape or visual effects reported in the LVIA for the approved solar scheme.
- 3.1.4 The updated photomontages confirm that the minor increase in the density and number of solar panels would result in only barely perceptible changes in views experienced by local receptors at Year 0, whilst the approved landscape mitigation proposals would remain effective at Year 10.
- 3.1.5 It is therefore concluded that the proposed amendments would not give rise to any material change to the landscape and visual effects reported for the approved Priory Farm Solar Array scheme. The findings and conclusions of the LVIA for the approved solar scheme therefore remain valid.

**Appendix A – Originally Approved
Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev
F), Approved Non-Material Amendment
Landscape Plan (Drawing 3004-01-012 Rev
N) and Updated Landscape Plan (Drawing
3004-01-012 Rev O)**



Appendix B – LVIA Figure 8: Viewpoint Locations



Appendix C – Comparison Photomontages – Originally Consented, NMA I and Proposed NMA II Schemes (Year 0 and Year 10)

