

7. LANDSCAPE AND VIEWS

Introduction

7.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) chapter of the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of landscape and visual effects.

7.2 This chapter has been authored by Claire McHarrie, a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, who has over 15 years' experience in undertaking landscape and visual impact assessments. The objectives of this LVIA are to assess the landscape character of the Site and its surroundings and to consider the landscape and visual qualities of the Site, its function in the landscape and views, and its contribution to the wider landscape character. The work undertaken includes an assessment of the existing landscape features, together with a visual appraisal of the Site and its context.

7.3 The LVIA has been used to inform the design evolution of the Development and to explain the likely landscape and visual effects that may arise as a result of the Development. It is supported by the following Figures:

- Figure 7.1: Study Area Plan (1:20,000@A1);
- Figure 7.2: Site Context Plan (1:10,000 @A1);
- Figure 7.3: Topography Plan (1:20,000@A1);
- Figure 7.4: Published Landscape Character Plan (1:20,000@A1);
- Figure 7.5: Site Appraisal Plan;
- Figure 7.6a: Visual Appraisal Plan (North) (1:20,000@A1); and
- Figure 7.6b: Visual Appraisal Plan (South) (1:20,000@A1).

7.4 It is further supported by the following appendices:

- Appendix 7.1: Site Appraisal Photographs A-L;
- Appendix 7.2: Site Context Photographs 1-21;
- Appendix 7.3: Extracts from planning policy and evidence base documents;
- Appendix 7.4: Extracts from published landscape character assessments;
- Appendix 7.5: Tree Survey;
- Appendix 7.6: Table of landscape effects;
- Appendix 7.7: Table of visual effects;
- Appendix 7.8: Correspondence with Medway Council;

- Appendix 7.9: Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan; and
- Appendix 7.10: Wireline AVRs/Photomontages.

Policy Context

7.5 Extracts from the relevant policy documents are included in Appendix 7.3.

National Planning Policy Frameworkⁱ

7.6 The revised NPPF promotes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with paragraphs 124-132 focusing on achieving well-designed spaces and seeking to promote good design of the built environment. Paragraph 130 states that development should be refused if it fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

7.7 Chapter 15 refers to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 170 states that the planning system should enhance the natural environment through recognising the intrinsic character of the countryside.

Planning Practice Guidanceⁱⁱ

7.8 PPG supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding local distinctiveness and Natural England's guidance on landscape character assessment.

Local Planning Policy

7.9 The current Development Plan for Medway Council comprises the 2003 Medway Local Plan. A new Local Plan (2019 to 2037) is being prepared and Medway Council issued its Development Strategy for Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2018.

Medway Local Plan (adopted 14 May 2003)ⁱⁱⁱ

7.10 The saved policies of the adopted Medway Local Plan provide the basis for all planning decisions within the district. Those relevant to landscape and visual matters are set out below.

7.11 Saved Policy S4: Landscape and Urban Design, which states:

"A high quality of built environment will be sought from new development, with landscape mitigation where appropriate.

Development should respond appropriately to its context, reflecting a distinct local character."

7.12 Saved Policy BNE1: General Principles for Built Development, which states:

"The design of development ... should be appropriate in relation to the character, appearance and functioning of the built and natural environment by:

- i) being satisfactory in terms of use, scale, mass, proportion, details, materials, layout and siting; and*
- ii) respecting the scale, appearance and location of buildings, spaces and the visual amenity of the surrounding area; and*
- iii) where appropriate, providing well structured, practical and attractive areas of open space."*

7.13 Saved Policy BNE6: Landscape Design, which states:

"Major developments should include a structural landscaping scheme to enhance the character of the locality. Detailed landscape schemes ... should have regard to the following factors:

- i) provide a structured, robust, attractive, long term, easily maintainable environment including quality open spaces, vistas and views;*
- ii) include planting of a size, scale and form appropriate to the location and landform...;*
- iv) retain important existing landscape features, including trees and hedgerows, and be well related to open space features in the locality; and*
- v) support wildlife by the creation or enhancement of semi-natural habitats and the use of indigenous plant material where appropriate..."*

7.14 Saved Policy BNE25: Development in the Countryside, which states:

"Development in the countryside will only be permitted if:

- i) it maintains, and wherever possible enhances, the character, amenity and functioning of the countryside..."*

7.15 Saved Policy BNE25 defines countryside as *"...that land outside the urban and rural settlement boundaries defined on the proposals map"*. Based on this definition, the Site falls within land classified as countryside.

7.16 Saved Policy BNE33: Special Landscape Areas (SLA). These are described as *"attractive landscapes of Countrywide significance"* under Policy ENV4 of the Kent structure plan. The North Kent Marshes SLA extends from the north eastern edge of the site to the northern shore of the Hoo Peninsula. The natural beauty of these areas is to be protected through Policy BNE33 which states:

"Development within the North Downs and the North Kent Marshes special landscape areas, as defined on the proposals map, will only be permitted if: (i) it conserves and enhances the natural beauty of the area's landscape or (ii) the economic or social benefits are so important that they outweigh the county priority to conserve the natural beauty of the area's landscape."

7.17 The text regarding Areas of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI), notes that ALLIs serve significant landscape functions including:

- a) As green lungs and buffers, helping to maintain the individual identity of urban neighbourhoods and rural communities;*
- b) As green corridors (or links) for the community to reach the wider countryside;*
- c) As edge or "fringe" land, needing protection from the pressures of urban sprawl; and*
- d) As habitats for wildlife and corridors, along which wildlife from the wider countryside can reach the urban environment.*

7.18 Therefore, there is *"...a need to protect the landscape character and functions of each of the designated ALLIs"*.

7.19 Saved Policy BNE34 relates to Areas of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI) and states that within the boundaries of ALLIs *"development will only be permitted if:*

- i) it does not materially harm the landscape character and function of the area; or*
- ii) the economic and social benefits are so important that they outweigh the local priority to conserve the area's landscape."*

7.20 Saved Policy BNE34 subsequently states that *"Development within an Area of Local Landscape importance should be sited, designed and landscaped to minimise harm to the area's landscape character and function"*.

7.21 Saved Policy S12: KINGSNORTH on the proposals map includes the Site within its extents and includes allocation for development for use Classes B2 and B8 and under the condition of provision of greater accessibility, Class B1 and Class B1 (c) uses. Page 131 of the Local Plan further notes:

"The designated existing site includes the Kingsnorth Power Station, and Kingsnorth Industrial Estate, which contains a mixture of general industries. Further development on adjacent land will be permitted for Class B1, B2 and B8 uses under Policy S12. However, in the light of the advice of PPG13 relating to accessibility of office uses, only those falling within subgroup B1 (c) will be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the development makes provision for increased accessibility by means other than the private car. Specialist industrial uses will also be

permitted subject to acceptable environmental standards being achieved. A higher standard of design and landscaping will be required to improve the overall image of the area."

7.22 Saved Policy ED5: Proposed Employment Areas as defined in the local plan and within the proposal maps include allocation for business (Class B1) development that includes the Site extents in Kingsnorth, subject to Policy S12.

7.23 Saved Policy ED7: Special Industrial Uses notes that:

"The development of special industrial uses will only be permitted at Kingsnorth and Grain, as defined on the proposals map, subject to the provisions of policies BNE2, BNE3, BNE23 and BNE 24 and securing the transport infrastructure improvements specified in policies S12 and S13."

7.24 Saved Policy ED8: Industrial Uses not in a Use Class states:

"The development of industrial uses not in a use class will be permitted at Kingsnorth and the Isle of Grain, as defined on the proposals map, subject to the provisions of policy BNE2 and there being no adverse environmental impact, especially in terms of residential amenity, nature conservation interests or the character of the surrounding rural area."

Future Medway Local Plan 2018 to 2037^{iv}

7.25 The Future Medway Local Plan sets out a vision for future development in Medway to 2037 and will replace the 2003 Medway Local Plan, forming the statutory planning framework for developing planning applications. The Medway Local Plan (2019-2037) will be adopted in 2022.

7.26 The Development Strategy technical document set out the ambitions for the plan and provides options for how the area could grow and draft policies for managing development. The following draft policies of most relevance are set out below.

7.27 Emerging Policy NE2: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment, which states:

"...The council will promote the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Medway, by restricting development that could result in damage to designated wildlife areas, and pursuing opportunities to strengthen biodiversity networks."

7.28 Emerging Policy NE4: Landscape, which states:

"The council attaches great importance to the distinctiveness and quality of landscape in defining Medway's character, containing urban sprawl and separation of settlements.

An updated Medway Landscape Character Assessment and Green Infrastructure Framework will provide a basis for determining the acceptability of development proposals and areas and features that need to be protected and enhanced.

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that they protect, strengthen and connect features of local landscapes."

7.29 Emerging Policy NE5: Securing strong Green Infrastructure, which states:

"The council will protect the network of green infrastructure across rural and urban Medway... A high level of protection from damaging impacts of development will be given to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Ancient Woodland. The council will consider the need to protect the special features of Regionally Important Geological Sites, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves.

Wider components of the green infrastructure network will be protected in line with the analysis and strategy set out in the emerging Green Infrastructure Framework. This will include open space assets, landscape buffers and green infrastructure zones.

New development should provide for green infrastructure that supports the successful integration of development into the landscape, and contributes to improved connectivity and public access, biodiversity, landscape conservation, design, management of heritage features, recreation and seeks opportunities to strengthen the resilience of the natural environment.

The council will expect development proposals to demonstrate that they are designed to be resilient to, and can adapt to the future impacts of climate change, in strengthening ecological networks.

The council will promote the extension of the green infrastructure network through setting criteria for the establishment and maintenance of Local Green Spaces."

7.30 Emerging Policy BE1: Promoting High Quality Design, which states:

"Development in Medway will be expected to be of high-quality design that makes a positive contribution and respond appropriately to the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Proposals that incorporate high quality design and sustainability which demonstrably consider the following criteria will be permitted:

- The scale and form of development is appropriate to its surrounding context and is characteristic of Medway, or where appropriate new high quality character...;*
- How the proposal relates to and/or reinforces the local distinctiveness and character through the use of high quality materials and local vernacular materials where appropriate; landscaping and building detailing;*
- Working with the topography of the site and the incorporation of existing natural features;*
- Responds appropriately to the character of the area, interprets respectfully the prevailing pattern of plot size, plot layout and building siting, roofscapes, mass, bulk and height, and views into and out of the site;*

- *Makes efficient use of land and ensures appropriate streetscapes;*
- *Good connectivity permeability that provides a clear user hierarchy for pedestrians, cycles, public transport and cars and that streets and spaces within new residential developments are not overly car dominated...;*
- *Respects the amenity of neighbouring uses through consideration of...visual intrusion...and other relevant considerations...;*
- *High quality landscaping and areas of public realm that make use of or retaining features considered relevant/important by the Council and demonstrating linkages/contribution toward green infrastructure assets and networks; and*
- *Achieves a transition from urban to rural where appropriate..."*

Supplementary Planning and Evidence Base Documents

Medway Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (26 April 2018)^v

7.31 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) sets out a framework of sustainability objectives used to assess the emerging Local Plan.

7.32 General biodiversity and green space opportunities and objectives in Medway are outlined on page 25 of the SA. Those of relevance to the Development include:

- *"Integrating biodiversity and green space into new development and growth;*
- *Enhancing, not just protecting biodiversity offering;*
- *Conserve and enhance the borough's diversity, habitats, and species; and*
- *Conserve and enhance the existing open space network".*

7.33 Relevant Development Scenarios and Policies to landscape and visual matters in the SA include:

*"NE4 - Landscape;
NE5 – Securing strong green infrastructure; and
BE1 – Promoting high quality design".*

A Building Height Policy for Medway (2006)^{vi}

7.34 This guidance applies to any development over 20m or 6 storeys in height. The checklist for developing proposals for higher buildings on page 27 notes under (iii) 'Effect on the whole existing environment':

- *"Does the proposal respect & enhance the area's identity?*
- *How will the proposed building(s) contribute to the life of the area?*
- *Does the building make a positive contribution to framing & enhancing protected views & sensitive areas such as potential World*

Heritage Site & buffer zones, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks & gardens, major public spaces, river, other important views, prospects, panoramas & their settings?"

7.35 Under (vi) 'Design Quality', the checklist includes:

- *"Does the proposal demonstrate outstanding architectural & design quality?"*
- *Are the main objectives for the higher building clear? For example, does it have a local or wider landmark function, or does it form part of a generally higher townscape? Is the scale proposed fully justified?"*
- *Does the massing proposed relate sensitively to neighbouring buildings, surrounding public spaces and to the wider skyline?"*
- *Are high quality materials proposed? Is their effect on their surroundings clearly understood and demonstrably sensitive?"*
- *Does the lighting strategy positively emphasise the building while showing consideration for the surrounding buildings and spaces?"*

7.36 Under (vii) 'Design of the Public Realm', the checklist includes:

- *"Is there a clear distinction between public, semi-public & private spaces?"*
- *Are frontages that add to the vitality of the public realm encouraged?"*
- *Are all parts of the site or area assigned a positive use that relates to adjacent uses?"*
- *Is legibility of the local townscape improved?"*
- *Is landscape recognised as an integral part of the overall design concept?"*

7.37 The document identifies several strategic views and landmarks which are included within Part 2 Appendix A. The chimney of the existing power stations can be seen in Viewpoint 12: Upnor Castle – towards St Mary's Island and the river frontage formed by Chatham Historic Dockyard located approximately 5km to the west of the Site.

Kent Design Guide^{vii}

7.38 The Kent Design Guide notes that successful places tend to:

- *"Be friendly, safe and attractive;*
- *Be well used – a steady passage of people provides a feeling of safety;*
- *Clearly distinguish private and public areas;*
- *Have building frontages with a direct relationship with the street;*
- *Have clearly defined entrances to buildings used by the public;*
- *Have a network of pedestrian routes and spaces;*
- *Give priority in streets to people rather than to vehicles;*
- *Have clearly defined boundaries for public areas – using hedges, fences and trees; and*

- *Have a coordinated approach to street surfaces and furniture - lamps, seats, litter bins, paving, bus shelters and signs."*

7.39 The document further notes that *"creating a 'sense of place' or 'character' is one of the most important things for new development to achieve..."*. With respect to the landscape setting it states that *"the landscape setting of a development site should be understood, extended and enhanced within the site"*, and states that a well-designed landscape will provide:

- *"An attractive setting for a development, its users and occupiers;*
- *A positive environment of wider economic benefit;*
- *A sense of place with a clear identity;*
- *A sense of space and enclosure;*
- *Spatial benefits including integrating the visual impact of the built environment with nature;*
- *Environmental benefits including micro-climate creation, pollution attenuation and the reduction of water and energy consumption;*
- *Noise and visual screening; and*
- *Retention of cultural associations with the natural environment."*

Planning for Growth on the Hoo Peninsula^{viii}

7.40 The vision for Hoo St Werburgh as set out in this document includes Kingsnorth Power station and the industrial park to the north as an employment area along with new homes *"set in rural character"*, a network of local parks with SUDs, improved pedestrian and cyclist experience, Vibrant and walkable neighbourhood centres, improved green infrastructure and footpaths and a new transport hub.

7.41 Principle 1 put forward in the document is to promote Landscape-led development with the following set out on page 9:

- *"The expansion of Hoo will be landscape-led, preserving and improving the existing natural environment for people as well as the local wildlife.*
- *Key aspirations include providing better public access to the natural assets throughout Hoo, enhance biodiversity, protect key viewpoints and the overall landscape identity.*
- *A careful approach regarding the physical, environmental and visual impact must be key priorities for any future developments across the Hoo Peninsula to ensure a more resilient and sustainable future.*
- *A comprehensive green infrastructure network consisting of both natural green assets and public open spaces will provide a seamless journey to key destinations for pedestrians and cyclists.*
- *Emerging plans include the planting of 1000s of new native trees and shrubs, the planting of kilometres of new hedges, acres of new fruit orchards, a green pedestrian bridge providing easy access across the A228 as well as the designing of new walking and cycling routes to connect the open space network to communities. Opportunities to create new wetlands closer to the River Medway are also to be explored.*

- *Green corridors will maintain physical and visual separation between Hoo St Werburgh and Chattenden, and between High Halstow and Hoo St Werburgh, preserving the rural character of each community. Additionally, the retention of a strategic gap between Chattenden and Strood will maintain the rural character of the peninsula, consolidating the natural buffer between urban and rural Medway."*

- 7.42 The proposals include housing areas and neighbourhood characters including housing to the south of Hoo St Werburgh to *"the north of the inland route of the Saxon Shore Way, retaining an open space buffer to the sensitive woodland and estuary areas"*. This would include the creation of a country park between the proposed housing areas and the coast within which the view towards the River Medway is illustrated (including the end of the conveyor pier associated with the former Kingsnorth power station).
- 7.43 The wider Kingsnorth area is envisaged as *"A thriving employment hub in Kingsnorth" to capitalise on the investments in transport and be a key site for Medway's economic development, conveniently located close to the new passenger rail station. It is envisaged as an "attractive and sustainable location for business" with "sustainable and inviting design"*.

Legislative Context

- 7.44 There is no legislation specific to Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Assessment Methodology

- 7.45 The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment's *"Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment"* Third Edition^x (GLVIA 3) notes in Chapter 1 that landscape and visual impact assessment relates to:

"...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"

- 7.46 The methodology employed in carrying out the LVIA of the Development has been drawn from guidelines set out in GLVIA3. The guidelines are not intended as a prescriptive set of rules, and the approach has been adapted based on professional opinion and experience.
- 7.47 The purpose of LVIAs is to identify and assess the likely effects of change resulting from the Development. Landscape and visual assessments are separate, although linked, procedures. A distinction is made between:

- landscape - landscape character and the elements and features that contribute to it (landscape receptors); and
- visual - people who experience views within the landscape (visual receptors).

7.48 The LVIA is accompanied by illustrative material, including baseline mapping and photographs of the Site itself and as seen within the wider context.

7.49 There are four key stages to the LVIA process, as follows:

- Baseline studies.
- Influence of design process.
- Assessment of landscape and visual effects, including residual effects.
- Cumulative assessment.

Baseline Studies

7.50 The purpose of baseline studies is to record the existing landscape features, characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced and potential visual receptors. The following were undertaken as part of the baseline studies:

- Identification of the extents of the Study Area, as shown on Figure 7.1. This was based on professional judgement and has been derived from the type of development proposed and the landscape context.
- A desktop study of patterns and scale of landform, land use and built development, relevant current planning policy (including landscape designations) and landscape character publications. Further localised character assessments have been undertaken to supplement published assessments and to identify areas which may not be reflective of the wider landscape character.
- Identification of potential representative viewpoints within the Study Area and agreement with Medway Council, as set out within the correspondence in Appendix 7.8.
- Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) site visits in May and October 2020 to appraise the Site and its function within the wider landscape setting.

7.51 Where relevant, the future baseline of the Site and its context was also considered, in order to account for ongoing change in the landscape, for example developments that are under construction and which will have altered the landscape context to the Site by the time the Development would be likely to be initiated.

Design and Mitigation

- 7.52 Mitigation measures were embedded within the design of the Development as a result of the desk-based study and field work. These measures, such as the maximum height of built development, location of access points, trees to be retained and arrangement of open spaces, are termed 'primary mitigation' and are included within the Parameter Plan (Figure 3.2 of the ES) which define the outline application. Effective primary mitigation strategies avoid or reduce adverse effects by ensuring the key principles of the design of the Development, as noted above, are sympathetic with the existing baseline.
- 7.53 Where the design process does not enable mitigation to be embedded within the Development, additional recommended measures to reduce adverse effects are termed 'secondary mitigation.' The illustrative masterplan (Figure 3.3 of the ES) shows one way the site could be developed incorporating secondary mitigation.
- 7.54 Typical secondary mitigation strategies to be secured through planning condition can include:
- Additional design detail including building materials or landscape design approaches, including indicative species and management principles;
 - Landscape and biodiversity management strategy to secure ongoing enhancement of landscape features (Appendix 7.9 LBMS);
 - A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to minimise effects arising during the construction process, typically including tree protection in line with BS5837:2012; and
 - A programme of appropriate monitoring, agreed with the regulatory authority, so that compliance and effectiveness can be readily monitored and evaluated.
- 7.55 These secondary measures contribute to the assessment of residual effects.
- 7.56 The contribution made by areas of planting introduced as part of the Development has been considered in terms of the effects at Year 1 and the residual effects (allowing for growth of planting over time) at Year 15. The height of this planting for assessment purposes is assumed to be as follows (based on an average growth rate of 1m in 3 years – the rate of growth varies according to species):
- Planting at Year 1: typically, 0.7-4.5 metres; and
 - Planting at Year 15: typically, 5.5-9.5 metres.

Enhancement

- 7.57 Whilst not specifically related to mitigation, enhancement may be achieved as part of the design process (e.g. the creation of a new landscape or public amenity/access; enhancement in character or view; or improved management of existing landscape features secured through the Development). The beneficial changes resulting from these measures are incorporated into assessment of landscape and visual effects.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

- 7.58 GLVIA3 Paragraph 5.1 states that:

"An assessment of landscape effects deals with the effects of change and development on landscape as a resource."

- 7.59 The significance of landscape effects is derived from a combination of assessments of the sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of effect (change) experienced as a result of the Development.

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

- 7.60 The sensitivity of a landscape receptor is a combination of the value of the landscape receptor and the susceptibility (in other words 'vulnerability') of the landscape receptor to the type of change proposed as assessed using professional judgement.

Landscape Value

- 7.61 The assessment of value is based on a combination of the importance of landscape-related planning designations and the following attributes:
- Landscape quality (condition): the measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical landscape character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.
 - Scenic quality: the extent that the landscape receptor appeals to the visual senses.
 - Perceptual aspects: the extent that the landscape receptor is recognised for its perceptual qualities (e.g. remoteness or tranquillity).
 - Rarity: the presence of unusual elements or features.
 - Representativeness: the presence of particularly characteristic features.

- Recreation: the extent that recreational activities contribute to the landscape receptor.
- Association: the extent that cultural or historical associations contribute to the landscape receptor.

7.62 Landscapes, including their character and features, may be designated for their landscape and visual qualities at a range of levels (national, county and local level).

7.63 The overall value for each landscape receptor is categorised as either high, medium, low or very low, as set out in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Landscape Value

Level	Criteria
High	Landscape area of distinctive components and characteristics which may also be nationally designated for scenic beauty. A landscape feature which makes a strong positive contribution to landscape character e.g. a mature tree or woodland.
Medium	Landscape area of common components and characteristics which may be designated at county or borough level for its landscape and visual qualities. A landscape feature which makes some positive contribution to landscape character.
Low	Landscape area/feature of inconsequential components and characteristics, undesignated and with little or no wider recognition of value, although potentially of importance to the local community.
Very Low	Landscape area or feature that is undesignated and providing no positive contribution to the landscape.

Landscape Susceptibility

7.64 The susceptibility of the landscape is a measure of its vulnerability to the type of development proposed, without undue consequences, for the maintenance of the baseline situation. The following criteria were taken into consideration in the assessment of the susceptibility of landscape character, although not all criteria are equally applicable or important within a given landscape / type of development proposed:

- Landform;
- Pattern/Complexity;
- Composition;
- Landcover;
- Relationship of a given landscape area to existing settlements or developments; and
- Potential for appropriate mitigation within the context of existing character and guidelines.

7.65 With regard to landscape features, susceptibility relates to the potential for loss/retention of the relevant features in relation to the type of development proposed and the facility with which such elements may be replaced, where appropriate.

- 7.66 Susceptibility of landscape character/ features was categorised as high, medium or low, as set out in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Landscape Susceptibility

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	The receptor is likely to have little scope to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences upon its overall integrity. The landscape element is impossible or extremely difficult to replace or recreate.
Medium	The receptor is likely to have some scope to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue consequences upon its overall integrity. The landscape features can be replaced with some ease and/or after some time.
Low	The receptor is likely to be able to accommodate the type of development proposed with little or no consequences upon its overall integrity. The landscape feature can be quickly and easily replaced.

- 7.67 Based on the combination of value and susceptibility, an assessment of landscape sensitivity was reached, defined as high, medium or low. Typically, a high value and high susceptibility would result in a high sensitivity; and a low value and low susceptibility would result in low sensitivity and this is based on professional judgement.

Landscape Magnitude of Effect (Change)

- 7.68 The landscape magnitude of effect (change) was informed by judgements about the precise nature of the change brought about by the Development in terms of the existing landscape character and landscape elements, the addition of new landscape elements, and its duration and reversibility, as set out in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Landscape Magnitude of Effect (Change)

Magnitude	Criteria
Large	Pronounced change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect an extensive area. The change may be long-term or may be irreversible.
Medium	Partial change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect a relatively extensive area. The change may be medium-term or may be irreversible.
Small	Limited change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect a relatively limited area. The change may be short-term or reversible.
Very Small	Very slight change to the existing landscape receptor that may affect a limited area. The alteration may be short-term or reversible.

Assessment of Visual Effects

- 7.69 GLVIA3 Paragraph 6.1 states that:

"An assessment of visual effects deals with the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity."

- 7.70 The significance of visual effects was derived from a combination of assessments of the sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of effect (change) experienced as a result of the Development.

Viewpoint Selection and Consultation

- 7.71 In order to assess the effects on visual receptors, a selection of 21 publicly accessible viewpoints was identified and agreed with Medway Council, including an additional location in Riverside Country park. A total of two meetings were held with the Urban Design Officer at Medway Council, on 2nd December 2020 and 9th March 2021 at which the approach to the design and landscape considerations were discussed. Copies of correspondence are included in Appendix 7.7. These were initially chosen as a result of the desktop assessment and refined on site to gain an understanding of the visibility of the Site from a range of distances and directions. These include representative viewpoints (e.g. representing views of users of a particular footpath) and specific viewpoints (e.g. a key view from a specific visitor attraction).
- 7.72 The type of view can be described as either transient (i.e. experienced when moving) or fixed (i.e. from a static location). It may also be described in terms of the degree of screening or openness (e.g. open or uninterrupted; partial (including where partially screened or filtered) by vegetation or other structures; or curtailed by intervening land form, built form or vegetation) and the angle of view (e.g. frontal or oblique).
- 7.73 Photographs of representative viewpoints were taken at eye level, using a digital SLR camera, and presented in accordance with the Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 'Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment'^x.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 7.74 The sensitivity of a visual receptor is a consideration of the value of the view and the susceptibility of the visual receptor, the latter being primarily based on consideration of the extent to which a visual receptor is focused on appreciation of the landscape. The sensitivity of a visual receptor results from the combination of value and susceptibility and was rated as high, medium or low. Typically, a high value and high susceptibility would result in a high sensitivity; and a low value and low susceptibility would result in low sensitivity, but these are based on professional judgement and as considerations set out in Table 7.4 and Table 7.5.

Table 7.4: Value of Views

Value	Criteria
High	View of/from a location that is likely to be of national importance, either designated or with national cultural associations. View has no visual detractors / degraded landscapes.
Medium	View of/from a location that is likely to be of local importance, either designated or with local cultural associations. View may contain some visual detractors, but these are not of detriment to the quality of the view.
Low	View of/from a location that is not designated, with minimal or no cultural associations. View contains frequent visual detractors / degraded landscapes.

Table 7.5: Susceptibility of Visual Receptor

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	People at their place of residence. People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), whose attention is likely to be focused on the landscape. People travelling along recognised scenic routes or where their appreciation of the view contributes to the amenity experience of their journey.
Medium	People engaged in outdoor sport and recreation, where their appreciation of their surroundings is incidental to their enjoyment. People travelling on secondary roads or country lanes, rail or other transport routes.
Low	People travelling on major roads. People at their place of work.

Visual Magnitude of Effect (Change)

7.75 In the evaluation of the effects on views and the visual amenity of the identified receptors, the magnitude of visual effect (change) was described with reference to:

- The scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition. Factors contributing to this include:
 - the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor;
 - the distance of the viewer from the Development; and
 - the extent of the area over which the changes would be visible.
- Whether or not the view is experienced in fixed or transient views and, in the latter, whether it is intermittent/glimpsed or continuous; and
- The duration of the change, whether temporary or permanent.

7.76 The criteria for magnitude of visual effect (change) are set out in

7.77 Table 7.6.

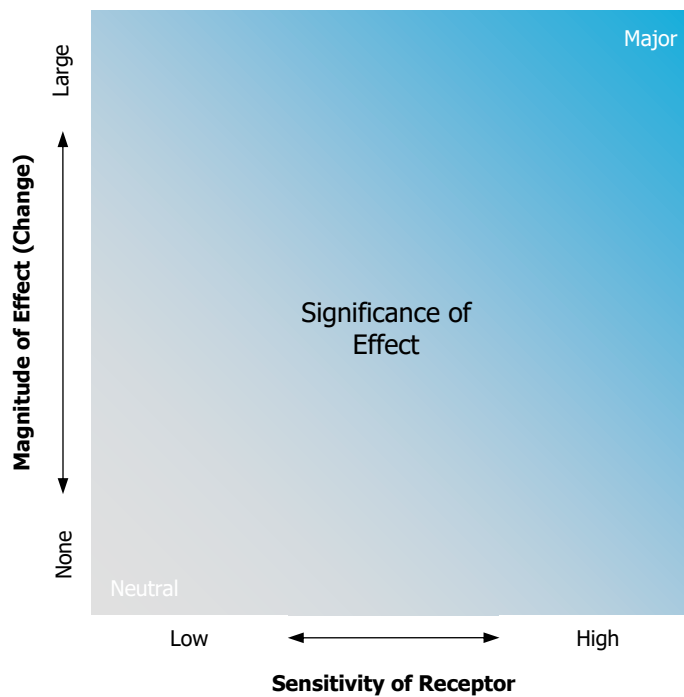
Table 7.6: Visual Magnitude of Effect (Change)

Magnitude	Criteria
Large	The proposals will cause a pronounced change to the existing view, resulting in the loss or addition of features that will substantially alter the composition of the view. The effects may be experienced over an expansive area. The change may be long-term or may be irreversible.
Medium	The proposals will cause a noticeable change in the view, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter the composition of the view. The effect is experienced over a moderate area. The change may be medium-term or may be irreversible.
Small	The proposals will cause a limited change in the view, which would not materially alter the composition of the view. The change may be short-term or reversible. The effect may be experienced over a limited area.
Very Small	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change in the view. The view is only available from a single or limited number of locations. The change may be short-term or reversible.
None	No change discernible in the view.

Significance of Effects

- 7.78 In order to draw conclusions about the significance of landscape or visual effects, the combination of the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of effect (change) has been considered for the Development at Year 1 of operation; and also at a point where planting associated with the Development will be establishing i.e. Year 15.
- 7.79 Significance of effects are rated on a scale of Neutral to Major. Assessment of significance of effects is subject to professional judgement but in broad terms, where a receptor of high sensitivity experiences a large magnitude of effect (change) as a result of the Development, the significance of effect is likely to be major. Conversely, where a receptor of low sensitivity experiences a very small magnitude of effect (change) as a result of the Development, the significance of effect is likely to be negligible. Diagram 7.1 illustrates this scale below.

Diagram 7.1: Significance of Effects



- 7.80 Where it is considered that there is potential for both beneficial and adverse changes, these are noted and the balance of these considerations used to inform conclusions on significance of effect.
- 7.81 The assessment of residual effects refers to the likely effects of the Development that will remain once secondary mitigation measures are applied and also considers the growth of planting introduced within the Development (including where this is part of primary or secondary mitigation).
- 7.82 For schemes subject to Environmental Impact Assessment, an assessment of whether or not the effect is considered 'significant' is required. This is relative to each scheme but, in general, effects of Major or Moderate (adverse/beneficial) significance are deemed 'significant'.

Table 7.7: Significance of Landscape Effects – Criteria

Significance of Landscape Effect	Criteria
Major Beneficial	Alterations that result in a pronounced improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be restored or reintroduced as part of the Development.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that result in a partial improvement of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be partially restored or reintroduced.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that result in a limited improvement of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be restored to a limited degree.

Significance of Landscape Effect	Criteria
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that result in a very slight improvement to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Neutral	Neither beneficial nor adverse effects on the existing landscape resource.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that result in a very slight deterioration to the existing landscape resource, not uncharacteristic within the receiving landscape.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that result in a limited deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Characteristic features would be lost to a limited degree.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that result in a partial deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be partially lost.
Major Adverse	Alterations that result in a pronounced deterioration of the existing landscape resource. Valued characteristic features would be wholly lost.

Table 7.8: Significance of Visual Effects – Criteria

Significance of Visual Effect	Criteria
Major Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced improvement in the existing view.
Moderate Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable improvement in the existing view.
Minor Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a limited improvement in the existing view.
Negligible Beneficial	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view.
Neutral	Neither beneficial nor adverse effects on the existing view.
Negligible Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view.
Minor Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a limited deterioration in the existing view.
Moderate Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a noticeable deterioration in the existing view.
Major Adverse	Alterations that typically result in a pronounced deterioration in the existing view.

Cumulative Assessment

- 7.83 The assessment of cumulative assessments considers the landscape and visual effects that will arise as a result of additional changes to the landscape resource or visual amenity caused by the Development in combination with other emerging schemes, as detailed in Chapter 2 EIA Methodology of the ES.
- 7.84 GLVIA3 emphasises that cumulative impact assessment should be reasonable and proportionate to the nature of the Development and local environment, focussing on likely significant effects, rather than providing a comprehensive catalogue of every conceivable cumulative effect that may occur.
- 7.85 The cumulative assessment takes into consideration:
- The extent to which the emerging schemes and the Development extend or intensify the landscape and/or visual effects of each scheme.

- The extent to which the landscape resource is altered due to the modifications in land use and pattern.
- The interrelations between the different types of built forms.
- The incremental changes as a result of successive built forms being introduced.
- The temporal effects arising due to simultaneous or successive construction activities over an extended period of time.
- The indirect effects arising from the enabling works of each emerging scheme and/or the consequences of the removal of elements of the landscape.

7.86 Cumulative landscape effects relate to the loss and/or addition of features as a result of the Development and other emerging schemes that alter the physical fabric and character of a landscape.

7.87 Cumulative visual effects may arise as a result of combined visibility and/or sequential effects and are principally concerned with the change in the composition of available views and the visual amenity experience. Cumulative visual effects are categorised as follows:

- Combined: the influence of more than one scheme is experienced in a single view by a visual receptor;
- Successive: where two or more schemes are visible from the same location but not within the same view. i.e. an observer at a given location would need to look in distinctly different directions to view more than one scheme; and
- Sequential: occurs when an observer moves through a landscape, e.g. where the presence of the emerging schemes and the Development are visible from different locations along a recognised route of travel. The schemes do not need to be inter-visible for sequential effects to arise.

Limitations and Assumptions

7.88 The following limitations are relevant to the assessment:

- The baseline assessment has been based on information readily available at the time of undertaking the assessment (2020);
- During visits to the Site and surrounding area, weather conditions, the time of day and seasonal factors have influenced the photographic record of the environment;
- Assessment is not undertaken from the Site Context Photographs. These are illustrative and are not intended to replace the experience of visiting the viewpoint in person;

- During a consultation meeting with Medway Council officers on 9th March 2021, it was agreed that, due to existing land uses surrounding the Site, an assessment of effects from lighting on the character of the night sky would not be necessary as part of the landscape and visual impact assessment. Therefore, it has been scoped out of this assessment; and
- It is not practicable or necessary to assess views from every available location but rather a number of representative viewpoints were identified to help determine the area from which the Development will be visible. In accordance with best practice, the most sensitive viewpoints were identified for inclusion. It should be noted that an assessment of effects from within the River Medway and from Fort Darnet and Fort Hoo is included without photography, as these views were not requested by Medway Council. By use of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), aerial photography and modelling using "Google Earth Pro", a measured judgement has been made of the likely effects from these locations.

7.89 The following assumptions have been made in the assessment:

- The contribution made by areas of existing and proposed planting is considered in terms of the effects at Year 1 and the residual effects (allowing for growth of planting over time), and the height of this planting for assessment purposes is assumed to be as follows (based on an average growth rate of 1 m in 3 years – the rate of growth varies according to species):
 - Planting at Year 1: typically 0.7-4.5 m; and
 - Planting at Year 15: typically 5.5-9.5 m.
- The 'Operational Phase' assessment within the 'Likely Significant Effects' section of the chapter (which comprises an assessment of the likely significant effects of the operational Development at 'year 1') is based upon the Parameter Plan (Figure 3.2) and a worst-case scenario of massing up to 50m in height AOD, as shown on Figure 3.2 Parameter Plan. This section of the chapter assesses the likely significant effects of the operational Development with the new planting being implemented at the heights (0.6m to 4.5m) set out above.
- The demolition and construction stage would follow the indicative construction programme set out in Chapter 5 Construction Methodology and Sequencing of the ES and a worst-case scenario of 'maximum' construction activity on the Site, including for the tallest plant, machinery and mobile cranes.
- Extensive scaffolding would be in place for the minimum practicable period of time during the construction works.
- The 'Operational Phase' assessment within the 'Residual Effects' section of the chapter (which comprises an assessment of the likely significant effects to the operational Development at 'year 15') takes into account the Figure 3.3 Illustrative Masterplan, and

the design principles discussed in the 'Mitigation Measures' section of the chapter. This section of the chapter assesses the likely significant effects of the operational Development with the new planting established at the heights (5.5m to 9.5m) set out above.

- When making judgements on susceptibility, reference was not made to the specifics of the Development, its proximity or reversibility, or indication of duration. This is to ensure the avoidance of 'double-counting' issues when assessing susceptibility and magnitude.

Baseline Conditions

- 7.90 The following pages describe the context in which the Site is situated, the Site itself and then the assessment of the published landscape character assessments. This aids the understanding of the contribution that the Site and its setting make to local landscape character and whether the Site is reflective of the wider landscape character, as well as the identification of landscape receptors to change. Sites which are less reflective of their context and the wider landscape character are generally of lower sensitivity to change but also provide opportunities for landscape enhancement and character restoration. Lastly, a visual appraisal has been undertaken to identify visual receptors to change and to understand the visual context of the Site and its role within views.

Landscape Context

- 7.91 The wider context of the Site is illustrated in Figure 7.1: Site Context Plan. As can be seen on this plan, the Site occupies a peninsula of land on the southern edge of the Hoo Peninsula in Kent and on the northern bank of the River Medway, extending out into coastal mudflats.
- 7.92 This Site is situated on a peninsula of land, Damhead Fleet, connected to Oakham Marsh to the east of the Site via the Oakham Ness Jetty. The Long Reach of the River Medway is to the south of the Site and the Kethole Reach to the east. East Hoo Creek extends around the northern side of Oakham Marsh, the latter in the east of the Site, before connecting into Damhead Creek.

Settlement and Land Use

- 7.93 The land to the south-east, south and south-west of the Site comprises mudflats and the land to the north comprises emerging large-scale industrial and warehouse development in Kingsnorth Industrial Estate, together with Damhead Creek Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Station (CCGT), marked in views by buildings of up to 36m in height and two 50m high

chimney stacks. The land to the west of the Site comprises open minerals extraction and areas of overburden. Beyond the industrial and minerals extraction areas, the landscape comprises the mainly agricultural landscape of the Hoo Peninsula, with further pockets of industrial and former industrial land along the coast on the Isle of Grain to the east.

- 7.94 Beyond the industrial areas, including the Site's surroundings, the landscape of the peninsula is broadly defined by its agricultural use and small settlements, connected by minor roads. The closest settlement to the site is Hoo St Werburgh, 2km to the west of the Site. The intervening landscape is composed of agricultural fields, mineral extraction activities, waterbodies and marshland.

Access and Rights of Way

- 7.95 The main access onto the Hoo Peninsula is via the A228 Peninsula Way which leads to the Isle of Grain on the eastern tip of the peninsula, location of an extensive array of power station and associated industrial uses on land reclaimed from the marshes. A railway line follows this east to west alignment connecting the Isle of Grain with Gravesend and London to the west.
- 7.96 There is a wide network of PRoW within the area, as illustrated on Figure 7.2: Site Context Plan. RS111/RS93 forms part the route of the Saxon Shore Way, which extends west along the coast, forming a key coastal recreation route, passing 540m to the west of the Site at its closest point. RS93 connects to RS351A which extends south of the settlement of Hoo St Werburgh. A series of PRoW extend across the wider landscape to the north and east of the Site, beyond the settlement of Hoo St. Werburgh including the remainder of the route of the Saxon Shore Way, which extends north-east towards Ratcliffe Highway approximately 3.2km northwest of the Site.
- 7.97 RS108 begins approximately 300m north of the Site from Eschol Road (adjacent to an electricity substation northeast of the Site boundary) and stretches north towards Stoke Road (opposite North Street Farm), connecting to the wider network of PRoW in the north.

Designations

- 7.98 Landscape designations that fall within the Study Area are illustrated on Figure 7.1: Location Plan and Figure 7.2: Site Context Plan. The Site is 1.8km to the east of Cockham Farm Ridge Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI), to the south-east of Chattenden Ridge ALLI, and 2.84km to the north of the Gillingham Riverside ALLI. The North Kent Marshes Special Landscape Area extends north eastwards from the Site's eastern boundary and covers the

marshland to the south of the Site within the Medway river, as designated within 'Saved' Policies BNE 33 and BNE34 of the Medway Local Plan (2003).

7.99 There are a number of listed buildings located in the Study Area. These are illustrated on Figure 7.1: Study Area and Figure 7.2: Site Context Plan, the following of which are closest to the Site:

- Lancer's Farmhouse, Grade II, 250m northwest of the Site;
- White Hill House, Grade II, 913m northeast of the Site;
- A cluster of WWII buildings including Anti-tank Cubes on the Sea-Wall of the River Medway and Pillbox on Seawall of the River Medway, Grade II, 1.1km west of the Site; and
- Church of St Werburgh: Grade I, 1.87km west of the Site.

7.100 Scheduled monuments within the Study Area are illustrated on Figure 7.1: Study Area and Figure 7.2: Site Context Plan and include:

- Fort Darnet Scheduled Monument, located 1.03km south of the Site on low islands on the opposite side of the Medway channel; and
- Hoo Fort Scheduled Monument, located 1.66km southwest of the Site on low islands on the opposite side of the Medway channel.

Topography and Hydrology

7.101 Hoo is an 8km wide and 19km long peninsula between the Thames Estuary to the north and the Medway Estuary to the south. The southern half of the Hoo Peninsula occupies higher ground whilst the northern parts are extensively covered by estuarine marshlands.

7.102 The flat estuary landscape of the River Medway, in which the Site is located, is overlooked to the north-west by undulating wooded hillsides upon which the settlements of Higham, Cliffe Woods and High Halstow are located. To the south of the River Medway a hillside, which runs parallel to the estuary, rises up to a height of 90m AOD within 2km of the shore. The extensive areas of urban and sub-urban development which dominate this hillside, including Gillingham and Rainham, mask the natural topography.

7.103 The Site occupies a smaller-scale peninsula of land which extends into the mudflats on the northern shores of the Medway estuary. A formerly dammed creek, "Damhead Creek", separates the former power station part of the Site from the site of the former RNAS Kingsnorth. Damhead Creek describes the northern extents of the Site as it flows into East

Hoo Creek and to the Medway to the north of Oakham Marsh. The mudflats to the south of the Site are known as Slede Ouse and the section of the River Medway directly to the south of the Site is known as Long Reach.

- 7.104 Locally, man-made landforms surround the industrial warehousing areas to the north of the Site and provide visual enclosure.

Vegetation and Field Pattern

- 7.105 The low-lying marshland estuary edge is composed mainly of marsh grassland and mudflats, but also includes limited areas of scrub woodland. The main vegetation within the marshes is grassland, contributing to their open character. Inland, to the north and west of the Site, the hillsides are very open with medium-sized agricultural fields and minimal tree cover. The main areas of tree cover occur along streams and the railway line. Blocks of woodland are located along the ridgeline to the north west including Northward Hill and the High Halstow National Nature Reserve north of the settlement of High Halstow, and Chattenden Wood to the east of the settlement of Cliffe Woods. Existing hedgerows and wide field margins can be found in the wider landscape north of the A228 in between settlements.
- 7.106 To the south of the Medway estuary, there is a greater coverage of woodland and treelined roadways within remaining rural areas resulting in a greater sense of enclosure inland for the immediate coastal areas.

Site Appraisal

- 7.107 The Site is approximately 111 hectares in area and covers the site of the former Kingsnorth power station together with land to the north of it, including part of the WWI Royal Navy Air Station (RNAS) Kingsnorth, and drained marshland land to the east, south of Damhead Creek and East Hoo Creek. An aerial photograph of the Site and the location of Site Appraisal Photographs are shown on Figure 7.5: Site Appraisal plan. Site Appraisal Photographs are included at Appendix 7.2.
- 7.108 The Site comprises four parcels of land of differing land uses and types (refer to Figure 3.1 of the ES) including areas of cleared hardstanding, buildings, drainage channels, pond, scrub woodland and grassland. The Site was formerly home to Kingsnorth coal-fired power station. Two main buildings remain, relating to the operational electric power station and National Grid substation situated within Parcel 2, but outwith the Site boundary (see Site Appraisal Photographs B, C and D). The former power station was mainly situated on Parcel 3, and associated coal storage. Parcel 1 comprises scrubby pasture and colonised areas of

hardstanding (see Site Appraisal Photograph A). Parcel 4 comprises an area of undeveloped pasture and was historically part of the airfields associated with RNAS Kingsnorth (see Site Appraisal Photograph F and G). The former airship sheds at RNAS Kingsnorth were located under the current ground plan of the gas fired power station to the north. The tower and jetty in the south of the Site are still present, as can be seen in the left side of Site Appraisal Photograph J.

7.109 High voltage power lines extend west from the electricity station, crossing the southern part of Parcel 2 in two lines. A third line extends north from the western boundary of Parcel 2 towards the north, as seen on Site Appraisal Photograph D.

7.110 There are long stretches of concrete walling extending along the edges of Damhead Creek, separating the eastern parts of Parcels 4 and 3 (see Site Appraisal Photograph I). The majority of the remaining boundaries are marked by chain link or mesh fencing, as shown on Site Appraisal Photographs A, C, E and K.

7.111 Due to the historic land uses of the Site, there is comparatively little vegetation. The most notable areas are the planting along the north of Parcel 2 (see Site Appraisal Photograph D left side) and the southern edge of Parcel 4 (see Site Appraisal Photograph F right side). Small stands of tree remain to the north of the remaining buildings (see Site Appraisal Photograph B). Further scrubby trees and shrubs occur throughout Parcel 1 (see Site Appraisal Photograph A and the left side of Site Appraisal Photograph F). Marginal planting is seen along the route of some ditches, as shown in Site Appraisal Photograph E.

7.112 There are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments within the Site and no PRow cross it.

Summary of Landscape Receptors

7.113 There are few landscape receptors remaining in the Site due to its historic land use as a power station with associated storage and lagoons. Those landscape features identified above are listed below:

- Scrubby vegetation and trees in Parcel 1;
- Hedge between Parcels 4 and 3;
- Planting along north of Parcel 2;
- Marshy grassland in Parcel 3;
- Drainage ditches in Parcels 2, 4 and 3; and
- Stands of trees in Parcels 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Landscape Character and Sensitivity

7.114 Analysis of the different levels of landscape character assessment was undertaken to better understand local variations in character, such as where the character of a particular location may not reflect that of the wider landscape. With regard to landscape character, the landscape, including the Site, has been assessed at national, county and district levels, as illustrated on Figure 7.4: Landscape Character Plan. Relevant extracts from these published assessments have been included in Appendix 7.4: Extracts from Published Landscape Character Assessments.

National Character Areas

7.115 As part of Natural England's responsibilities in delivering the Natural Environment White Paper, Biodiversity 2020^{xi} and the European Landscape Convention^{xii}, Natural England has developed a series of National Character Area (NCA) profiles. These NCA profiles provide a broad range of information including an outline of the key characteristics of a given area; a description of the ecosystem services provided and how these relate to people, wildlife and the economy; and an array of opportunities for positive environmental change. The extent of NCA profiles is illustrated on Figure 7.4: Landscape Character Plan.

7.116 At a national level, the majority of the Site is within National Character Area 81: Greater Thames Estuary^{xiii} with the northernmost part of the Site within NCA 113: North Kent Plain^{xiv}, as shown on Figure 7.4: Landscape Character Plan.

NCA 81: Greater Thames Estuary

7.117 NCA 81: Greater Thames Estuary is characterised by:

- *"Predominantly flat, low-lying coastal landscape where extensive open spaces are dominated by the sky, and the pervasive presence of water and numerous coastal estuaries extend the maritime influence far inland.*
- *Open grazing pastures patterned by a network of ancient and modern reed-fringed drainage ditches and dykes, numerous creeks and few hedges or fences, with tree cover a rarity.*
- *Traditional unimproved wet pasture grazed with sheep and cattle combined with extensive drained and ploughed arable land protected from floods by sea walls, with some areas of more mixed agriculture on higher ground.*
- *Strong feelings of remoteness and wilderness persist on extensive salt marshes, mudflats and reclaimed farmed marshland.*
- *Distinctive landmarks of coastal military heritage including Napoleonic military defences, forts and 20th-century pillboxes.*

- *Some of the least settled parts of the English coast with numerous small villages and hamlets on higher ground and marsh edges reflecting medieval patterns and the coastal economy.*
- *Highly urbanised areas ... on marsh edges subject to chaotic activity of various major developments including ports, waste disposal, marine dredging, housing regeneration, mineral extraction and prominent power stations plus numerous other industry-related activities."*

7.118 NCA 81 is noted for being a predominantly remote and tranquil landscape of shallow creeks and broad tracts of marsh. Statements of Environmental Opportunity ('SoE') include conserving and enhancing important coastal habitats and providing increased opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the landscape. In addition, development should make a positive contribution to local character and incorporate green infrastructure.

[NCA 113: North Kent Plain](#)

7.119 NCA 113: North Kent Plain is characterised as:

- *"An open, low and gently undulating landscape, characterised by high quality, fertile, loamy soils dominated by agricultural land uses.*
- *Large arable/horticultural fields with regular field patterns and rectangular shapes predominating, and a sparse hedgerow pattern.*
- *Large settlements and urban infrastructure (including lines of pylons) are often visually dominant in the landscape, with significant development around the Greater London and Medway Town, as well as around towns further east and along the coast. Major rail and road links connect the towns with London".*

7.120 This assessment considers that National Character Area 113: North Kent Plain is reasonably tolerant of change due to the presence of existing large settlements and urban infrastructure. National Character Area 113: North Kent Plain is considered to be of a high value due to distinctive nationally designated components, rich heritage assets and habitats.

[County Landscape Character Areas – The Landscape Assessment of Kent^{xv}](#)

7.121 The Landscape Assessment of Kent was prepared by Jacobs Babbie on behalf of Kent County Council and was published in October 2004. The Landscape Assessment of Kent identifies several different Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across Kent and provides a description of and vision for each.

7.122 The majority of the Site is within the Medway Marshes LCA with the north-western corner situated within with the Hoo Peninsula LCA directly to the north and including part of the Site.

Medway Marshes

7.123 Medway Marshes LCA includes the following key characteristics:

- *"Typically low lying and flat.*
- *Open skies and extensive views.*
- *North of the river, the marshes are dominated by the massive industrial complexes of Grain and Kingsnorth which sit in grand isolation amidst open marshland.*
- *The southern Medway marshes are much smaller and fragmented and have a much less coherent character."*

7.124 The published landscape study assesses the condition of the Medway Marshes LCA as poor due to the fragmentation of the marshes by industrial complexes and, *"many visual detractors within the area, including industrial lighting and residential development among others"*. The sensitivity of the marshes are assessed as moderate due to the distinctiveness of the landscape characteristic and high visibility of the area.

Hoo Peninsula

7.125 The Hoo Peninsula LCA includes the following key characteristics:

- *"Prominent hills and low-lying alluvial marshes.*
- *Flat/undulating farmland.*
- *Decline in orchards and mixed farmland with shelterbelts.*
- *Intensive, open farmed arable land.*
- *Intrusive influence of industrial development."*

7.126 The published landscape study assesses the condition of the Hoo Peninsula LCA as poor, due to *"very little coherent landscape pattern and little opportunity for ecological interest within arable fields"*. The sensitivity of the Hoo Peninsula is assessed as moderate, with a *"weak sense of place and where views are long and visibility is high"*.

7.127 This assessment considers that given the existing perceptual qualities of the Hoo Peninsula including views of industrial development on the edge of the Thames estuary to the north and the Medway estuary to the south from elevated locations within the LCA, there is capacity to accommodate the proposed development in its location without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation, therefore the susceptibility is Low. The value of the Hoo Peninsula is assessed as medium due to the visibility across the area and the extent of designated habitats. The combination of the low susceptibility and medium value result in the Hoo Peninsula having a medium sensitivity to the Development.

District – Medway Landscape Character Assessment (2011)^{xvi}

7.128 The Medway Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment was prepared in 2011. The Site overlaps with one landscape character area: the north-western edge of the Site in LCA 12: Lower Stoke Farmland. The western edge of the Site is adjacent to LCA 4: Hoo Flats with the Kingsnorth Industrial Estate outside the boundaries of the assessment in an "urban and industrial" area.

Medway Marshes

7.129 The principal characteristics of the Medway marshes on the north and south of the Medway River identified in the Medway assessment include:

- *"Open expansive areas of marshland with big skies and wide views; includes substantial areas of water which contribute to a strong sense of place*
- *An area of high biodiversity value with national and international designations*
- *Power stations along with other industrial facilities at Grain and Kingsnorth have major impacts on character of whole area, affecting views from southern as well as northern banks of estuary; structures retain some sense of 'grandeur' in their isolation*
- *Strong urban/industrial influence affects rural character of these character areas and leads to a predominance of transitional landscape categories; includes industrial fringe influences along northern side*
- *Integrity of marshland landscape less affected by more distant views of industry from southern shores; balanced by views of boats and shipping in foreground; stronger sense of remoteness along shore of Motney Hill character area*
- *Includes extensive areas of salt marsh within estuary and along southern and northern banks"*

7.130 The Principal issues for these Landscape Character Areas include:

- *Role of marshes as important natural asset that provides a distinctive 'sense of place' and natural beauty ...*
- *Plans for flood management contained within the Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) and Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100)*
- *Impact of new development proposals on landscape character,along northern side to ensure the threat of industrial coalescence is carefully constrained*
- *Consider EA plans relating to coastal processes – requires no net loss of inter-tidal and freshwater marsh habitats within study area*
....
- *The adverse visual and landscape character impacts of large infrastructure components – particularly power stations and power lines – solutions may include seeking the partial screening/softening of larger industrial structures from footpaths and roads*

- *Balancing infrastructure requirements of industrial uses on Peninsula with environmental impacts*

[LCA 3: All Hallows to Stoke Marshes](#)

7.131 LCA 3: All Hallows to Stoke Marshes landscape Character Area (LCA), which lies largely between Grange industrial area and the settlement of Allhallows, also includes an area to the north of the Site where London Medway Commercial Park has been recently constructed (Amazon Warehouse). The characteristics of the LCA are described in the Medway character assessment and include:

- *"Open, flat and expansive marshland landscape with big skies and wide views; strong industrial influences to south and south east (at Grain and Kingsnorth)*
- *Area includes several former industrial sites planned for business park and warehouse uses, specifically site to north east of Kingsnorth and Damhead Creek Power Stations with outline approval for new business park. This area includes natural features (streams, pools, marshland and regenerating scrub) with protected wildlife zones;*
- *Water contributes to strong sense of place – historic creeks, fleets and pools interrupted in places by strongly rectilinear man made dykes (e.g. EA land at mouth of Yantlett Creek); sea wall and counter walls; wild birds/grazing animals contribute to strong sense of place*
- *Extensive tracts of grazing marsh*
- *Large pockets of salt marsh at Damhead Creek,"*

7.132 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of the LCA as moderate due to its high ecological integrity, tempered by its many detracting features and interrupted visual unity. The assessment concludes that the sensitivity of LCA 3 is high due to its very distinct character, dominant landform, strong sense of place and high visibility.

7.133 The issues identified in the Medway character assessment for LCA 3, of relevance to the Development, include flood protection of energy infrastructure at Kingsnorth, visual, landscape character and biodiversity impacts of new development. The Guidelines include reviewing and if necessary, upgrading flood defences around energy infrastructure and to:

"Ensure new development proposals respect open, remote character of marshland landscape and minimise visual intrusiveness; mitigation of impacts should be sought primarily through careful design and siting; planting and earth binding as secondary mechanisms; introducing extensive areas of planting (even using water tolerant species) would not generally be considered suitable to character of open marshland".

[LCA 4: Hoo Flats](#)

7.134 LCA 4: Hoo Flats comprises marshland that stretches between Hoo and Kingsnorth and is adjacent to the western edge of the Site. The characteristics of LCA 4 identified in the Medway assessment include:

- *"Low lying marshland area with remnant features – ditches, hedges, creeks.*
- *Mixed arable; grazed marshland and equine related land uses.*
- *Panoramic views of estuary; sea wall, saltmarsh areas; 19th century artillery forts (Hoo and Darnet) all contribute to strong sense of place.*
- *Strong industrial influences with adverse impacts – includes Power Station, pylons and sewage works; also includes pockets of equine managed land in poor condition.*
- *Includes fishing lakes (created by mineral extraction) – this is located within SSSI area and forms distinctive landscape feature; new mineral extraction works planned within this area.*
- *Footpaths well used and valued by local community – recreation, dog walkers etc.*
- *Includes WW2 Hoo to Cliffe stop line – line of defence forms part of national GHQ stop line.*
- *Hoo Island in close proximity and prominent in views to south."*

7.135 The stated issues of LCA 4 include:

- *"Planning approval for aggregate extraction to the north eastern corner of this area – will have adverse impacts on landscape character in short to medium term...*
- *Hoo to Cliffe WW2 Stop Line.*
- *Visual and landscape character intrusions of industrial development, pylons, settlements...*
- *Proximity to....industry introduces...loss of rural character, tranquillity and local distinctiveness..."*

7.136 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of LCA4 as moderate, due to a variable pattern of elements, many detracting features and interrupted visual unity. The sensitivity is assessed as moderate, due to distinctiveness, a moderate sense of place, dominant landform and moderate visibility.

[LCA 5: Riverside Marshes](#)

7.137 LCA 5: Riverside Marshes LCA is located on the coastal edge of the Medway River to the south of the Site, between Gillingham and Rainham. The characteristics of LCA 5 are described in the Medway character assessment and include:

- *"Strong industrial influences at Kingsnorth and Motney Hill; ...*
- *Saxon Shore way forms strong east/west link along sea wall;*
- *Several salt marsh areas add to distinctive character along estuary*

- *Much of area owned by Medway Council and managed as country park with Visitor Centre and Car Park – introduces amenity element rather than distinctly rural character*
- *Country Park designation (2003) extends to most of this character area”*

7.138 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of the LCA as moderate due to its high ecological integrity, detracting features and interrupted visual unity. The assessment concludes that the sensitivity of LCA 5 is moderate due to its distinct character, historic continuity, moderate sense of place and moderate visibility. The guidelines include ensuring new development proposals *“protect area from adverse visual and landscape character impacts”*.

[LCA 6: Motney Hill](#)

7.139 LCA 6: Motney Hill extends as a peninsula from LCA 5 into the Medway River. The characteristics of the LCA identified in the Medway Character Assessment include:

- *“Narrow peninsula ...*
- *Natural and man-made features – marshland, reed beds, sea wall, scrub and saltmarsh – give varied and distinctive character to area with high biodiversity value*
- *Dramatic open views across estuary from sea wall and inland from higher ground to north*
- *Remote, tranquil and peaceful; informal routes along shoreline, especially at low tide; Saxon Shore Way route follows edges and crosses mid-point of peninsula”*

7.140 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of the LCA as moderate due to its high/moderate ecological integrity, detracting features and interrupted visual unity. The assessment concludes that the sensitivity of LCA 5 is high due to its distinct character, historic continuity, Strong sense of place and high visibility. The guidelines include ensuring new development proposals *“protect area from adverse visual and landscape character... impacts”*.

[Hoo Peninsula](#)

7.141 The principal characteristics of the Hoo peninsula identified in the Medway assessment include:

- *“... central clay ridgeline with woodland to upper slopes forms central backbone and creates visual barrier between north and south.*
- *Broad leaved woodland ... forms significant landscape feature;*
- *Three dominant rural landscape types – 1) flat or undulating arable farmland – large open arable fields with long views 2) mixed farmland with orchards and shelter belts – smaller fields*

with stronger sense of containment 3) isolated wooded or farmed hills

- *... open, often remote and isolated but fragmented in places by roads, dispersed settlements, industrial areas, power and rail lines; includes significant areas of urban-rural and industrial transition – particularly to south at Kingsnorth ...”*

7.142 The Principal issues for these Landscape Character Areas include:

- *“Intrusiveness and adverse visual and landscape character impact of overhead power lines which run through several farmland character areas*
- *Proximity of rural settlements; poor quality edge treatments; intrusion of urban-rural fringe activities (often prominent in views from main roads) into countryside; trend towards loss of rural character with threat of settlement coalescence and loss of local distinctiveness*
- *Wider scale accessibility links fragmented ... Saxon Shore Way links Cliffe, High Halstow and Hoo St Werbergh but poor connections north out to Marshes and east to-wards Allhallows, Stoke and Grain; poor links from urban areas (e.g. Medway City Estate) out to wider countryside*
- *Impact on countryside and landscape character of major new development plans on Peninsula for sites at Chattenden, Grain and Kingsnorth; ...*
- *Opportunity to strengthen landscape structure, improve landscape condition and accessibility; remove and screen adverse urban-rural fringe impacts; co-ordinate and link enhancements with overall strategic framework and development plans for major new schemes on Peninsula*
- *Opportunity to strengthen woodland structure across peninsula...”*

[LCA 11: Hoo Peninsula Farmland](#)

7.143 LCA 11: Hoo Peninsula Farmland occupies the large part of the Hoo Peninsula. The characteristics of LCA 11, identified in the Medway Assessment, include:

- *“Undulating...farmland with large open fields and little sense of enclosure; extensive views from higher ground towards estuaries*
- *Weak landscape structure, lack of distinctiveness and overall coherence*
- *Many detracting features – poor quality edges to farms and settlements with discordant conifers, roads (notably A228), railway, signs, telephone lines and pylons/power lines; industrial areas at Grain and Kingsnorth often prominent in views to south and east*

7.144 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of LCA11 as poor, due to an incoherent pattern of elements, many detracting features and fragmented visual unity. The sensitivity is assessed as moderate, due to moderate visibility and apparent landform. It is however considered to be an indistinct landscape with a poor sense of place.

7.145 The issues for LCA 11 include the *"Extensive views out across farmland from higher ground towards estuaries"*.

[LCA 12: Lower Stoke Farmland](#)

7.146 The characteristics of LCA 12: Lower Stoke Farmland identified in the Medway Assessment include:

- *"More diverse, varied and enclosed than Hoo Peninsula farmland character area.*
- *Industry and large pylons have strong and distinctive impact on character and views.*
- *Railway line and Kingsnorth industrial complex forms strong southern edge."*

7.147 The stated issues of LCA12 include:

- *"Visual and landscape character impact of industrial development and pylons.*
- *Impact of new development on loss of rural character: views of marshes and estuary: coalescence threat of industrial area and settlements.*
- *Poorly treated edges to infrastructure, settlement and industry.*
- *Intrusiveness and adverse visual and landscape character impact of pylons/power lines.*
- *Loss of biodiversity value."*

7.148 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of LCA12 as moderate, due to a variable pattern of elements, many detracting features and interrupted visual unity. The sensitivity is assessed as moderate, due to distinctiveness, a moderate sense of place, apparent landform and moderate visibility.

[LCA 14: Chattenden Ridge](#)

7.149 The characteristics of LCA 14: Chattenden Ridge identified in the Medway Assessment include:

- *"Prominent steep wooded ridge ...*
- *RSME camp with extensive network of buildings, earthworks, roads and areas of natural regeneration; ... includes some detracting features but retains distinctive character and contains many remote and tranquil areas*
- *Extensive woodland blocks ...*
- *... dramatic views to north of Thames Estuary also views south towards North Downs and east towards Kingsnorth; ridge forms strong landscape feature in views from north"*

7.150 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of LCA14 as moderate, due to a variable pattern of elements, some detracting features and interrupted visual unity. The

sensitivity is assessed as high, due to distinctiveness, a moderate sense of place, dominant landform and high visibility.

[LCA 17: Cockham Farm Ridge](#)

7.151 The characteristics of LCA 17: Cockham Farm Ridge, identified in the Medway Assessment, include:

- *"Distinctive and prominent wooded ridge; accessible areas well used by local community*
- *Undulating large, open arable farmland on gently sloping valley sides....*
- *Steep wooded ridge along river edge an unusual and distinctive feature; provides strong elevated green backdrop to settlement at Lower Upnor and distinctive estuary edge and setting in views across Medway estuary from southern shoreline and urban areas; includes heritage features along shoreline*
- *Elevated woodland ridge also prominent and distinctive in views from north....*
- *Open views from Saxon Shore Way northwards towards Hoo St Werburgh; Kingsnorth Power Station prominent in views to east*
- *Includes scheduled monuments at Cockham Wood Fort and Beacon Hill"*

7.152 The Medway character assessment defines the condition of LCA 17 as moderate due to its moderate ecological and functional integrity, variable pattern of elements and interrupted visual unity. The sensitivity of Cockham Ridge Farm LCA is assessed as high given its moderate sense of place and visibility, together with the dominant landform.

7.153 The issues identified for LCA 17 include the erosion of the estuary shoreline including loss of woodland and the estuary path network between Upnor, Hoo, Kingsnorth and Grain

[Character of the Site](#)

7.154 The character of the Site varies distinctly between the Parcels. Parcel 1 comprises overgrown pasture and scrub to the west of the access road and overgrown historic hardstanding to the east of the access road. The land east of the access road was cleared of vegetation in circa 2011 before becoming overgrown again in more recent years. As such, the character of the western part of Parcel 1 is more natural in character, despite the high voltage power lines crossing the western corner. The western part of Parcel 1 is of medium to low value and low susceptibility and the eastern part of Parcel 1 is of low value and low susceptibility. Overall, Parcel 1 is of low landscape sensitivity to change.

- 7.155 Parcel 2 is much more characteristic of cleared industrial land and is dominated by the remaining large buildings associated with the electric power station, National Grid substation and the high voltage power lines crossing the Site, as well as areas of overgrown hardstanding and scrub. The planting along the northern boundary of Parcel 2, established in the late 1980s or early 1990s, forms a strong landscape feature in this area of the Site. Parcel 2 is of low value and susceptibility and is, therefore, of low landscape sensitivity.
- 7.156 Parcel 3 is the most degraded area of the Site, being characterised by areas of hardstanding, concrete lagoons and chain link fencing with essentially no vegetation. It retains none of its original features or features that contribute positively to landscape character. The concrete walls of the creek are distinctive features in the north-east of the Parcel with the tower and conveyor belt in the south. It is of low value and very low susceptibility to change. It is of low landscape sensitivity. Parcel 4 comprises an area of pastureland, historically part of RNAS Kingsnorth and associated with the airship sheds that were immediately to the north of the Site. The planting along the southern boundary of Parcel 4 was established around 1990 with the planting along the northern boundary emerging after 2010. Parcel 4 is crossed by man-made linear earthworks relating to the historic RNAS to the north and the later use as part of the grounds of the Kingsnorth Power Station. The eastern part of the Parcel is marshier in character. Parcel 4 has been affected by its history as part of both RNAS Kingsnorth and the power station and is heavily influenced by the Damhead Creek CCGT to the north, and is of low value and susceptibility and, therefore, low landscape sensitivity.

[Landscape Character Guidance](#)

[National Character Areas](#)

- 7.157 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) for NCA81 include the following:

- *"SEO 1: Maintain and enhance the expansive, remote coastal landscape – with its drowned estuaries, low islands, mudflats, and broad tracts of tidal salt marsh and reclaimed grazing marsh – maintaining internationally important habitats and their wildlife, and underlying geodiversity, while addressing the impacts of coastal squeeze and climate change and considering dynamic coastal processes.*
- *SEO 2: Work with landowners and managers to incorporate measures to improve biodiversity, geodiversity, pollination, water quality, soil quality and climate adaptation and to prevent soil erosion in this important food providing landscape, while maintaining its historic character.*
- *SEO 3: Ensure that the tranquil and remote character of the estuary is maintained by conserving and enhancing important coastal habitats and distinctive historic and geological features,*

while providing increased opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of the landscape.

- *SEO 4: Encourage a strategic approach to development that is informed by and makes a positive contribution to local character, incorporates green infrastructure which provides ecosystem services where they are needed most, and promotes recreation and addresses climate change, while maintaining important open mosaic and coastal habitats, and historic and geological features."*

7.158 Examples of actions to support the SEOs include:

- *"Effectively managing the mosaic of coastal, freshwater and terrestrial habitats...while seeking opportunities to re-link fragmented habitats...*
- *Improving sustainable public access...incorporating interpretation to raise awareness, increase understanding and enhance visitor enjoyment, while protecting habitats and species that are vulnerable to disturbance.*
- *Improving the area for important pollinators...by sympathetic habitat management, habitat creation and strategic conservation of flower-rich brownfield sites.*
- *Increasing carbon storage capacity by creating new wetland habitats including reedbeds...*
- *Managing the network of drainage ditches and drains...while improving the habitat for freshwater species.*
- *Conserving the historic character of the area...including the ancient patterns of reed-filled drainage ditches...*
- *...Where appropriate, increasing access to the distinctive military landmarks along the coastline...*
- *Encouraging opportunities for people to connect with the natural landscape...*
- *Encouraging...access to characteristic features of the landscape...and incorporating interpretation to raise awareness, increase understanding and enhance visitor enjoyment.*
- *Encouraging the development of new public rights of way networks where appropriate...*
- *Planting sustainably managed broadleaved woodland, and potentially miscanthus, to screen new and existing urban and industrial developments and to help protect the tranquillity of the estuary, while taking care not to impact on its open, expansive views."*

7.159 Landscape opportunities identified for NCA81 Greater Thames Estuary include:

- *"Protect the open spaces and expansive skylines from intrusive development, conserving the large areas of tranquillity and remoteness that remain especially remote coastal habitats and low lying islands*
- *Protect key open mosaic habitats and species on brownfield sites through site protection, mitigation and habitat creation*
- *Manage and significantly restore areas of coastal grazing marsh and its associated habitats, including sea walls, reedbeds, ditches and saline lagoons, re-linking fragmented habitats to create a robust wildlife network with enhanced adaptation to climate change*

- *Plan to create new landscapes that include sustainably managed broadleaved woodlands that provide a setting to urban areas, as well as existing disused industrial land and mineral/waste sites, to significantly enhance landscape character and help to protect the tranquil and open character of the estuary*
- *Plan strategic and local networks of green infrastructure as part of ongoing development to make a positive contribution to climate change, biodiversity, geodiversity and recreation within urban areas of the NCA"*

7.160 The Statements of Environmental Opportunity for NCA113: North Kent Plain include:

- *SEO 2: "Plan for and manage the effects of coastal change, by allowing the operation of natural coastal processes and improving the sustainability of current management practices, to maintain and enhance the local landscape character and the area's biodiversity assets.*
- *SEO 3: Protect the distinct wooded areas of the landscape...increasing the area of broadleaved woodland where appropriate, while increasing the connectivity of the mosaic of associated habitats notably wooded heath and semi-improved grassland while enhancing the recreational resource.*
- *SEO 4: Protect and enhance the strong character and heritage of the urban areas..."*

7.161 Examples of ways to achieve the SEOs above include:

- *"Conserving and enhancing tranquillity ...and, where appropriate, planting broadleaved woodland to screen development while simultaneously linking habitats, improving ecological connectivity and resilience, and providing a source of local community green space.*
- *Restoring hedgerow boundaries...*
- *Adopting a landscape-scale approach to strengthening ecological networks...*
- *Protecting the historic environment along the coast...as well as the military remains... Seeking to enhance the educational and recreational opportunities associated with these historic features.*
- *Identifying opportunities to improve coastal access...*
- *Considering small-scale woodland creation where appropriate...*

[County Landscape Character Areas – The Landscape Assessment of Kent^{xvii}](#)

7.162 Recommended actions for the Medway Marshes include:

- *"Restore the cultural emphasis, occasional use of open, inaccessible land.*
- *Restore the dominance of the natural features.*
- *Create semi-natural grassland and marshland.*
- *Restore and maintain traditional grazing marsh and associated elements such as counterwalls, ditches and creeks."*

7.163 Recommended actions for the Hoo Peninsula Landscape Character Area are based on "*restore and create*", for examples through "*creating new ecological bases within farmland which may also act as recreational resources for residential areas*".

[District – Medway Landscape Character Assessment \(2011\)^{xviii}](#)

7.164 The General Themes and Policies which emerged from the detailed character area assessments are set out at page 12 of the Medway assessment. These include:

1. *Resist the threat of coalescence; maintain separation and openness between rural settlements; retain a strong sense of local distinctiveness and rural character within countryside areas;*
2. *Protect distinctive and prominent landscape features; including views from the Thames and Medway estuaries and across the marshes; green backdrops, escarpments, wooded ridges and open farmed hills*
3. *Repair and restore damaged landscapes, particularly in urban–rural and industrial fringe locations where erosion of rural character and loss of local distinctiveness is most threatened – typical adverse impacts include large pylons and industrial structures, piece-meal and random small-scale development, insensitive boundary treatments and a gradual trend towards suburbanisation of the countryside*
4. *Strengthen and reinforce landscape structure in urban–rural fringe areas and across the wider countryside;*
7. *Ensure that the edges of new and existing urban and rural settlements blend comfortably with the surrounding countryside – balancing sensitivity in architectural and urban design detailing and form with a sound understanding and appreciation of landscape context*
8. *Conserve and protect all landscapes noting particularly those high-quality landscapes along the Thames and Medway estuaries;*
9. *Consider the value of the Eastern Thames and Medway Marshes for their natural beauty, their cultural and biodiversity value and their distinctive sense of place alongside their role and importance within the wider landscape of the North Kent Marshes and Thames Estuary*
10. *New development proposals should seek to strengthen and reinforce local distinctiveness and identity; balance and prioritise conflicting land use issues; respect the environmental and cultural heritage of the area in which they are planned and seek to create sustainable landscapes*
11. *Accessibility and connectivity. Access and connectivity is what makes the landscape understandable and able to be appreciated by the many rather than the few. In many parts of Medway access and connectivity is fragmented and weak. There is great potential to improve off-road cycle and footpath links between urban areas and the countryside*
13. *Seek opportunities to strengthen landscape character and biodiversity value by improving Medway’s wildlife habitat network; including restoration of hedgerows and shelter belts and enlargement of woodland areas; noting the value of lowland woodland refuges (to address climate change impacts); the carbon fixing benefits of*

woodland and the relatively low percentage of woodland within Medway compared to the rest of Kent

14. Consider the impacts of 'coastal squeeze' on inter-tidal and freshwater habitats; noting the three potential habitat creation sites planned along the northern coastline of the Hoo Peninsula

16. Areas currently designated within the Local Plan as Areas of Local Landscape Importance (see Purpose and Scope section – bullet point 4), have been judged significant not only for their landscape importance but also in considering their role as green hillsides and backdrops to the urban area and other functions.... It is important that all of these valuable functions continue to be valued and protected, particularly when considering the urban–rural fringe character areas of Medway.

17. Development proposals should be judged on the basis that no material harm is caused to landscape character and function and that a positive land management approach has been evidenced that is both sensitive to landscape context and follows the recommended actions and guidelines with this document."

7.165 The guidelines for LCA12 include:

- *"Strengthen biodiversity value – woodland blocks, hedgerows, wider field margins.*
- *Resist all development proposals considered likely to diminish biodiversity value, tranquillity and rural character.*
- *Maintain separation and openness between industry and rural settlements.*
- *Firmly resist proposals for new overhead power lines or cables and seek to under-ground cabling of existing overhead lines.*
- *Resist and seek to reverse rural fringe pressures – especially suburbanisation of settlement edges, poor boundary treatments, loss of native hedgerows etc."*

7.166 The guidelines for LCA4 include:

- *"Resist reversion from grazing marsh to arable; support change from arable to grazing; maintain and improve existing reed beds.*
- *Seek to strengthen biodiversity and landscape value of area – woodland blocks and hedgerows will assist screening and provide valuable habitats; some areas may require a more open habitat where this favours certain bird species.*
- *Resist development proposals that threaten enhanced biodiversity value, rural character, tranquillity and distinctive sense of place.*
- *Maintain separation and openness between rural and industrial settlements*
- *Support natural screening of industrial areas, village and marina envelope.*
- *Promote use of native species to reflect and reinforce rural character; resist suburbanisation of roadside edges.*
- *Seek to increase controls on adverse impacts of urban-fringe activities such as fly-tipping."*

Summary of Landscape Character Receptors

7.167 Effects on the following landscape character areas will be assessed in this chapter:

- NCA 81: Greater Thames Estuary;
- NCA 113: North Kent Plain;
- Kent Character Area Medway Marshes;
- Kent Character Area Hoo Peninsula;
- Medway LCA 3: Allhallows to Stoke Marshes;
- Medway LCA 4: Hoo Flats;
- Medway LCA 5: Riverside Marshes;
- Medway LCA 6: Motney Hill;
- Medway LCA 11: Hoo Peninsula Farmland;
- Medway LCA 12: Lower Stoke Farmland;
- Medway LCA 14: Chattenden Ridge;
- Medway LCA 17: Cockham Farm Ridge; and
- Character of the Site.

Visual Appraisal

7.168 Site visits were undertaken in May 2020 and again in October 2020 to gain an understanding of the role that the Site plays within views of the landscape from near, medium and long-distance viewpoints and during winter and summer months. A series of Site Context Photographs (1-21) were taken to demonstrate the views from key viewpoints, which are included within Appendix 7.2, and the locations of which are demonstrated on Figure 7.6: Visual Appraisal Plan (a, North and b, South). The Site Context Photographs were agreed with Medway Council. The related correspondence is included within Appendix 7.7.

7.169 Representative views towards the Site are discussed below. Those from which the Development would not be visible have then been scoped out in accordance with the GLVIA3.

Visual Context

7.170 The visibility of the Site is largely determined by the intervening landform, as topographic features such as ridgelines and subtle undulations may block or curtail views towards the Site. In addition, land cover has an important role in determining potential visibility; woodland, tree belts or built forms may contribute to additional blocking, filtering or curtailing of views.

- 7.171 The effectiveness of vegetation as a visual screen depends to a considerable extent on its scale. A large mature feature will form a substantial screen throughout the year, but a hedgerow or intermittent tree belt may only be effective during the summer months when vegetation is in leaf. Whilst small features, such as hedgerows and individual trees can be very important, particularly when their combined effect is taken into account, they cannot be considered to be substantial or wholly effective screening features or visual barriers due to the seasonal nature of their effect.
- 7.172 The landscape of the Study Area is low lying and open, with the Site on the edge of the open water of the estuary. The land rises up to ridgelines to the north-west and south-west, providing slightly elevated viewpoints over the low-lying and sparsely developed landscape. The twin stacks of the Damhead Creek CCGT form a useful reference point in views, as do the buildings in Parcel 2 and the warehouses to the north and north-east.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility

- 7.173 To initially aid in identifying the likely study area for the Development, a ZTV was generated, by extrapolating the maximum probable heights of the built features within the Development (i.e. up to 30m in height) over a terrain model based on Environment Agency (EA) Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) 2m data. The ZTV used the EA Lidar Digital Surface Model (DSM) data to represent existing features including buildings and vegetation. As such the ZTV provides an approximate portrayal of the greatest possible extent of visibility of the Development, which was subsequently verified through fieldwork.
- 7.174 The location of the Site within the flat estuarine landscape of the Medway and the potential sizes of the built-form result in wide extents of potential visibility extending northwards into the interior of the Hoo Peninsula and southwards to north facing hillsides of Gillingham and Rainham.
- 7.175 As discussed above, the Site was occupied from 1968 until 2018 by Kingsnorth power station, a structure 60m in height with a single chimney 200m tall. This was a dominant landmark in surrounding views, and whilst its removal has resulted in the removal of a highly visible industrial feature, it has not resulted in an improvement to the landscape or visual quality of the Site and its immediate surroundings. The sensitivity of visual receptors has been considered in the light of the historic land use of the Site.
- 7.176 The existing national grid building and the adjacent Damhead Creek CCGT remain prominent landmarks which signpost the location of the Site in views from the local roadways and footpaths around Hoo St Werburgh and High Halstow, as illustrated by Site Context

Photographs 2-7, 16 and 17. From within the estuary itself and as illustrated by Site Context Photographs 10-12 and 19-21 the existing national grid building and the adjacent Damhead Creek CCGT are clearly visible from the southern shore of the estuary.

- 7.177 From further inland on the Hoo Peninsula, the dominance of the existing structures and potential visibility of the Site is masked by undulations in the topography and vegetation, resulting in more limited, glimpsed views as illustrated by Site Context Photographs 1, 8, 9, 14, 15 and 18.
- 7.178 To the south of the Medway estuary there is significantly more tree cover and dense roadside vegetation. This has the effect of curtailing views of the northern shores from publicly accessible areas within the Gillingham Riverside ALLI, directly to the south of the Site, and from the roads extending northwards from Upchurch. As the hillside rises to the south the settlements of Gillingham and Rainham create visual enclosure and views of the estuary are only glimpsed where open space allows. From Callum Hill above Lower Halstow on PROW ZR51 there are broad panoramic views across the Medway estuary from where the Site is visible at a distance of over 7km, as illustrated by SCP 12.
- 7.179 The longest range and clearest views of the Site are from the coastal Saxon Shore Way (PROW GB1) which extends along the southern shore of the Medway Estuary, connecting Gillingham and Motney Hill. The visual influence of the existing built form extends as far east as Sheerness and the Isle of Grain, although at these distances (10km) form an inconspicuous part of the view. The intervening marshes are broadly inaccessible by land. Views from within the estuary are experienced by boat users and visitors to Darnet and Hoo Forts to the south of the Site.

Site Context Photographs

- 7.180 The 21 Site Context Photographs demonstrate the representative views of the Site from the surrounding area and illustrate the visual envelope of the Site. These are included within Appendix 7.2 and the locations of the viewpoints are demonstrated on Figure 7.6a (north) and 7.6b (south).
- 7.181 Site Context Photograph 1 and 18 are taken from RS105, the inner route of the Saxon Shore Way as it extends down a local ridge of land south of Hoo, 2170m and 2850m from the Site respectively. In Site Context Photograph 18, it is possible to see Hoo in the left of the image and the tower and jetty in the south of the Site to the right of the central area of trees. It is possible to see the stacks of the Damhead Creek CCGT and, in the distance, the round storage towers on the Isle of Grain. Site Context Photograph 1 is taken from further east along the

same PRow, close to the southern edge of Hoo St Werburgh. It is possible to see the tower of St Werburgh's Church in the left of the view with the tower, jetty and electrical power station in the centre of the view. The majority of the Site is hidden behind the curve in the landform, the buildings in Parcel 2 and the layers of intervening vegetation in the middle ground.

- 7.182 Site Context Photograph 2 is taken from RS111, at the point where the Saxon Shore Way passes closest to the Site, 625m to the west. It is possible to see the vegetation in Parcel 1 in the centre of the view, with the Damhead Creek CCGT behind. The two buildings remaining in the Site in Parcel 2 are visible, as is the tower and northern part of the jetty in the south of the Site. Parcels 3 and 4 are mainly screened by the buildings in Parcel 2. The pylons, CCGT Damhead Creek, areas of bunding and electrical power station buildings create an industrial and fringe character to the view.
- 7.183 Site Context Photograph 3 is located at the junction of PRow RS90, S92 and RS352, 270m to the west of the Site. It is possible to see the white farmhouse of Burnt House Farm with the trees in Parcel 1 behind and the planting along the north of Parcel 2 to the right. It is possible to see the buildings in Parcel 2 with much of Parcel 3 hidden from view. The pylons, Damhead Creek CCGT and existing industrial buildings mean that the house appears out of scale and context in the industrialised landscape. This view is also represents that of properties and road users on Jacobs Lane, 300m further east.
- 7.184 Site Context Photograph 4 is situated on the Saxon Shore Way and RS111, just south of Stoke Road, 1.175km to the west of the Site. It is possible to see the minerals extraction activities to the west of the Site with the buildings in Parcel 2 behind. The Site is generally set behind the layers of vegetation but is in the context of surrounding industrial uses and large-scale structures.
- 7.185 Site Context Photograph 5 is taken from the point where PRow RS91 crosses Stoke Road 0.62km to the north-west of the Site. The large building in Parcel 2 forms a distinct feature and is seen in the context of the nearby Damhead Creek CCGT. The vegetation in Parcel 1 and to the north-west of the Site merge visually to create the impression of a vegetated landscape. Despite this vegetation, the Site is seen in the context of an area of industrial buildings and large-scale manmade structures.
- 7.186 Site Context Photograph 6 is situated on the Saxon Shore Way (RS109), 1.41km north-west of the Site. The majority of the Site is screened by the intervening landform although it is possible to see concrete structures around Damhead Creek to the left of the Damhead Creek CCGT and Parcel 3 of the Site.

- 7.187 Site Context Photograph 7 is situated on Stoke Road by the listed building Cold Arbour, 1.27km to the north of the Site. The ground plane of the Site is obscured from view by the curve of the landscape, intervening vegetation and by the structure of the Damhead Creek CCGT. The Site location is seen in the context of the adjacent large-scale buildings and structures which combine to create an area of industrialised character behind the agricultural foreground.
- 7.188 Site Context Photograph 8 is situated 2.80km to the north-east of the Site at the junction of RS34 and RS33 as the latter extends along the coast. The northern and western parts of the Site are screened behind the intervening large warehouse building. Parcel 3 is visible between the rise in the landform in the left of the view and the warehouse in the centre. The Site forms a very small element in the view.
- 7.189 Site Context Photograph 9 is situated 3.9km to the north of the Site at the point where PRow RS15 crosses Hoopers Lane on the rising ground. It is possible to see the electrical power station and sub-station in Parcel 2 and the large warehouse to the north of the Site. The colouring of the electrical power station in Parcel 2 makes it recessive in the view. It is also possible to see the chimney stacks of the Damhead Creek CCGT to the north of the Site in the centre of the view. Buildings on the Isle of Grain are visible in the left of the view. The overall impression is of pockets of industrialised land uses sat in an agricultural setting.
- 7.190 Site Context Photograph 10 is taken from the Saxon Shore Way (PRow GB1) on the southern shore of the Medway Estuary at Gillingham, 2.88km south-west of the Site. The view takes in the Gillingham and Long Reaches of the river with Hoo Fort and Darnet Fort visible right of centre. It is possible to see across the Site with the tower and jetty to the right of Hoo Fort and the buildings in Parcel 2 to the left. It is possible to see the extensive industrial complexes around the Isle of Grain in the right side of the view with Sheerness beyond. The Site is seen as part of a continuum of industrial land uses along the horizon.
- 7.191 Site Context Photograph 11 is taken from the Saxon Shore Way as it passes south of Motney Hill south of Rainham Creek, 4.05km to the south of the Site. The Site is visible along the opposing shoreline, with the Damhead Creek CCGT set behind the central part of the Site and the nearby warehouses behind the eastern parts of the Site. It is seen in the context of the cluster of industrial uses and large-scale infrastructure.
- 7.192 Site Context Photograph 12 is taken from PRow ZR51 as it crosses Callum Hill 7.7km to the south-east of the Site. It is possible to see the Site in the left of the image, seen within the context of the nearby warehouses and other industrial uses along the shoreline. Due to the distance, the Site forms a minor element within the view. Effects on this view have been scoped out in accordance with the GLVIA3.

- 7.193 Site Context Photograph 13 is taken from PRoW ZB47 on the coast at Queenborough, 7km to the east of the Site. Due to reduced contrast, resulting from the effects of the atmosphere over distance, the Site forms an indistinguishable feature amongst the low mudflats and islands of the estuary. Effects on views represented by Site Context Photograph 13 are scoped out of the assessment in accordance with the GLVIA3.
- 7.194 Site Context Photograph 14 is taken from Malmaynes Hall Road, 2.3km to the north of the Site. It is possible to see the chimney stacks of the Damhead Creek CCGT, but the floor plane of the Site is screened behind the landform. It is not possible to see the buildings within the Site or the warehouse buildings to the north of the Site in the business park. Therefore, effects on visual receptors represented by this Site Context Photograph have been scoped out of the assessment in accordance with the GLVIA3.
- 7.195 Site Context Photograph 15 is taken from Stoke Road 2.05km to the north-east of the Site. It demonstrates the large new warehouses being constructed to the north of the Site, obscuring much of it from view. It is possible to see Oakham Ness Jetty. The Site is seen in the context of the neighbouring industrial and infrastructure uses.
- 7.196 Site Context Photograph 16 is taken from one of the new estate roads in the industrial area, 650m north-east of the Site. It is possible to see the Site, particularly Parcels 4 and 3, with the buildings in Parcel 2 seen to the left of the Damhead Creek CCGT. The Site is seen in the context of the new warehouse buildings in the right of the view and the power station and the surrounding large-scale pylons.
- 7.197 Site Context Photograph 17 is taken immediately adjacent to the northern corner of the Site and by the entrance into the adjacent industrial areas. It demonstrates the vegetation that has colonised the eastern part of Parcel 1, together with the industrial fringe character of the area. The majority of the Site is screened behind the curve in the landform and the intervening vegetation and built form.
- 7.198 Site Context Photographs 19-21 are taken from Riverside Country Park on the southern shore of the Medway Estuary at Lower Twydall, 2890m south of the Site. The views take in the Long Reaches of the river with Nor Marshes intervening. It is possible to see across the Site with the buildings in Parcel 2 to the left of the Damhead Creek CCGT. It is possible to see the extensive industrial complexes around the Isle of Grain in the right side of the view with Sheerness beyond. The Site is seen as part of a continuum of industrial land uses along the horizon.

Summary of Visual Receptors:

7.199 Effects on the visual receptors represented by the following Site Context Photographs have been assessed within this Chapter:

- Site Context Photograph 1/18: View from Saxon Shore Way (RS105) 2.1km and 2.8km west of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 2/ AVR 1: View from Saxon Shore Way (RS111) 625m to west of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 3: View from PRow RS90 270m west of the Site;
- No site context photograph: Views from Jacobs Lane to the north east of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 4: View from Saxon Shore Way (RS111) 1.175km west of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 5: View from Stoke Road at junction with RS91 620m north-west of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 6: View from Saxon Shore Way (RS109) 1.41km north of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 7 AVR 2: View from Stoke Road by listed building Cold Arbour 1.27km north of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 8: View from junction of RS34 and RS33 2.8km to the north-east of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 9: View from RS15 and Hoopers Lane 3.9km to the north of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 10: View from Saxon Shore Way (GB1) 2.88km to the south-west of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 11: View from Saxon Shore Way 4km to the south of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 15: View from Stoke Road 2.05km to the north-east of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 16: View from new estate road 650m to the north of the Site;
- Site Context Photograph 17: View from Eschol Road near junction with RS108;
- Site Context Photographs 19-21 AVR 3: Views from Riverside Country Park, Lower Twydall; and
- No site context photograph: Views from the River Medway to the south of the Site, including Fart Darnet.

7.200 Wireline Accurate Visual Representations of the parameters have been prepared for three viewpoints as indicated above. These are illustrated in Appendix 7.10.

Likely Significant Effects

- 7.201 This assessment has informed the iterative design process of the Development and the relevant matters relating to access and circulation, buildings heights and landscape infrastructure are embedded within the Parameter Plan (comprising inherent mitigation).
- 7.202 Figure 3.2 Parameter Plan demonstrates the various AOD heights for built form, ranging from 20m AOD to 50m AOD. Maximum Building heights are concentrated within parcels 3 and 4 in the central part of the Site. These will be up to a maximum height of 50 m AOD and this will relate to the existing height of the Damhead Creek CCGT to the immediate north. Within this area there is the parameter for one chimney stack of up to 103m AOD. Building heights on the western areas, parcels 1 and 2, are limited to a maximum of 20m AOD, in order to create a stepping up of built form on the interface between the Development and the marshes to the west. On the eastern part of Parcel 3, building heights are limited to 29m AOD. This will provide a stepping down in building heights from the central parcels to the east and relating this to the existing and emerging development to the north east. In views from the south this will assist in assimilating the built form in the view by presenting a stepped profile towards a higher central area, set against the existing height of the Damhead Creek CCGT. An earth bund for flood defence, approximately 3.6m high, is shown on the western boundary of parcel 1, to achieve a 6.6m AOD crest height. A 3m high acoustic fence will be incorporated on top of the bund. This will involve the removal of vegetation along this boundary for construction.
- 7.203 Figure 3.2 Parameter Plan includes retained areas of landscape and ecological value within a proposed network of Green Infrastructure (GI) corridors. The GI corridors connect between the entrance to the Site, the Site's perimeters and the central east west and north south spines that provide an extensive new recreational access, planting, ecological recreation and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The GI corridors on the southern edge of the Site sets back built form from the edge of the river and allows for an area in which planting can become established, softening built form in views from the Medway channel and from the southern shores of the Medway. The perimeter routes provide the potential to connect users of the Site to the River Medway in a manner not currently provided for. The existing trees are to be largely retained, as part of a strong green infrastructure framework. Existing ditches and ponds are to be retained and areas to create natural wetland within Parcel 4 and throughout the development, and the green infrastructure corridors orientated to allow views out between buildings toward the River Medway.
- 7.204 The Site access extends from Eshool Road, a lane that connects eastwards to join Lancers Lane and the start of PRow RS95 and the wider PRow network between the Site and Hoo St

Werburch. Whilst this is not an existing PROW, there is the potential for future recreational linkages between the Site and the wider network are enabled via this connection.

7.205 The below section summarises the landscape and visual effects resulting from the Development for the construction phase and for the operational phase, at Year 1 (during winter months) and at Year 15 (during the summer months), based on Figure 3.2, prior to the implementation of additional mitigation measures. The detailed assessment of landscape and visual effects are set out in the tables in Appendices 7.5 and 7.6. The following sections set out the identified significant and borderline significant effects of the Development.

Construction Phase

7.206 The principal activities that will have an effect upon landscape features, landscape character, views and visual amenity during the construction phase comprise:

- Introduction of new temporary elements, including material stockpiles, plant and machinery (including excavation and drilling equipment), fencing/hoardings, lighting and construction site compounds (including welfare facilities);
- Demolition of existing buildings and structures;
- Increased movement of plant and machinery within the Site and the surrounding landscape, including for excavation and foundation activities;
- General realignment and construction of temporary and permanent utility connections;
- Groundworks, including slight modifications to the underlying landform, and structural planting;
- Removal of areas of existing vegetation including trees to accommodate construction;
- The building and emergence of new built form up to 50m in height AOD with one chimney stack up to 103m AOD; and
- A new landscape structure across the Site and change in land use.

7.207 The construction phase is anticipated to commence in 2021 and continue for approximately 11 years, with completion expected in 2031, based upon the programme given within Chapter 5 Construction Methodology and Sequencing in the ES. The assessment is based upon a realistic worst-case scenario of the 'maximum' construction activity on the Site, including for the tallest plant, machinery and mobile cranes, to be constructed at the rate indicated across the Site. When assessing magnitude of effect as compared to the completed Development, it is important to balance the more discordant nature of the construction activities and the movement caused by plant against the temporary nature of the construction phase. The

former would result in a generally greater magnitude of effect, whereas the latter would tend to result in a smaller magnitude of effect.

Effects of Construction on the Site

7.208 There are few landscape features within the Site that will form part of the construction areas. The construction phase will result in the loss of openness within the Site, but will retain the vast majority of the existing landscape features within the Site. The effects on the landscape features within the Site would not be significant, with further information outlined in Appendix 7.6.

7.209 The introduction of construction activities, plant and machinery and storage of material within the landscape would directly alter the land use of the Site. However, this would not result in a significant effect on the former industrial land with areas of scrub regeneration, as demonstrated in Appendix 7.6.

Effects of Construction on Landscape Character

7.210 Construction activities will not result in any significant effects on the published landscape character areas, given the existing and surrounding land uses. The greatest changes will be the direct effects experienced within Kent "Medway Marshes" LCA, where construction activity will result in a change in land use and the temporary introduction of associated construction activity, within a limited portion of the character area. However, as the area is already characterised by industrial uses, this effect will not be significant, as demonstrated in Appendix 7.6.

Effects of Construction on Views

7.211 From the majority of the SCP locations (viewpoints), representing the majority of visual receptors, construction activities will not result in significant effects, due to the existing context of adjacent development, especially the Damhead Creek CCGT and the expansive skies dominating the wide panoramic views in which the Site forms a relatively small component. Further information on the sensitivity of the visual receptors, the magnitude and significance of visual effects resulting from construction are set out in Appendix 7.7, Visual Effects Table.

7.212 Where the Site is visible at relatively close range, from Jacobs Lane, the PRoWs and Saxon Shore Way to the west of the Site (viewpoints 2, 3 and 4) construction activities will result in minor adverse visual effects (medium magnitude of effect upon receptors of medium

sensitivity). The potential visual effects are not considered to be large because of the containment provided in the view by the existing National Grid building which will largely obscure the ground level activities within parcels 3 and 4. Construction activity within parcels 1 and 2 will be filtered and screened by the layers of intervening vegetation. The construction of the flood attenuation bund and acoustic barrier will result in the loss of some vegetation on the north western boundary and construction activities will be visible along this boundary for part of the construction programme, contributing to the minor adverse visual effects from Jacobs Lane. The buildings within parcels 1 and 2 will be constructed to a maximum height of 20m AOD. In these views, construction activities will be seen in the context of the existing buildings, including the Damhead Creek CCGT to the north.

7.213 In close range views to the north-west (viewpoints 5 and 6) construction activities will result in negligible to minor adverse effects on users of the PRoW and road network. To the north of the Site, within the developing industrial estate area (viewpoints 16 and 17) construction will result in negligible adverse visual effects due to the addition of activity and the emergence of built form, which will be seen in the immediate context of existing industrial and commercial development. The construction activities will not result in a reduction in views towards the Medway in any of these close-range views due to the existing buildings, vegetation, and the flat landform.

7.214 Construction will be visible to varying degrees from within the wider landscape of the Hoo Peninsula (viewpoints 1, 7, 8, 9, 15 and 18) in the context of the surrounding existing and emerging industrial and commercial development, resulting in negligible to minor adverse effects. These adjacent features reduce the magnitude of impact which would result were the construction activities at the Site to appear in isolation.

7.215 To the south of the Site on the southern edge of the River Medway (viewpoints 9, 10, 11, and 19-21), construction activities will result in minor adverse visual effects due to the extent of change to the view which is largely unobscured across the water. There is likely to be increased magnitude and significance of visual effects from within the Medway closer to the Site, including from the Heritage Assets of Hoo Fort and Darnet Fort. These will include significant adverse effects (moderate adverse) resulting from a medium magnitude of effect upon highly sensitive receptors.

Operational Phase - at Year 1 and Year 15

7.216 The description of the Development is stated in Chapter 3 Site and Development Description of the ES, with the specific matters pertinent to the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Development being (amongst others) new built form mainly up to 50m (AOD) in height

with one chimney at 103m in height (AOD) and a new landscape structure across the Site and change in land use.

Landscape Effects – The Site

- 7.217 The landscape effects upon the Site will be beneficial due to the cohesive quality of built form which will be arranged to take advantage of views to the River Medway. The existing trees, areas of scrub, ponds and drainage ditches are to be retained and new wetlands established. The effects will not be significant with further information outlined in Appendix 7.6.

Landscape Effects – Published and Fieldwork Character

- 7.218 There will be no significant effects upon the published and field work landscape character areas and for the majority of these, the effects will be 'negligible adverse' or 'neutral', having direct effects upon a small proportion of the character area, or, where indirect effects will be perceived from adjoining character areas as a small scale of change set in the context of the established industrial and warehousing land uses surrounding the Site. The direct effects upon the landscape character of Medway Marshes LCA will not be significant due to the cohesive and higher quality of built form within a limited portion of the character areas and the strong landscape framework which will be created.

Visual Effects

- 7.219 The change in views will result from the introduction of a massing of built form within Parcels 3 and 4 in the central part of the Site to a similar height as Damhead Creek CCGT, including a chimney stack up to 103m AOD, with lower heights to the west and east (29m AOD within parcel 3, and 20m AOD in parcels 1 and 2). This will be seen in the context of existing built form, being situated between the Damhead Creek CCGT structures adjacent to the north of the Development and the jetty, tower and crane to the south.
- 7.220 Significant (moderate adverse) effects were identified on users of PRoW RS91 at close range to the Site (viewpoint 5) from parts of the southern shores of the Medway identified by viewpoints 11 and 19-21, and within the River Medway at Darnet Fort and Hoo Fort. In these views the Development will result in a noticeable change to the view for receptors of high sensitivity. From the immediate north (viewpoint 5) there will be a pronounced change in the view resulting from the foreshortening of an existing view to the Medway River from this location.

- 7.221 Where the Site is visible at relatively close range, from Jacobs Lane, the PRowS and Saxon Shore Way to the west of the Site (viewpoints 2, 3 and 4), the Development will result in minor adverse visual effects (medium magnitude of effect upon receptors of medium sensitivity). The potential visual effects are not considered to be large because of the containment provided in the view by the existing National Grid building which will largely obscure Development within Parcels 3 and 4. Development within Parcels 1 and 2 will be filtered and screened by the layers of intervening vegetation. The flood attenuation bund and acoustic barrier will be visible at year 1 on the north western boundary contributing to the minor adverse visual effects from Jacobs Lane. The buildings within Parcels 1 and 2 will be constructed to a maximum height of 20m AOD and will be seen in the context of the existing buildings, including the Damhead Creek CCGT to the north.
- 7.222 There will be no significant visual effects resulting from the Development during operation from the majority of the SCP locations, representing the majority of visual receptors. In these views the Development will occupy a small part of a wider view, with wider views of the surrounding landscape remaining. The proposed massing will not screen or obstruct any longer distance views, and the characteristic extensive, big skies within the view will remain.

Mitigation Measures

Construction Phase

- 7.223 Additional mitigation measures to reduce the temporary effects of construction will comprise (and can be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition or obligation, as necessary):
- Establishment of the landscape proposals (advanced planting) during early phases of construction, where practicable and in accordance with an appropriate phasing strategy of works, and reinstate vegetation wherever feasible immediately following preparatory works;
 - Locating site compounds and material stockpiles away from nearby sensitive receptors to minimise adverse effects;
 - Control of the security lighting at site compounds and machinery to minimise upward and outward light pollution. In addition, ensure that the minimum area only is lit, whilst satisfying health and safety requirements, for the minimum period of time;
 - Limiting the movement of materials between stockpiles so that these do not shift over time, thereby adding to the sense of fragmentation and instability of the landscape;
 - Providing hoardings to limit the visibility and conspicuousness of ground level activities;

- Minimising the duration of construction activities that require tall plant and machinery, scaffolding, and ensuring that vehicular movements are restricted to designated routes within and around the Site, utilising geotextile tracks where appropriate;
- Agreeing appropriate working hours to ensure that any adverse visual effects of construction activities experienced by nearby receptors are minimised at a time when they could reasonably expect a cessation of work, e.g. during evenings, Sundays and bank holidays (refer to Chapter 5 Construction Methodology and Sequencing of the ES); and
- Protecting existing trees on site in accordance with BS 5837 ^{xix}.

Operational Phase

7.224 The following considers the primary mitigation, which is built into the scheme and demonstrated on the Parameter Plan (Figure 3.2), and the secondary mitigation, which would be implemented as the detailed design progresses (demonstrated in the Landscape Management Strategy in Appendix 7.9).

Inherent or Primary Mitigation Measures

7.225 Primary mitigation measures have been embedded into the Development as demonstrated on the Parameter Plan set out above. These primary mitigation measures have been taken into consideration when assessing the pre-mitigation effects section, i.e. during construction and at Year 1.

Additional or Secondary Mitigation

7.226 The additional mitigation measures, the principle of which are illustrated by the Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 3.3), include the following (which can be secured by planning condition or obligation as necessary):

- Likely reduction in massing of the built form – for assessment purposes, the Parameter Plan includes an allowance for the maximum extents of potential built form within the Site. In practice, the actual development footprint will occupy a smaller area, and therefore a reduced massing of built form. One option for how this could come forward is shown on the Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 3.3). This option does not preclude larger massing within the Site, therefore the assessment of residual effects considers a limited reduction in massing from that of the parameters plans and the heights of proposed buildings are taken as the maximum presented in the Parameter Plan;
- Creation of new linkages through new vehicular and pedestrian access;

- Enhancement of biodiversity through managed natural regeneration and SuDS features;
- Creation of new public open spaces to provide recreational value;
- Innovative façade detailing to the buildings, and secured through condition;
- Use of a consistent set of architectural design principles to create a strong identity for the Development;
- Promote active river frontages to help ensure a distinctive approach with links to the river where possible and tallest elements set back from the immediate river frontages;
- Proposed buildings should respond positively and ensure a high-quality point of arrival at key gateways and nodes;
- Proposals to consider the landscape requirements for each character area; and
- Implementation of a Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan (LBMP).

LBMP

7.227 The mitigation measures include the implementation of a LBMP (Appendix 7.9), to be secured by condition or obligation, as necessary, which will include (amongst other things) management of the following landscape elements:

- Retained and enhanced landscape features such as trees, scrub and reedbeds and management of those features in accordance with ecological enhancement proposals;
- Managed and natural regeneration along GI and habitat corridors, allowing the regrowth of pioneer scrub, trees and grassland together with new wetland features associated with the SuDS;
- Management of an urban core and access landscape consisting of street trees and native ornamental shrub planting; and
- Maintenance and management of the hard landscape elements of paving and external furniture.

Residual Effects

7.228 The assessment of residual effects refers to the likely effects of the Development that will remain once the additional mitigation measures as set out above are applied. The assessment of residual effects for the operational phase of the Development (at Year 15 of the Development) takes into account the ongoing establishment of vegetation within the Site. Appendix 7.6 and Appendix 7.7 set out in full the residual effects that will arise for all of the receptors identified. Given the similarity of effects at Year 1 and Year 15, the residual effects of the operational phase of Development at Year 1 have not been considered separately.

Construction Phase

Landscape Effects

7.229 During the construction phase, the control of the movement of material, lighting restrictions, the siting of construction compounds and the use of low-level hoardings will reduce the potential for adverse effects on landscape features and landscape character and reduce the sense of fragmentation in the landscape. However, construction activities will remain apparent within the Site and whilst the impact upon individual components of the landscape will diminish, the effects on landscape features and character, of which none are significant, will not appreciably reduce during construction. The effects on the landscape during the construction phase are, therefore, not significant.

Visual Effects

7.230 Additional mitigation measures introduced during the construction phase to reduce the potential for adverse visual effects include the careful siting and movement of stockpiles within the Site, limiting of working hours, and controls on lighting lantern design and duration. The effects experienced will be temporary and reversible in nature, lasting only for the duration of the construction activities. Any residual effects will arise due to the changes in the composition of views as a result of the visibility of ongoing construction activities.

7.231 Whilst the mitigation measures proposed serve to reduce the effects experienced, generally, the overall residual effect on visual amenity will not appreciably reduce during the construction phase, and the moderate adverse effect from the Medway to the south (Forts Hoo and Darnet) would remain during construction.

Operational Phase – at Year 15

7.232 The assessment of the residual effects of the Development at year 15 of operation is based upon the Parameter Plan informed by the potential option shown on the Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 3.3) which demonstrates a smaller extent of built form within the Site in comparison to that illustrated on the Parameter Plan. The façade treatments to the built form, will aid in reducing their overall mass and providing a higher aesthetic value to the view than compared to the former power station structures within the Site. The assessment of all effects are set out in Appendices 7.6 and 7.7 and the following paragraphs summarise the residual effects.

Landscape Effects on the Site

7.233 Taking into account the mitigation measures, the principles of which are demonstrated in the Illustrative Masterplan (Figure 3.3) the effect of the Development on the landscape character of the Site will be 'moderate beneficial', as a result of the increased permeability and accessibility to the Site and the quality of the built form.

Landscape Effects Published and Field Work Character

7.234 There will be no significant effects upon the published landscape character areas because the effects will be 'negligible adverse' or 'neutral', having direct effects upon a small proportion of the character area, or, where indirect effects will be perceived from adjoining character areas as a small scale of change set in the context of the established industrial and warehousing land uses surrounding the Site.

7.235 The Development, taking into account the proposed mitigation measures and design principles as indicated within the Illustrative Masterplan, is likely to result in a negligible adverse effect upon the landscape character of Medway Marshes LCA due to the cohesive and higher quality of built form across a substantial portion of the character area and the strong landscape framework which will have become established including habitat and recreational linkages and softening of the built form.

Visual Effects

7.236 From the majority of the SCP locations, representing the majority of visual receptors, the residual significance of visual effects will be neutral to 'minor adverse', including reduction from the moderate adverse visual effects resulting from operation year 1 in close range views to the north and south of the Site. The effects from the wider viewpoints are not significant as the improvements continue to be seen in the context of industrial, commercial and infrastructure development surrounding the Site and the breadth of the view, of which the Site is a relatively small component.

Cumulative Effects

7.237 Chapter 2 EIA Methodology of the ES sets out the cumulative schemes which have been considered in respect of the significant cumulative effects with the Development.

Landscape and Visual Cumulative Effects

7.238 Cumulative effects can relate to the loss and/or addition of features as a result of developments that alter the physical fabric and character of a landscape, or they may relate

to a change in the composition of views and the visual amenity experienced. With regards to cumulative visual effects, the Development need not necessarily be visible at the same time as a cumulative scheme in order to bring about an effect e.g. in-succession and/or sequential effects.

Damhead Creek II Power Station (ref. DAM/B/2.4/S36C Application)

7.239 A Section 36 Electricity Act variation to consent for Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) electricity generating station up to 1,800 MW capacity adjacent to the northern Site boundary.

Kingsnorth Quarry Lane to the south of Stoke Road (ref. MC/12/0020)

7.240 A variation of Condition 14 of planning consent MC/05/0589 – extraction and processing of sand and gravel, establishment of ready-mix concrete plant, restoration to agriculture and water-based conservation to defer the commencement date. It is proposed that the minerals will be worked in a phased manner, with progressive restoration taking place over an anticipated 11 years. It was approved in January 2013, with works ongoing until 2024. This scheme is located approximately 350m to the west of the Site.

Kingsnorth Industrial Estate (ref. MC/08/0370)

7.241 Outline application for the construction of a business park of up to 250,992 sqm for business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses (use classes B1(c) (20,752sqm), B2 (115,120sqm) and B8 (115,120sqm)) with landscaping, parking and access. This scheme was approved in 2011 and is currently being built out. It is located approximately 500m to the north of the Site. There have been eight reserved matters applications and discharge of conditions.

Stoke Road Business Centre Stoke Road (ref. MC/17/4424)

7.242 An outline planning application for up to 200 residential dwellings, which was approved in August 2018. A subsequent reserved matters application was approved in July 2019 (ref: MC/19/0888). It is located approximately 1.2km north-west of the Site.

Land south of Stoke Road, Hoo St Werburgh (ref. MC/19/3129)

7.243 An outline application for up to 100 dwellings, which was approved in November 2019. It is located approximately 1.3km north west of the Site.

Land at White House Farm Stoke Road (ref. MC/18/0247)

- 7.244 An outline planning application for up to 65 dwellings, which was approved in July 2018. A subsequent reserved matters application was validated in July 2019 (ref. MC/19/1736) and approved with conditions in March 2020. It is located approximately 1.6km to the north west of the Site.

Street Farm, Stoke Road (ref. MC/15/0098)

- 7.245 The redevelopment of a former farm site to provide a residential development of up to 50 dwellings, which was approved in November 2016. A subsequent reserved matters application has been approved (ref. MC/18/1795). It is located approximately 1.7km to the north west of the Site.

Land south of Ratcliffe Highway Junction with Bells Lane (ref: MC/17/1884)

- 7.246 Demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment of the land south of Ratcliffe Highway, with a detailed application to provide up to 232 residential units with access, landscaping and open space. The planning application was approved in November 2016. A subsequent reserved matters application has been approved (ref. MC/18/1795). It is located approximately 1.7km to the north west of the Site.

Land at Hillcrest, Ratcliffe Highway (ref: MC/19/3328)

- 7.247 A detailed planning application for 21 dwellings including affordable housing, together with access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure works, which was validated in December 2019. It is located approximately 2.95km to the north west of the Site.

National Grid Property Holdings Grain Road (ref: MC/09/1628)

- 7.248 An outline planning application for up to 464,685 sqm of built employment floorspace (Use classes B1(c), B2 and B8) and up to 245 sqm of business park management centre with associated infrastructure and access. The outline planning application was revised in March 2015 (ref. MC/15/0702), with an application for the approval of reserved matters to MC/09/1628 approved in July 2015 with conditions (ref. MC/15/1051). The application was approved with conditions in March 2010. It is located approximately 5km to the north east of the Site.

Gridlink Interconnector Ltd, Kingsnorth Power Station (ref. MC/20/2738).

- 7.249 A planning application for the construction, operation and maintenance of a converter station, balance of plant and equipment, buildings related to materials storage and maintenance activities, internal roads and car parking, landscaping, access road and underground HVDC cable system from the converter station to the Mean High Water Springs. This scheme is located within the Site boundary. The application was approved with conditions in March 2021.

Gridlink Interconnector Ltd, Kingsnorth Power Station (ref: MC/20/0028).

- 7.250 An application for a Lawful Development Certificate (proposed) for the installation of an underground 400 kV cable system between the new Gridlink Interconnector Ltd converter station site and the existing National Grid ESO Kingsnorth 400 kV sub-station located at the Kingsnorth Power Station. This scheme is located within the Site boundary. The application was consented in March 2021.

Land South of Britannia Road, High Halstow (ref. MC/20/0721).

- 7.251 A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion from Medway Council for a scheme comprising the provision of up to 790 dwellings, two form entry primary school, provision of a retail unit or GP/pharmacy and access. It is located approximately 2.2km to the north west of the Site.

Construction Phase

Landscape Effects

- 7.252 There will be no significant landscape effects upon any of the published landscape character areas as a result of the concurrent construction of the cumulative schemes. Whilst a number of the character areas have a greater sensitivity to a mixture of residential and industrial development over a wide area, compared to industrial development within an existing industrial setting, sensitivity of the LCA's remain low-medium to the cumulative schemes. The magnitude of effects for construction of the cumulative schemes ranges from 'very small' to 'medium' resulting in 'Negligible adverse' to 'minor adverse' significance of effects, with the majority being negligible. Concurrent construction of the Kingsnorth Industrial Estate, Damhead Creek II Power Station and residential development within the elevated areas within the Hoo Peninsula (LCA 11 and 12) which overlook the Medway estuary, will result in minor adverse effects due to the scale of the changes across the landscape on the southern side of the Hoo Peninsula, which would not be out of keeping with the existing land use.

Visual Effects

- 7.253 The future consented parts of Kingsnorth Industrial Estate¹ and Damhead Creek II Power Station will be apparent in views from the south-facing ridge line to the north of the Development in short-medium range views, illustrated by SCPs 6, 7, 15 and 8. In these locations, construction of the cumulative schemes to the north of the Development will be seen either in front of, or as an extension to the view of the construction of the Development. This will increase the magnitude of effect from this locality however, overall, the significance of effect would remain minor adverse from these locations and not significant. In distant views from the north, represented by SCP 9, construction of Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and Damhead Creek II Power Station will increase the magnitude of visual effect in combination with that of the Development, however given the distance of the view and the existing context, the cumulative visual effect will not be significant.
- 7.254 Construction of the residential expansion to the north of Hoo St Werburgh (ref. MC/17/1884) will result in successive visual effects along Ropers Green Lane, being visible to the north-west whilst the development, Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and Damhead Creek II PS will feature in views to the south-east (represented by SCP 6). Given the existing nature of the view of the edge of Hoo St Werburgh, to which the scheme would comprise a minor extension, it is not considered to materially increase the visual effect. Similarly, successive visual effects will be experienced in the vicinity of SCPs 2, 3, 4 and 5 where developments to the south of Stoke Road (MC/19/0888 and MC/19/3129) may be seen from the same viewpoints but in a different direction than that of the Development, Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and Damhead Creek II PS.
- 7.255 In views from the south of the Medway represented by SCPs 10, 19, 20, 21 and 11, the emergence of the proposed chimneys at Damhead Creek II PS will be visible in addition to the construction of the Development. The construction activities within Kingsnorth Industrial Estate would be screened from view beyond that of the Development. Construction works at Grain would not be discernible at these distances. Construction of residential development to the south-east of Hoo St Werburgh (ref. MC/19/0888) and the Quarry Lane cement works (ref. MC/12/0020), would also be visible although considerably less apparent than the larger development at and surrounding the Site. The cumulative schemes will not therefore change the assessment for the construction of the Development of minor adverse effects in views from the south shore of the Medway.

¹ Part of Unit 1 of the Kingsnorth Industrial Estate (KIE) is the Amazon warehouse identified as part of the baseline context. Unit 5 is under construction and was partially complete at the time of the assessment.

- 7.256 Users of the River Medway to the south of the Site, including Fort Darnet and Fort Hoo will view construction of the Development and the cumulative schemes at closer range and the significance of effects are therefore greater than from the southern shores. As set out in the assessment of effects section these will be moderate adverse. The assessment of the cumulative effects is similar to that of the southern shoreline in that construction activity within Kingsnorth Industrial Estate will be screened from view by construction within the Site and Damhead Creek II Power Station. Residential development at Hoo St Werburgh and the cement works at Quarry Lane, while visible, will not on balance increase the visual effect, which remains moderate adverse.
- 7.257 To the immediate west of the Site, within the adjacent flat coastal plain, as represented by SCPs 2 and 3, construction of the of Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and most of the Damhead Creek II Power Station (excepting the emergence of the chimney stacks) will be screened behind the Development construction. Installation of the cement works at Quarry Lane will add slightly to the perception of construction activity in the area. Sequential visual effect will also result from construction of residential development to the south of Stoke Road (ref. MC/19/0888). On balance however the minor adverse (non-significant) visual effect remains.
- 7.258 Construction activities within the Site and the natural landform will screen views of Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and Damhead Creek II Power Station from sensitive views on Cockham Ridge within the ALLI, as represented by SCPs 1 and 18. These views also show that construction of the residential developments to the southeast and north of Hoo St Werburgh would not be visible beyond the existing urban form of this settlement. No increase from minor adverse visual effects is anticipated as a result of the cumulative schemes.

Operational Phase – Year 1

Landscape Effects

- 7.259 There will be no significant landscape effects upon any of the published landscape character areas as a result of the cumulative schemes. Whilst a number of the character areas have a greater sensitivity to a mixture of residential and industrial development over a wide area, compared to industrial development within an existing industrial setting, sensitivity of the LCA's remain low-medium to the cumulative schemes. The magnitude of effects for construction of the cumulative schemes ranges from 'very small' to 'medium' resulting in 'Negligible adverse' to 'minor adverse' significance of effects, with the majority being negligible. Concurrent construction of the Kingsnorth Industrial Estate, Damhead Creek II Power Station and residential development within the elevated areas within the Hoo Peninsula

(LCA 11 and 12) which overlook the Medway estuary, will result in minor adverse effects due to the scale of the changes across the landscape on the southern side of the Hoo Peninsula, which would not be out of keeping with the existing land use.

Visual Effects

- 7.260 The future consented parts of KIE² and Damhead Creek II Power Station will be apparent in views from the south-facing ridge line to the north of the Development in short-medium range views, illustrated by SCPs 6, 7, 15 and 8. In these locations, the cumulative schemes to the north of the Development will be seen either in front of, or as an extension to the view of the construction of the Development. This will increase the magnitude of effect from this locality however, overall, the significance of effect would remain minor adverse from these locations and not significant. In distant views from the north, represented by SCP 9, Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and Damhead Creek II Power Station will increase the magnitude of visual effect in combination with that of the Development, however given the distance of the view and the existing context, the cumulative visual effect will not be significant.
- 7.261 The residential expansion to the north of Hoo St Werburgh (ref. MC/17/1884) will result in successive visual effects along Ropers Green Lane, being visible to the north-west whilst the development, KIE and Damhead Creek II Power Station will feature in views to the south-east (represented by SCP 6). Given the existing nature of the view of the edge of Hoo St Werburgh, to which the scheme would comprise a minor extension, it is not considered to materially increase the visual effect. Similarly, successive visual effects will be experienced in the vicinity of SCPs 2, 3, 4 and 5 where developments to the south of Stoke Road (refs. MC/19/0888 and MC/19/3129) may be seen from the same viewpoints but in a different direction than that of the Development, KIE and Damhead Creek II PS.
- 7.262 In views from the south of the Medway represented by SCPs 10, 19, 20, 21 and 11, the emergence of the proposed chimneys at Damhead Creek II Power Station will be visible in addition to the construction of the Development. Kingsnorth Industrial Estate would be screened from view beyond that of the Development. The development at Grain would not be discernible at these distances. Residential development to the south-east of Hoo St Werburgh (ref. MC/19/0888) and the Quarry Lane cement works (ref. MC/12/0020), would also be visible although considerably less apparent than the larger development at and surrounding the Site. The cumulative schemes will not therefore change the assessment for the development of minor adverse effects in views from the south shore of the Medway.

² Part of Unit 1 of the Kingsnorth Industrial Estate (KIE) is the Amazon warehouse identified as part of the baseline context. Unit 5 is under construction and was partially complete at the time of the assessment.

- 7.263 Users of the River Medway to the south of the Site, including Fort Darnet and Fort Hoo will view the Development and the cumulative schemes at closer range and the significance of effects are therefore greater than from the southern shores of the Medway. As set out in the assessment of effects section these will be significant, moderate adverse effects. The assessment of the cumulative effects is similar to that of the southern shoreline in that development at Kingsnorth Industrial Estate will be screened from view by construction within the Site and Damhead Creek II Power Station. Residential development at Hoo St Werburgh and the cement works at Quarry Lane, while visible, will not on balance increase the visual effect, which remains moderate adverse.
- 7.264 To the immediate west of the Site, within the adjacent flat coastal plain, as represented by SCPs 2 and 3, Kingsnorth Industrial Estate (excepting the chimney stacks) will be screened by the Development. The cement works at Quarry Lane will add slightly to the perception of built form and activity in the area, which is not out of keeping with existing land uses. Sequential visual effect will also result from residential development to the south of Stoke Road (ref. MC/19/0888). On balance however the minor adverse (non-significant) visual effects remains.
- 7.265 Development within the Site and the natural landform will screen views of Kingsnorth Industrial Estate from sensitive views on Cockham Ridge within the ALLI, as represented by SCPs 1 and 18. These views also show that the residential developments to the southeast and north of Hoo St Werburgh would not be visible beyond the existing urban form of this settlement. No increase from the minor adverse visual effects are anticipated as a result of the cumulative schemes.

Summary

Methodology

- 7.266 The methodology employed in carrying out the LVIA of the Development has been drawn from guidelines set out in GLVIA3. The guidelines are not intended as a prescriptive set of rules, and the approach has been adapted based on professional experience and opinion.

Mitigation Measures

- 7.267 Mitigation Measures during the construction phase will include measures such as control of lighting, careful location of stockpiles and machinery into visually less sensitive areas and the protection of existing vegetation to be retained, implemented through a CEMP.

7.268 Primary mitigation measures for the operational phase are set out within the Parameter Plan (Figure 3.2), including the provision of green infrastructure within the Site, building heights not exceeding 50m AOD in the central portion of the Site with building heights to the west limited to a maximum of 20m AOD and to the east 29m AOD. Assessment of the construction effects assumes a worst-case scenario of 'maximum' construction activity on the Site, including for the tallest plant, machinery and mobile cranes.

7.269 Secondary mitigation measures are those not enshrined within the Parameter Plan and include the principles illustrated by the illustrative masterplan (Figure 3.3) the landscape strategy and the Landscape Management Strategy (Appendix 7.9). These measures include reduction in massing, innovative façade detailing, consistent design principles creating a strong identity and providing an active river frontage.

Likely Significant Effects

7.270 The effects and their descriptions are detailed in the tables in Appendices 7.6 and 7.7 and significant effects are summarised in Table 7.9 below.

7.271 The following significant effects have been identified during this assessment:

Construction Phase

- Moderate adverse visual effects for users of the Medway including visitors to Fort Hoo and Fort Darnet due to a medium magnitude of effect on receptors of high sensitivity.

Operational Phase – Year 1

- Moderate adverse visual effects for users of the Medway including visitors to Fort Hoo and Fort Darnet due to a medium magnitude of effect on receptors of high sensitivity;
- Moderate adverse Visual Effects on users of the PROW network in close range views to the north of the Site (represented by SCP5) resulting from a large magnitude of effect on receptors of medium sensitivity; and
- Moderate adverse Visual Effects from the southern shore of the Medway represented by SCPs 11, 19, 20 and 21 due to a medium magnitude of effect on receptors of high sensitivity.

Operational Phase – Year 15 (Residual Effects)

7.272 By Year 15, taking account of the secondary mitigation and the reduction in massing of the built form, there will be no significant residual effects.

Cumulative Effects

7.273 The combined visual effects of the Development, Kingsnorth Industrial Estate and Damhead Creek II Power Station in views to the north east of the Site on Stoke Road, represented by SCPs 7 and 15 will result in moderate adverse effects during construction and on completion due to the scale of development within the view.

Table 7.9: Table of Significance – Landscape and Visual Effects

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/Temporary)	Significance (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/Negligible)	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*							Residual Effects (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/Negligible)
				I	UK	E	R	C	B	L	
Construction											
Visual Effects for users of the Medway including visitors to Fort Hoo and Fort Darnet	Temporary	Moderate Adverse	Advance Planting Location of stockpiles and site compound away from southern boundary Hoardings to screen GL activity			*	*	*	*	*	Moderate Adverse
Completed Development											
Visual Effects on users of the PROW network in close range views to the north of the Site (represented by SCP5)	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Reduction in massing (i.e. detailed design would not occupy the entire development zone up to the maximum height throughout. There would be buildings with gaps between in some cases) Innovative façade detailing Consistent design principles creating strong identity and high-quality point of arrival						*	*	Negligible Adverse
Visual Effects for users of the Medway including visitors to Fort Hoo and Fort Darnet	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Reduction in massing Innovative façade detailing Consistent design principles Active river frontage			*	*	*	*	*	Minor adverse
Visual Effects from the southern shore of the Medway represented by SCPs 11, 19, 20 and 21	Permanent	Moderate Adverse	Reduction in massing Innovative façade detailing Consistent design principles Active river frontage					*	*	*	Negligible Adverse
Landscape Character and features of the Site	Permanent	Minor Beneficial	Development of a biodiverse green infrastructure including woodland, tree planting, wetlands, amenity planting and recreational routes					*	*	*	Moderate Beneficial

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/Temporary)	Significance (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/Negligible)	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*							Residual Effects (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/Negligible)
				I	UK	E	R	C	B	L	
Cumulative Effects											
<i>Construction</i>											
Effects on views from Stoke Road represented by SCP 7	Temporary	Moderate Adverse									
Effects on views from Fort Hoo and Fort Darnet	Temporary	Moderate Adverse									
<i>Operation</i>											
Effects on views from Stoke Road represented by SCP 7	Permanent	Moderate Adverse									
Effect on Views from SCP 5	Permanent	Moderate Adverse									
Effect on Views from SCP 11	Permanent	Moderate Adverse									
Effects of views from SCPs 19/20/21	Permanent	Moderate Adverse									

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; E = England; R = Regional; C = County; B = Borough; L = Local

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- ^v Medway Council (26 April 2018) *Medway Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal: Appraisal of Development Scenarios and Draft Policies*
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- ^{xi} Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, August 2011. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services.
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