



The Sizewell C Project

6.10 Volume 9 Rail Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual

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6. Landscape and Visual

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This chapter of **Volume 9** of the **Environmental Statement (ES)** presents an assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects arising from the construction and operation of proposals relating to rail.

6.1.2 The proposals considered in this volume are as follows:

- the part of the green rail route comprising a temporary rail extension of approximately 1.8 kilometres (km) from the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to the proposed B1122 (Abbey Road) level crossing inclusive (the 'proposed rail extension route') as shown on **Chapter 2** of this volume, **Figure 2.1**; and
- Saxmundham to Leiston branch line upgrades (including track replacement and level crossing upgrades) (the 'proposed rail improvement works') as shown on **Chapter 2** of this volume, **Figure 2.11**.

6.1.3 Together these are referred to throughout this volume as the 'proposed development'.

6.1.4 The proposed green rail route in its entirety comprises of a temporary rail extension of approximately 4.5km from the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to a terminal within the main development site. The 2.7km part of the green rail route between the proposed B1122 (Abbey Road) level crossing and the terminal within the main development site is detailed in **Volume 2, Chapters 1 to 4** of this volume and assessed in **Volume 2** of the **ES**.

6.1.5 Once the proposed rail extension route is no longer required for the construction of the Sizewell C Project, it would be removed and the land reinstated, however the other rail improvement works would be permanent.

6.1.6 Detailed descriptions of the green rail route and other rail improvement sites (referred to throughout as the 'site'), the proposed development and the different phases of development are provided in **Chapters 1 to 2** of this volume of the **ES**. A glossary of terms and list of abbreviations used in this chapter is provided in **Volume 1, Appendix 1A** of the **ES**.

6.1.7 The assessment has been informed by data from other assessments including ecological receptors and heritage assets identified in **Chapter 7** Terrestrial Ecology and Ornithology and **Chapter 9** Terrestrial Historic Environment, in how they contribute to the landscape character and value, whilst impacts on views are taken into account in the consideration of amenity and recreation in **Chapter 8** of this volume of the **ES**.

6.1.8 This assessment has been informed by data presented in the following technical appendices:

- **Appendix 6A:** Illustrative Viewpoints; and
- **Appendix 6B:** Night-time Appraisal.

6.2 Legislation, policy and guidance

6.2.1 **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** identifies and describes legislation, policy and guidance of relevance to the assessment of the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the Sizewell C Project across all **ES** volumes.

6.2.2 This section provides an overview of the specific legislation, policy and guidance of relevance to the assessment of the proposed development.

6.2.3 There are no additional policy considerations which relate to this assessment which are not already described in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**. Policies relating to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and local landscape designations are highlighted below as they have specific relevance given the that parts of the AONB and Special Landscape Area (SLA) are within the study area. The response to policy requirements relating to ‘good design’ is also described in **section 6.5** of this chapter.

a) International

6.2.4 International legislation and policy relating to the landscape and visual assessment include the European Landscape Convention 2000 (Ref. 6.1).

6.2.5 The requirements of this, as relevant to the landscape and visual assessment, are set out in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

b) National

6.2.6 National legislation and policies relating to landscape and visual assessment include:

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (Ref. 6.2).
- National Policy Statements (NPSs) (Ref. 6.3 - 6.4).
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref. 6.5).
- The Planning Practice Guidance for the Natural Environment (Ref. 6.6), Design: process and tools (Ref. 6.7) and Light Pollution (Ref. 6.8).
- Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan 2018 (Ref. 6.9).

6.2.7 The requirements of these, as relevant to the landscape and visual assessment, are set out in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

i. [Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy \(EN-1\) \(NPS EN-1\)](#)

6.2.8 The National Policy Statement (NPS) 2011 sets out the national policy for energy infrastructure. The overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) (Ref. 6.3) and NPS for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6) (Ref. 6.4) provide the primary policy framework within which the development will be considered.

6.2.9 **Table 6.1** below summarises the topic-specific study and/or assessment requirements in the overarching NPS EN-1 and explains how these have been addressed within this chapter.

Table 6.1: Requirements of the National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

Ref.	NPS Topic Requirement	How the Requirement has been Addressed
EN-1 5.9.9	<i>“... AONBs have been confirmed by the Government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes which help ensure their continued protection”.</i>	The Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB has been an important consideration throughout the assessment and design process. SZC Co has liaised with the AONB Partnership to agree the AONB’s natural beauty and special qualities, as set out in the Natural Beauty and Special Quality Indicators document (Ref. 6.10) which form the basis of the assessment of effects on the AONB within the landscape and visual assessment chapters.
EN-1 5.9.12	<i>“The duty to have regard to the purposes of nationally designated areas also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas which may have impacts within them. The aim should be to avoid compromising the purposes of designation and such projects should be designed sensitively given the various</i>	

Ref.	NPS Topic Requirement	How the Requirement has been Addressed
	<i>siting, operational, and other relevant constraints.”</i>	

ii. National Planning Policy Framework, February 2019

6.2.10 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England.

6.2.11 In particular relation to landscape, paragraph 171 states that:

“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites”.

6.2.12 The hierarchy of landscape designations has informed the criteria for assessing landscape value, a component of landscape sensitivity within the landscape and visual impact assessment, and effects on all hierarchies of landscape designation are considered within this chapter. Further detail on the NPPF as relevant to the landscape and visual assessment can be found in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

6.2.13 Paragraph 172 also states:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.”

6.2.14 Whilst the eastern edge of the study area is located within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, the proposed development is located outside the AONB boundary.

c) Regional

6.2.15 There is no regional legislation or policy that is relevant to the landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development.

d) Local

6.2.16 Local policies relating to the landscape and visual assessment include:

- Suffolk Coastal District Council Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Polices 2013 (Ref. 6.11), including Strategic Policy SP1, Strategic Policy SP13, Strategic Policy SP14, Strategic Policy SP15, Development Management Policy DM21,

Development Management Policy DM23 and Development Management Policy DM26.

- Suffolk Coastal District Council Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies – Development Plan Document 2017 (Ref. 6.12), including Policy SSP37 and Policy SSP38.
- Suffolk Coastal District Council Final Draft Local Plan 2019 (Ref. 6.13), including Draft policy SCLP3.4, Draft policy SCLP10.3, Draft policy SCLP10.4, Draft policy SCLP11.1 and Draft policy SCLP11.2.

6.2.17 The requirements of these, as relevant to the landscape and visual assessment, are set out in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES** (Doc Ref. 6.2). At a local level, policies relating to East Suffolk (formerly Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Districts) are considered.

e) **Guidance**

6.2.18 Guidance relating to the landscape and visual assessment include:

- National Character Area Profiles (Ref. 6.14 and Ref. 6.15);
- East of England Regional Landscape Typology 2011 (Ref. 6.16);
- Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment 2008, revised 2011 (Ref. 6.17);
- Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment 2018 (Ref. 6.18);
- Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation 2012 (Ref. 6.19); and
- Special Landscape Areas Paper 2016 (Ref. 6.20).

6.2.19 Further detail on this guidance is set out in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

6.3 Methodology

a) **Scope of the assessment**

6.3.1 The generic Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) methodology is detailed in **Volume 1, Chapter 6** of the **ES**.

- 6.3.2 The full method of assessment for landscape and visual that has been applied for the Sizewell C Project is included in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

- 6.3.3 This section provides specific details of the landscape and visual assessment methodology applied to the assessment of the proposed development and a summary of the general approach to provide appropriate context for the assessment that follows. The scope of assessment considers the impacts of the construction, operation, and, where relevant, removal and reinstatement (proposed rail extension route) or post-operational (proposed rail improvements works) use of the proposed development.

- 6.3.4 The assessment methodology is based primarily upon the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) (Ref. 6.21) which is considered to be best practice guidance for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessments.

- 6.3.5 The scope of this assessment has been established through a formal EIA scoping process undertaken with the Planning Inspectorate. A request for an EIA scoping opinion was initially issued to the Planning Inspectorate in 2014, with an updated request issued in 2019 - see **Volume 1, Appendix 6A** of the **ES**.

- 6.3.6 Comments raised in the EIA Scoping Opinion received in 2014 and 2019 have been taken into account in the development of the assessment methodology. These are detailed in **Volume 1, Appendices 6A to 6C** of the **ES**.

- b) **Consultation**

- 6.3.7 The scope of the assessment has also been informed by ongoing consultation and engagement with statutory consultees throughout the design and assessment process. Full details of the consultation undertaken in relation to landscape and visual matters is provided at **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**. A summary of the general comments raised during the most recent meeting with consultees, and SZC Co's responses, are detailed in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.2: Summary of consultation responses that have informed the scope and methodology of the landscape and visual impact assessment

Consultee	Date	Summary of Discussion/Comments
Natural	Meeting: 7 February	The purpose of the meeting was to confirm several matters regarding the scope and approach to the landscape and visual

Consultee	Date	Summary of Discussion/Comments
England Suffolk County Council (SCC) Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils (SCDC/WDC) (now ESC) Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.	2019.	assessment, which had previously been discussed during several meetings, the first of which was in March 2014.
		The following points were agreed at the meeting:
		The landscape and visual assessment methodology to be used as the basis of the landscape and visual assessment chapters.
		The Suffolk County Council Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) (Ref. 6.17) is to be used as the basis for the assessment of effects on landscape character, informed by other studies, including the recently published Suffolk Coastal LCA.
		The landscape and visual impact assessment identifies the likely effects of the proposed development on landscape character types (LCTs) presented in the Suffolk County Council LCA. Where appropriate, reference is made to several other published LCAs.
		Version 1.8 of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Natural Beauty and Special Qualities indicators document (Ref. 6.10) is to be used as the basis of the assessment of effects on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB.
		<p>The landscape and visual assessment presents an assessment of the effects of the proposed development on the natural beauty and special qualities indicators of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB as recorded in Version 1.8 of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Natural Beauty and Special Qualities indicators document.</p>
		<p>The SLA Paper (November 2016, Ref. 6.20) is to be used as the basis of the assessment of effects on the SLA designation.</p> <p>The landscape and visual assessment identifies the likely effects of the proposed development on visual receptors. Reference is made to agreed representative and illustrative viewpoint photographs. Visualisations have been prepared for agreed viewpoint locations.</p>
		<p>Agreement was also reached on the location of representative viewpoints, illustrative viewpoints and the location of viewpoints to be used to generate photowire and photomontage visualisations.</p> <p>The landscape and visual assessment presents an assessment of the effects of the proposed development on visual receptors. Reference is made to agreed representative and illustrative viewpoint photographs. Visualisations have been prepared for agreed viewpoint locations.</p>

6.3.8 Further detail on consultation undertaken in relation to landscape and visual matters is provided in **Volume 2, Appendix 13H** of the **ES**.

c) Environmental screening

6.3.9 The proposed development has the potential to result in environmental effects which could be significant and therefore these works have been considered in the environmental assessment.

6.3.10 The proposed track replacement works on the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line would be typical of the existing railway corridor as they comprise replacement of the existing railway, and would involve short term presence of construction machinery as the works progress along the branch line, therefore **no significant** effects are likely.

6.3.11 An environmental screening exercise was undertaken to identify which, if any, of the level crossing upgrade works on the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line may give rise to environmental effects that have the potential to be significant. The outcome of this environmental screening exercise concludes that all of the level crossing upgrade works have been screened out of the landscape and visual assessment as they are not likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. Given the minor nature of the proposed rail improvement works, which would introduce features that are typical of the existing rail corridor in landscape and visual terms, no in-combination landscape and visual effects are anticipated from all the proposed rail improvement works.

6.3.12 **Table 6.3** provides a summary of the environmental screening exercise.

Table 6.3: Summary of environmental screening exercise

Proposed Crossing Improvement	Level	Summary of Potential Effects	Screened In or Out of the Assessment
Bratts Black House		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary and are unlikely to require any vegetation removal. Works would result in small additions to the existing rail infrastructure, typical of the existing rail corridor. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out
Knodishall		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary. The satellite construction compound would be located in the field to the south west of the crossing and there would be works to the highway on the approach to the crossing, all of which is within the site boundary. This may result in localised removal of short sections of hedgerow, but these would be limited. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out

NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Proposed Crossing Improvement	Level	Summary of Potential Effects	Screened In or Out of the Assessment
West House		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary. The satellite construction compound would be located in the field to the south of the crossing and there would be works to the highway on the approach to the crossing, all of which is within the site boundary. This may result in localised removal of short sections of hedgerow, but these would be limited. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out
Snowdens		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary and are unlikely to require any vegetation removal. Works would result in small additions to the existing rail infrastructure typical, of the existing rail corridor. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out
Saxmundham Road		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary. The satellite construction compound would be located in the field to the north east of the crossing and there would be works to the highway on the approach to the crossing, all of which is within the site boundary. This may result in very localised removal of short sections of hedgerow, but these would be limited. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out
Buckles Wood		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary and are unlikely to require any vegetation removal. Works would result in rail infrastructure typical of the rail corridor. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out
Summerhill		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the rail land boundary and are unlikely to require any vegetation removal. Works would result in small additions to the existing rail infrastructure, typical of the existing rail corridor. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out
Leiston		All works to upgrade the level crossing would be within the existing rail boundary, with the satellite compound located to the south-west of the track on Network Rail land. There would be works to the highway on the approach to the crossing, all of which is within the site boundary. This may result in very localised removal of short sections of hedgerow, but these would be limited. No landscape or visual effects are anticipated.	Screened out

d) Study area

6.3.13 As the outcome of this environmental screening exercise concludes that all of the level crossing upgrade works have been screened out of the landscape and visual assessment, the study area for the landscape and visual assessment relates only to the proposed rail extension route. The study area includes the proposed rail extension route land within the red line boundary and land immediately beyond it to a distance of 2km (refer to **Figure 6.1**) and has been informed by the theoretical extent of visibility and likely significant effects.

6.3.14 **Section 6.4** of this chapter describes the extent of visibility, based on desk and field study.

e) Assessment scenarios

6.3.15 The assessment of effects on geology and land quality includes the assessment of the construction, operation and, where relevant, the removal and reinstatement phase of the proposed development, rather than specific assessment years.

f) Assessment criteria

6.3.16 As described in **Volume 1, Chapter 6** of the **ES**, the EIA methodology considers whether impacts of the proposed development would have an effect on any resources or receptors. Assessments broadly consider the magnitude of impacts and value/sensitivity of resources/receptors that could be affected in order to classify effects.

6.3.17 As set out within **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**, there are some minor differences between the landscape and visual assessment method and the generic method, or additions to it, to ensure that the method is suitable for the assessment of landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development.

6.3.18 The assessment criteria include consideration of value and susceptibility in determining receptor sensitivity; and consideration of the scale, extent and duration of the effect in determining magnitude. These criteria are briefly outlined below and further detail on how these criteria are applied and combined to form judgements of sensitivity, magnitude and significance is provided within **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

i. Sensitivity

6.3.19 Sensitivity is assessed by combining the considerations of susceptibility and value. The criteria used in the landscape and visual assessments for determining the sensitivity of receptors are set out below.

Susceptibility

6.3.20 Susceptibility indicates the ability of a landscape or visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development “*without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.*” (Ref. 6.21, para. 5.40). The susceptibility levels of landscape and visual receptors are defined in **Table 6.4.**

Table 6.4: Susceptibility of landscape and visual receptors

Susceptibility	Description
High	Undue consequences are likely to arise from the proposed development.
Medium	Undue consequences may arise from the proposed development.
Low	Undue consequences are unlikely to arise from the proposed development.

6.3.21 Susceptibility of landscape character areas/types is influenced by their characteristics and is frequently considered (though often recorded as ‘sensitivity’ rather than susceptibility) within documented landscape character assessments and capacity studies.

6.3.22 The susceptibility of designated landscapes is influenced by the nature of the special qualities and purposes of designation and/or the valued elements, qualities or characteristics, indicating the degree to which these may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

6.3.23 Susceptibility of accessible or recreational landscapes is influenced by the nature of the landscape involved; the likely activities and expectations of people within that landscape and the degree to which those activities and expectations may be unduly affected by the development proposed.

6.3.24 Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptors (Ref. 6.21, para 6.32).

Landscape Value

6.3.25 Landscape value is "*the relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society*" (Ref. 6.21, page 157). These values are defined in **Table 6.5**.

Table 6.5: Landscape Value

Value	Description
National/ International	Designated landscapes which are nationally or internationally designated for their landscape value.
Local/District	Locally or regionally designated landscapes; also areas which documentary evidence and/or site observation indicates as being more valued than the surrounding area.
Community	'Everyday' landscape which is appreciated by the local community but has little or no wider recognition of its value.
Limited	Despoiled or degraded landscape with little or no evidence of being valued by the community.

6.3.26 Areas of landscape of greater than community value may be considered to be 'valued landscapes' in the context of NPPF paragraph 170.

6.3.27 For visual receptors, susceptibility and value are closely linked – the most valued views are also likely to be those where viewer's expectations will be highest. Visual receptor value relates to the value of the view, e.g. a National Trail is nationally valued for access, not necessarily for the available views. It is therefore not possible to separate out visual receptor value from susceptibility. Typical examples of visual receptor sensitivity are plotted in a diagram in **Volume 1, Annex 6I** of the **ES**.

Sensitivity

6.3.28 Sensitivity is assessed by combining the considerations of susceptibility and value described above. The differences in the tables below reflect a slightly greater emphasis on value in considering landscape receptors, and a greater emphasis on susceptibility in considering visual receptors. **Table 6.6** defines the sensitivity of receptors for landscape and visual impact assessments.

Table 6.6: Assessment of sensitivity of receptors for landscape and visual impact assessments

Landscape Sensitivity				
		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National/International	High	High-Medium	Medium
	Local/District	High-Medium	Medium	Medium-Low
	Community	Medium	Medium-Low	Low
	Limited	Low	Low-Negligible	Negligible
Visual Receptor Sensitivity				
		Susceptibility		
		High	Medium	Low
Value	National/International	High	High-Medium	Medium
	Local/District	High-Medium	High-Medium	Medium
	Community	High-Medium	Medium	Medium-Low
	Limited	Medium	Medium-Low	Low

ii. Magnitude

6.3.29 The magnitude of effect is informed by combining the scale, duration, and extent of an effect as set out in the GLVIA (Ref. 6.21, para. 3.26). The criteria for the assessment of magnitude are set out below.

Scale

6.3.30 The scale of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the degree of change which would arise from the proposed development. The criteria for the assessment of scale of effect are set out in **Table 6.7**.

Table 6.7: Scale of effect

Scale effect	of	Description
Large		Total or major alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be fundamentally changed.
Medium		Partial alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be noticeably changed.

Scale effect	Description
Small	Minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be largely unchanged despite discernible differences.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to key elements, features, qualities or characteristics, such that post development the baseline will be fundamentally unchanged with barely perceptible differences.

Duration

6.3.31 Duration of effect is assessed for all landscape and visual receptors and identifies the time period over which the change to the receptor as a result of the development would arise. The criteria for the assessment of duration of effect, relevant to this assessment, are set out in **Table 6.8**.

Table 6.8: Duration of effect

Duration	Description
Permanent	The change is expected to be permanent and there is no intention for it to be reversed. Or occurring for a period longer than 25 years.
Long-term	The change is expected to be in place for 10-25 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.
Medium-term	The change is expected to be in place for 2-10 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.
Short-term	The change is expected to be in place for 0-2 years and will be reversed, fully mitigated or no longer occurring beyond that timeframe.

6.3.32 As the proposed rail extension route is not permanent and would be reinstated to agricultural use, with the temporary level crossings reinstated to highway, following the completion of the construction of the Sizewell C Project, there would be no permanent effects. Medium or short-term effects may be identified where mitigation planting is proposed, or local factors will result in a reduced duration of effect (for example where maturing woodland would screen views in future).

Extent

6.3.33 **Table 6.9** details the extent of effects which is assessed for all receptors and indicates the geographic area over which the effects will be felt.

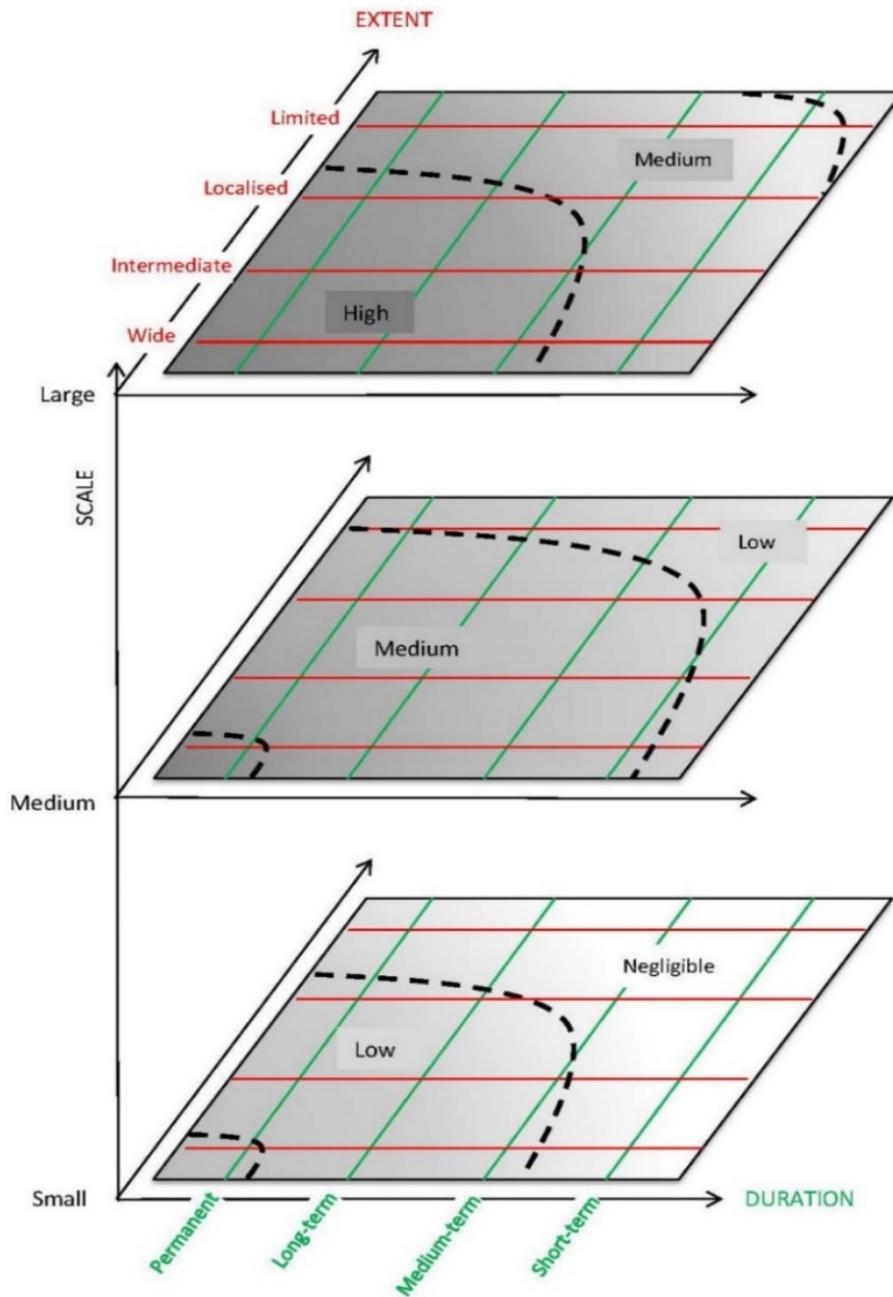
Table 6.9: Extent of effect

Extent	Description
Wide	Beyond 4km, or more than half of receptor area.
Intermediate	Up to approximately 2-4km, or around half of receptor area.
Localised	Site and surroundings up to 2km, or part of receptor area (up to approximately 25%).
Limited	Site, or part of site, or small part of a receptor area (< approximately 10%).

Magnitude

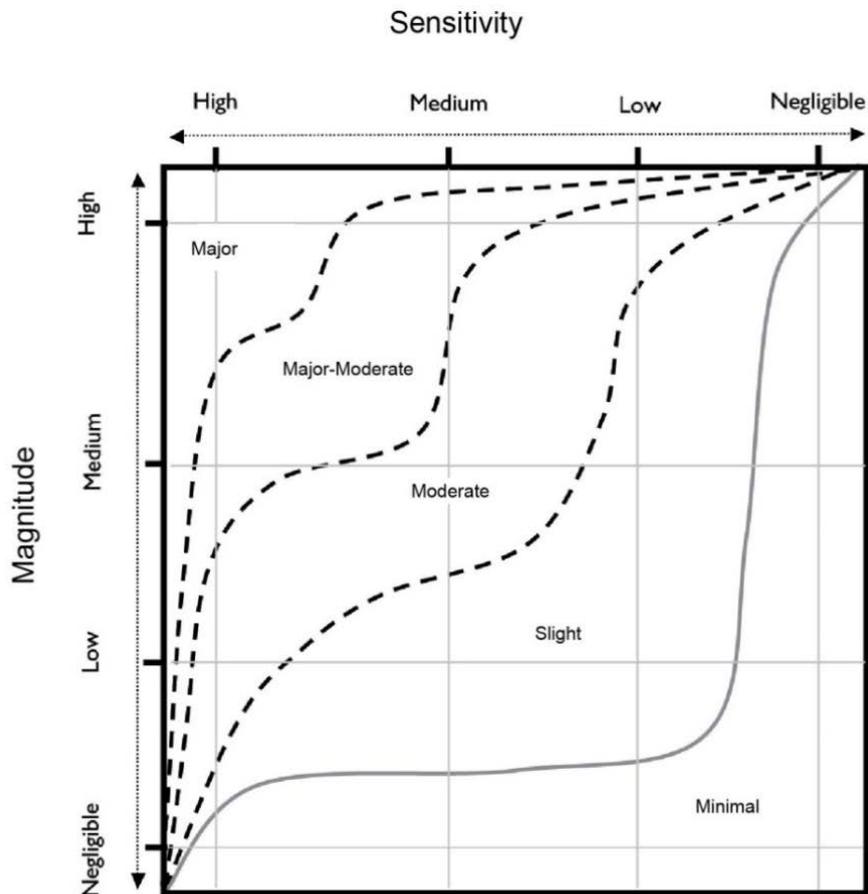
6.3.34 The magnitude of effect is informed by combining the scale, duration and extent of effect. **Plate 6.1** illustrates the judgement process:

Plate 6.1: Magnitude of Effect



- 6.3.35 As can be seen from **Plate 6.1**, scale (shown as the layers of the diagram) is the primary factor in determining magnitude; most of each layer indicates that magnitude will typically be judged to be the same as scale, but may be higher if the effect is more widespread and longer term, or lower if it is constrained in geographic extent or timescale.
- 6.3.36 Where the scale of effect is judged to be negligible the magnitude is also assumed to be negligible and no further judgement is required.
- 6.3.37 Intermediate judgements may be used for judgements of magnitude. Where intermediate ratings are given, e.g. ‘medium-low’, this indicates an effect that is both less than medium and more than low, rather than one which varies across the range. In such cases, the higher rating will always be given first.
- iii. **Significance of effects**
- 6.3.38 The definitions of the significance of effect for the landscape and visual assessments are explained below.
- 6.3.39 Significance indicates the importance or gravity of the effect. The process of forming a judgement as to the degree of significance of the effect is based upon the assessments of magnitude of effects and sensitivity of the receptor to come to a professional judgement of how important the effect is. This judgement is illustrated by **Plate 6.2**:

Plate 6.2: Significance



6.3.40 The significance ratings indicate a 'sliding scale' of the relative importance of the effect, with major being the most important and minimal being the least.

6.3.41 Following the classification of an effect as presented above, a clear statement is made as to whether the effect is 'significant' or 'not significant'. Within this assessment, major-moderate or major effects are considered to be significant and effects of moderate significance or less are “of lesser concern” (Ref. 6.21, para 3.35) and are considered to be not significant. However, professional judgement is also applied where appropriate. It should also be noted that whilst an effect may be significant, that does not necessarily mean that such an impact would be unacceptable, or should necessarily be regarded as an “undue consequence” (Ref. 6.21, para 5.40).

6.3.42 Where intermediate ratings are given, for example ‘moderate-slight’, this indicates an effect that is both less than moderate and more than slight, rather than one which varies across the range. In such cases, the higher rating will always be given first. This does not mean that the impact is closer to that higher rating but is described in such a way to facilitate the identification of the more significant effects within tables.

6.3.43 Effects are defined as adverse, neutral or beneficial. Neutral effects are those which overall are neither adverse nor beneficial but may incorporate a combination of both. Further detail is provided in **Appendix 6I** of **Volume 1** of the **ES**.

g) **Assessment methodology**

6.3.44 The methodology has the following key stages, which are described in more detail in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**:

- Baseline – includes the gathering of documented information; development of the scope of the assessment in consultation with the relevant local planning authorities and other relevant landscape and visual consultees; site visits and early input into the initial stages of design. Baseline site visits were undertaken during June and December 2018 and February to March 2019.
- Design – includes input into further stages of design including mitigation options to avoid or minimise landscape and visual impacts where possible.
- Assessment – includes an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the design of the proposed development, including the proposed construction, operation and removal and reinstatement works, requiring site survey work to assess likely landscape and visual effects. Assessment site visits were undertaken during June and July 2019.
- Cumulative Assessment – assesses the effects of the proposed development in combination with other developments, where required as provided in **Volume 10** of the **ES** for more detail.

h) **Assumptions and limitations**

6.3.45 The following assumptions have been made in this assessment:

- the assessment and visualisations are based on the Works Plans and limits of deviation for the temporary structures and lighting provided in the description of development at **Chapter 2** of this volume of the **ES**;
- photography utilised in the assessment has been undertaken during the winter months, as requested by landscape and visual consultees, to represent a worst-case scenario;
- it is assumed that existing vegetation would remain in place during the construction and operation phases, unless the proposed development requires it to be removed or other circumstances indicate its likely removal;
- the following estimated growth rates have been applied when considering the screening effect of any proposed planting (appropriate for the type of planting proposed, location and suitable management regime):
 - proposed screen planting at year 1 is assumed to be 800mm high;
 - proposed screen planting by year 10 is assumed to be 4.8m, assuming approximate growth rates of approximately 400mm per annum;
 - proposed hedgerow planting at year 1 is assumed to be 450mm high; and
 - proposed hedgerow planting by year 10 is assumed to be 3m, assuming approximate growth rates of approximately 400mm per annum and maintenance at an appropriate height for the locality.

6.3.46 No limitations have been identified respective to the assessment of the proposed rail extension route.

6.4 Proposed rail extension route baseline environment

6.4.1 This section presents a description of the baseline environmental characteristics within the site and in the surrounding area, with the full baseline description of the individual landscape and visual receptors being provided alongside the assessment in **section 6.6** of this chapter for ease of reference.

- 6.4.2 This section provides a review of the key local guidance documents and identifies those landscape and visual receptors which merit detailed consideration in the assessment of effects, and those which are 'scoped out' from further assessment as the effects *"have been judged unlikely to occur or so insignificant that it is not essential to consider them further"* (Ref. 6.21, Para 3.19).
- 6.4.3 Both this baseline section and the assessment of effects section as provided in **section 6.6** of this chapter describe landscape character and visual receptors before considering designated landscape. A number of representative and illustrative viewpoints are utilised to inform the baseline section, further detail of which is provided later in this section. Representative viewpoints represent the experience of different types of visual receptor and form the basis of assessment, while illustrative viewpoints demonstrate a particular effect or specific issues, which might be, for example, the restricted visibility at certain locations.
- a) **Current baseline**
- i. **Key Local Guidance Documents**
- 6.4.4 The documents listed below are relevant to this assessment, further information about each of these can be found within **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.
- Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment – this document presents the landscape character baseline for the assessment of effects on landscape character.
 - Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Position Statement - Sizewell C Design Principles: The Local Perspective (Ref. 6.22) – this document informs the approach to landscape and visual mitigation in relation to the proposed development.
- ii. **Site and Context**
- 6.4.5 The land use within the 2km study area is predominantly arable farmland, with well-defined hedgerow field boundaries and interspersed with scattered woodlands and copses. The site itself is in arable use and comprises several adjoining fields, separated by hedgerows of varying levels of intactness. The site extends in a north-eastward direction, from the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to the B1122 (Abbey Road). The site location and context is shown on **Figure 6.1**.

- 6.4.6 The northern boundary of the site follows the mature hedgerow along Abbey Lane. The north eastern boundary follows the B1122 (Abbey Road), which has an intermittent hedgerow along it, with a further stretch of hedgerow following the garden boundaries of properties along Abbey Road. The southern boundary of the site follows the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line, which has vegetation predominantly along its northern edge. The site boundary also wraps around the field between the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and Buckleswood Road, with Buckleswood Road lined by hedgerows and small woodland blocks. The remainder of the site boundaries do not follow any features currently defined on the ground and pass through large arable fields.
- 6.4.7 As shown in detail on **Chapter 8, Figure 8.1** of this volume, three public footpaths run through the site. These are Footpaths E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0 running north south between Leiston and Abbey Lane in the eastern part of the site and Footpath E-363/003/0 running through the western part of the site between the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and Buckleswood Road.
- 6.4.8 Within the wider context of the site, Leiston is located to the south-east. There are a number of smaller settlements within the study area, generally at least 1km from the site boundary, including Theberton, Aldringham, Coldfair Green, Knodishall and Knodishall Green. Local roads, including Abbey Lane, Buckleswood Road and Saxmundham Road further to the south, are generally lined with tall hedgerows or tree belts and there are small areas of woodland such as Buckle’s Wood to the west and Spring Covert to the north. To the east of the site, near Fiscal Policy, lies a larger area of woodland at Kenton Hills.
- 6.4.9 As shown on **Figure 6.2**, the topography of the site slopes downwards steadily from south-west to north-east. The landform in the south-west of the site forms part of a localised ridgeline, with a highpoint of approximately 22m above ordnance datum (AOD), with the landform in the north-east of the site, along the B1122 (Abbey Road), forming part of a localised valley with a low point of approximately 8m AOD. Within the wider study area, the landform falls from higher ground in the west towards the coast in the east, with the valleys of the Minsmere Old River to the north and the Hundred River to the south.
- 6.4.10 **Figure 6.3** illustrates the landscape character within the study area, as described in further detail within the baseline and assessment sections, which indicates that the site is located within a plateau landscape.

iii. Zone of Theoretical Visibility study

- 6.4.11 A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) study was generated, based on the site layout and limits of deviation of the proposed rail extension route. This is shown on **Figure 6.4** and indicates areas of potential visibility.
- 6.4.12 The analysis was carried out using a topographic model and including settlements and woodlands (with heights derived from Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) with a 2m resolution for both surface mapping and terrain data) as visual barriers in order to provide a more realistic indication of potential visibility.
- 6.4.13 The ZTV study was used in the identification of those receptors that are likely to be most affected by the proposed rail extension route and those that may be scoped out. However, areas shown as having potential visibility may have visibility of the proposed rail extension route screened by local features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments or buildings.

Extent of Theoretical Visibility

- 6.4.14 **Figure 6.4** shows the ZTV and indicates that theoretical visibility covers all areas around the site, up to approximately 500m from the site boundary, with the exception of locations to the north and west where Spring Covert and Buckle's Wood provide visual obstructions.
- 6.4.15 Beyond approximately 800m to 1km from the site boundary, the ZTV becomes more fragmented. The valley landforms to the north and south limit potential visibility, with areas of no theoretical visibility along the Minsmere Old River and Hundred River. To the north, theoretical visibility extends beyond the Scheduled Monument and Listed Buildings at Leiston Abbey, as far as the woodland belts around the grounds of the listed buildings at Theberton House and Leiston Old Abbey. To the east, theoretical visibility extends to the woodland at Fiscal Policy/the edge of Kenton Hills and the change of landform east of Brick Kiln Farm, but otherwise is limited by the western edge of Leiston. To the south, theoretical visibility extends for a single field to the south of Saxmundham Road before it starts to become much more fragmented. To the west theoretical visibility generally only extends as far as Abbey Lane, with an area of greater theoretical visibility in the vicinity of the Saxmundham Road level crossing.
- 6.4.16 Further from the site, theoretical visibility is shown on the west facing valley slopes of Minsmere Old River to the east of the site and the north and east facing valley slopes of the Hundred River to the south-west of the site.

There is a further area of theoretical visibility shown on higher ground to the north-west of the site.

Zone of Visual Influence

- 6.4.17 As noted above, areas shown as having theoretical visibility may have visibility of the proposed rail extension route screened by existing features such as trees, hedgerows, embankments or buildings.
- 6.4.18 Site observations confirm that extensive vegetation and buildings within the landscape substantially reduces the extent of visibility towards the site from that illustrated by the ZTV. The anticipated main area of visibility, based on site observations, is annotated on the ZTV study as the “Zone of Visual Influence” (ZVI). Field boundaries are typically formed from established hedgerows, often with frequent hedgerow trees and roads and footpaths are also typically bordered by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Within settlements, trees further contribute to visual screening and limit views towards the proposed rail extension route.
- 6.4.19 Views of the proposed rail extension route would generally be restricted to within 500m of the site boundary, with some infrequent glimpsed views from within 1.5km, as follows:
- To the north, the ZVI is limited to the fields immediately south of Leiston Abbey, with visibility also possible from elevated locations within Leiston Abbey (see Viewpoint 1 at **Figure 6.5**).
 - To the east, the ZVI extends to the rear gardens of properties along B122 (Abbey Road) (see Viewpoint 2 at **Figure 6.6**).
 - To the south, the ZVI extends as far as Saxmundham Road, beyond which roadside vegetation would limit visibility (see Viewpoint 7 at **Figure 6.11**).
 - To the west, the ZVI extends as far as Abbey Lane, as roadside vegetation would restrict visibility. The only exception to this would be to the south-west where roadside vegetation is sparser along Abbey Lane and the ZVI would extend further to Crossing Farm as provided in illustrative Viewpoint 2 in **Appendix 6A** of the **ES**.
- 6.4.20 Beyond these areas, although some glimpsed views would arise, visibility would be minimal or very infrequent and effects on landscape and visual receptors beyond the ZVI are not assessed further.

iv. Landscape Character

6.4.21 Paragraphs 5.13 – 5.15 of GLVIA (Ref. 6.21) indicates that landscape character studies at the national or regional level are best used to ‘set the scene’ and understand the landscape context of a proposed development. It also indicates that assessments undertaken by or for local authorities provide more detail and that these should be used to form the basis of the assessment of effects on landscape character, albeit with (appropriately justified) adaptation, refinement and interpretation where required. The relevant assessments are:

- National Character Area Profiles (East of England) (Ref. 6.14 and Ref. 6.15);
- East of England Regional Landscape Typology (Ref. 6.16);
- Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.17);
- Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.18); and
- Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (Ref. 6.19).

6.4.22 Landscape character types are illustrated on **Figure 6.3**.

National Character Area Profiles

6.4.23 At a national level, the site and the majority of the study area are situated within National Character Area (NCA) 82: Suffolk Coast and Heaths (Ref. 6.14). NCA82 shows characteristics of gently undulating farmland with areas of woodland and forest plantation in the surrounding area. This NCA is described within the NCA summary as sparsely settled and “...*mainly flat or gently rolling, often open but with few commanding viewpoints*”. More than half of the NCA is utilised for arable and pig farming. The remainder of the NCA (beyond the study area) is coast, lowland heaths (Sandlings) and forest plantations. Close to the boundary between NCA82 and the adjacent NCA83, the landscape is described as “*The boundary between the Suffolk Coast and Heaths and the more wooded boulder clay plateau of central East Anglia (South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands and South Suffolk and North Essex Claylands) is incised by several small east–west river valley corridors*”.

6.4.24 To the west, the study area begins to transition into NCA83: South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands (Ref. 6.15). NCA83 covers a large area of

central East Anglia and is a predominantly flat clay plateau incised by numerous small-scale wooded river valleys. Large areas of woodland are noted as being scarce within this NCA, with views frequently open and occasionally exposed *“although within the valleys it is possible to find quite confined landscapes with intimate views”*. NCA83 is also *“an area of mixed settlement patterns with nucleated villages found in the west and along the river valleys, intermixed with dispersed hamlets and moated farmsteads. Large, often interconnected village greens or commons are a key feature of the area”*. The description also notes that *“Public rights of way, including the Boudicca Way and Angles Way long-distance footpaths, and country estates and parklands continue to provide recreational opportunities”*.

- 6.4.25 The site and surrounding study area is generally representative of NCA82, being located on farmland between the river valleys of the Minsmere Old River and the Hundred River on gently undulating land. However, given the scale of the NCAs, and the presence of more detailed character areas at a local level, effects on NCAs are not assessed in detail.

East of England Landscape Typology

- 6.4.26 At the regional level, the site lies predominantly within the Wooded Plateau Claylands LCT (Ref. 6.16). The description for this character type indicates *“For the most part this is a settled, early enclosed landscape with frequent ancient woods, associated with a rolling, in places undulating glacial plateau, dissected by numerous shallow valleys”*.

- 6.4.27 This and the other LCTs identified within the study area broadly correspond with those identified in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.17), but with greater subdivision in the County assessment. Given the greater detail in the County assessment, effects on regional LCTs are not assessed in detail.

Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (2008, revised 2011)

- 6.4.28 Local LCTs within the study area, as identified in the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.17), include:

- Ancient Estate Claylands;
- Coastal Levels;
- Estate Sandlands;

- Rolling Estate Claylands; and
- Valley Meadows and Fens.

6.4.29 Effects on the Ancient Estate Claylands, which include the site, and on the adjacent Estate Sandlands which form the lower ground at the north-eastern edge of the site, are assessed in **section 6.6** of this chapter.

6.4.30 The remaining local LCTs are excluded from more detailed assessment. As indicated by the ZVI and field study, there would be little or no potential visibility of the proposed rail extension route within these local LCTs, largely due to the effects of landform and the vegetation pattern.

Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (July 2018)

6.4.31 The Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.18) forms part of the evidence base for the draft SCDC Local Plan (January 2019). As noted at **section 6.3** of this chapter, it has been agreed with landscape and visual impact assessment consultees that the Suffolk County assessment would be used as the basis for assessment, as it is in the public domain and has been subject to consultation. Reference is therefore made to the Suffolk Coastal Landscape Character Assessment where relevant.

Suffolk Historic Landscape Characterisation (version 3, 2008)

6.4.32 This study (Ref. 6.19) identifies the different types of historic landscape within the county and identifies the site as predominantly “*Pre-18th Century enclosure – random fields*” with some “*Pre-18th-century enclosure – irregular co-axial fields*”. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has informed the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment which forms the main basis of the assessment and is not considered further.

v. Visual environment

Visual receptors

6.4.33 Visual receptors are “*the different groups of people who may experience views of the development*” (Ref. 6.21, Para 6.3). The ZTV study, baseline desk study and site visits have been used to identify those groups that may be significantly affected by the proposed rail extension route and receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common (for example routes within an area of designated landscape). Baseline site visits were

undertaken during June and December 2018 and February to March 2019, with assessment site visits undertaken during June and July 2019.

6.4.34 As described in relation to the ZVI and site context above, the site is relatively open, and there are views across the site from adjoining roads and footpaths. However, views of the site from within the wider landscape are relatively contained by local variations in landform and woodland and the site is not readily visible from settlements within the study area, beyond the edge of Leiston.

6.4.35 Seven representative viewpoints have been selected to inform the assessment of the effects on visual receptors, in relation to the proposed rail extension route. These are identified in **Table 6.10**, with locations shown on **Figure 6.4** and illustrated by photopanel at **Figures 6.5 to 6.11**. The assessment is further informed by six illustrative viewpoints (I1 to I6) which are illustrated by photographs in **Appendix 6A** of this volume.

Table 6.10: Representative viewpoints

Viewpoint number	Location	Receptors	Approximate Distance/ Direction from Nearest Site Boundary
R1	Leiston Abbey (from top of ruins) looking south	Visitors to Leiston Abbey	235m, north.
R2	Footpath E-363/010/0	Users of footpath, residents along B1122 (Abbey Road)	260m, east.
R3	Footpath E-363/006/0	Users of footpath	350m, east.
R4	Footpath E-363/003/0 near Fisher's Farm	Users of footpath, local residents	275m, west.
R5	Footpath E-363/006/0	Users of footpath, motorists and cyclist using Abbey Lane	Adjacent to the north of site.
R6	Footpath E-363/030/0 to Leiston Common (Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB)	Users of footpath	1.2km, east.
R7	Saxmundham Road along permissive footpath	Users of permissive route, motorists along Saxmundham Road, future residents of Leiston (residential development approved to north of viewpoint)	300m, south.

Receptor groups

- 6.4.36 The main settlement within the study area is Leiston, which lies to the south-east of the site, with properties along the B1122 (Abbey Road) located adjacent to the site boundary. There are a number of smaller settlements in the study area, including Theberton, approximately 1.6km to the north of the site; Aldringham, approximately 1.9km to the south of the site; Coldfair Green, approximately 1.8km to the south of the site; Knodishall, approximately 0.9km to the south-west of the site and Knodishall Green, approximately 1.9km to the west of the site. None of these other, smaller settlements would have views of the proposed rail extension route and only effects on Leiston are considered further in the assessment of effects.
- 6.4.37 There are also a number of dispersed farmsteads and individual properties in the study area. The closest individual private residential properties are Fisher's Farm, Gypsy Lodge and Aldhurst Farm along Abbey Lane to the west; Leiston House Farm and Highbury Cottages along Saxmundham Road to the south; and Abbey Farm and Hill Farm near Leiston Abbey to the north.
- 6.4.38 As outlined above, desk and field study has confirmed that the ZVI within which there may be visual effects arising from the proposed rail extension route would be contained. Only the following visual receptor groups are likely to experience effects which would be greater than negligible and are considered further within the assessment of effects at **section 6.6** of this chapter:
- Group 1 – Residents of and visitors to Leiston at their properties, driving through the settlement and using open space/footways/cycle routes within Leiston.
 - Group 2 – Users of Footpaths E-363/003/0, E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0, which currently cross the site.
 - Group 3 – Users of Footpaths E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0 north of Abbey Lane and bridleway E-363/013/0, visitors to Leiston Abbey and motorists using minor roads to the north and north-east of the site within 800m.
 - Group 4 – Users of Footpath E-363/003/0 south of the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and the permissive footpath along the northern side of Saxmundham Road from the edge of Leiston to Highbury

Cottages, visitors to Leiston Cemetery and drivers using Saxmundham Road.

- Group 5 – Local road users using Abbey Lane to the west of the site.

Long distance routes

6.4.39 As shown on **Chapter 8, Figure 8.1** of this volume, there are two long distance cycle routes within the study area, both following the same alignment. These are the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route and Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 42, which run along a minor road from Eastbridge in the north-east, along B1122 (Abbey) Road and Abbey Lane to the north and west of the site, then along a minor road to Knodishall in the south. As indicated by the ZVI there may be some views of the proposed rail extension route from the routes where they pass along Abbey Lane and effects on users of the routes are considered further within the assessment of effects.

6.4.40 The Sandlings Walk Long Distance Recreational Route also passes through the north-east of the study area. The route runs through Goose Hill and Kenton Hills in the north-east, before turning north to follow Bridleway E-363/019/0 and then a minor road towards Eastbridge. As set out above, desk and field study has confirmed that the ZVI would not extend to the Sandlings Walk, and users are not considered further within the assessment of effects.

6.4.41 The existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line runs along the southern boundary of the site. However, this is no longer used for timetabled passenger trains and consequently users of the route are not considered further within the assessment of effects.

Specific viewpoints

6.4.42 Ordnance Survey mapping does not indicate any panoramic viewpoints within the 2km study area, and no promoted or designated viewpoints have been identified.

vi. Landscape designations and value

National landscape designations

6.4.43 The site is not covered by any statutory landscape designations.

6.4.44 As shown on **Figure 6.1**, the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is located approximately 780m to the

east of the site. It covers a band along the eastern edge of the study area. The ZVI confirms that there would be no views of the proposed rail extension route from the AONB and no potential for effects on the AONB.

Local landscape designations

- 6.4.45 As shown on **Figure 6.1**, two Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) cover small areas of the study area, at the Minsmere Old River valley 620m north-east and the Hundred River valley 1.9km south. Field survey has confirmed there would be no views of the proposed rail extension route from the SLAs and no potential for effects on the SLAs.

Local landscape value

- 6.4.46 Within the 2km study area there are a number of features that contribute to the value of the local landscape. These include an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways, large woodlands and Commons, and the valleys of Minsmere Old River and Hundred River. As indicated above in relation to landscape designations, part of the study area is covered by the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB and other parts are covered by SLAs. Within the AONB the landscape is considered to be of national value and within the SLA the landscape is considered to be of local value. Beyond these designated areas, none of these features are considered sufficiently valued to increase the landscape value above community value.

b) Future baseline

- 6.4.47 There are two consented residential developments to the south of the site, on the edge of Leiston, that could become future visual receptors. These include:
- application DC/16/1961/OUT for 187 dwellings at Johnsons Farm, between the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and Saxmundham Road and immediately adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. This was consented in 2017 and a reserved matters application has recently been submitted to East Suffolk Council. It is assumed that construction is likely to have begun on this development in advance of construction of the proposed rail route extension and the future residents are therefore considered as part of receptor group 1; and
 - application DC/16/2104/OUT for 77 dwellings located between the branch line and St Margaret's Crescent, 120m south east of the site boundary. This was consented in 2017, but it is uncertain if and when this development is likely to come forward. However, it is located

outside the ZVI and therefore effects on future residents are not considered further.

6.4.48 In addition, public access is proposed within the southern areas of the habitat creation scheme at Aldhurst Farm and this permissive access is likely to be formalised in due course. Effects on users of the Aldhurst Farm site are therefore considered below where relevant.

6.5 Proposed rail extension route environmental design and mitigation

6.5.1 As detailed in **Volume 1, Chapter 6** of the **ES**, a number of primary mitigation measures have been identified through the iterative EIA process and have been incorporated into the design and construction planning of the proposed rail extension route. Tertiary mitigation measures are legal requirements or are standard practices that will be implemented as part of the proposed rail extension route.

6.5.2 The assessment of likely significant effects of the proposed rail extension route assumes that primary and tertiary mitigation measures are in place. For landscape and visual, these measures are identified below, with a summary provided on how the measures contribute to the mitigation and management of potentially significant environmental effects.

a) Primary mitigation

6.5.3 Primary mitigation is often referred to as ‘embedded mitigation’ and includes modifications to the location or design to mitigate impacts; these measures become an inherent part of the proposed development.

6.5.4 **Chapter 2** of the **ES** and the **Associated Development Design Principles** (Doc Ref. 8.3) document details a number of primary mitigation measures that seek to mitigate the potential impacts of the proposed development. Those of direct relevance in the landscape and visual context are:

- the creation of an approximately 2m high grassed visual and noise screening bund along the northern edge of the proposed rail extension route, which widens towards the eastern end of the proposed rail extension route and a second bund (also approximately 2m high) to the south of the rail extension at the eastern end of the proposed rail extension route, west of the B1122 (Abbey Road). Both would utilise on-site material removed due to earthworks associated with the alignment of the proposed rail extension route through the landscape and top soil storage.

- The retention of existing woodland and hedgerows wherever possible, including hedgerows along Abbey Lane and the current alignment of Footpath E-363/003/0. Buckle's Wood falls outside of the site and would not be affected.
- Diversion of existing Footpaths E-363/003/0, E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0, which currently cross the site to safe crossing points over the rail route at level crossings.
- The level crossing lighting would be designed so as to not cause substantial levels of glare to road users, train drivers or signallers and others operating the crossing.

6.5.5 The listed mitigation measures aim to control and limit views of the proposed rail extension route from neighbouring receptors, including residents of and visitors to Leiston and local public rights of way.

6.5.6 Following the completion of the construction of the Sizewell C Project, the proposed rail extension route, including the track bed and level crossings, would be removed and returned to its original topography. Boundary hedgerows would be reinstated and the area would then be returned to existing use.

b) Tertiary mitigation

6.5.7 Tertiary mitigation will be required regardless of any EIA assessment, as it is imposed, for example, as a result of legislative requirements and/or standard sectoral practices.

6.5.8 The following tertiary mitigation measures have been included within the **Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)** (Doc Ref. 8.11) to minimise landscape and visual effects during the construction and removal and reinstatement phases:

- minimum light levels for safe working and the minimum number of lighting elements to illuminate the work area safely will be used;
- lighting will be directed to minimise nuisance to adjacent properties. If lights cannot be positioned in such way because of physical constraints or for safety reasons, then local screening of the lights, including shielding of luminaires, where appropriate, will be used to reduce light spill;

- task-specific lighting will be turned off on completion of the task, or at the end of the working day by the contractor;
- spotlights and task lighting towers will be positioned away from sensitive receptors, where identified; and
- contractors will consider the use of sensors or timing devices to automatically switch off lighting, where appropriate.

6.6 Proposed rail extension route assessment

a) Introduction

6.6.1 This section presents the findings of the landscape and visual impact assessment for the construction, operation, and removal and reinstatement of the proposed rail extension route.

6.6.2 This section identifies any likely significant effects that are predicted to occur and **section 6.7** of this chapter then identifies any secondary mitigation and monitoring measures that are proposed to minimise any adverse significant effects (if required).

6.6.3 Effects are assessed covering all stages; approximately 18 months of construction, approximately 9 to 12 years of operation and approximately five months of removal and reinstatement works. Where relevant, a distinction is made between the period following completion, when construction is complete but before mitigation planting is fully mature (Year 1) and following establishment and initial maturation (Year 10) to capture the effects of proposed planting on views.

b) Construction

6.6.4 As described in **Chapter 2** of this volume, construction of the proposed rail extension route would involve vegetation clearance; earthworks to create the appropriate levels for the track, a temporary haul route, the placement of soils into the landscape bunds, construction of the level crossings, laying of the track and ballast and the construction of proposed fencing and access control. The construction works would be expected to take 18 months and would involve the movement of construction vehicles, storage of materials, task lighting and gradual transformation of the site from agricultural land to form the proposed rail extension route and the associated modifications to road and PRow alignments.

i. Landscape fabric

6.6.5 A number of landscape features, comprising the physical fabric of the site would be modified or removed as follows:

- replacement of arable farmland with the proposed rail extension route;
- removal of vegetation along approximately 75m of the northern edge of the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to enable the connection of the proposed rail extension route to the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line;
- creation of gaps through hedgerows where they cross the site, removing a total of approximately 290m of hedgerow;
- removal of approximately 180m of hedgerow along Abbey Road at the location of the proposed level crossing; and
- removal of approximately 50m of hedgerow on the northern side and 260m on the southern side of Buckleswood Road at the proposed level crossing, to allow for visibility splays and creation of a new layby.

ii. Landscape character

6.6.6 The scale of effects on landscape character are illustrated on **Figure 6.3**.

6.6.7 Large scale effects would arise within the site, where the character would change from being open fields contained by hedgerows and tree belts, with limited built infrastructure, becoming a construction site with moving construction vehicles (including trains), to become a new rail route with two level crossings, landscaped bunds and bounded by security fencing.

6.6.8 Medium scale effects would arise across adjacent fields, extending to the boundaries created by Abbey Lane to the north and west and the rear gardens of properties along the B1122 (Abbey Road) and the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to the east and south, where the nearby presence of construction machinery and eventually the track, landscape bunds, security fencing and level crossings would alter the character of the open fields due to the proximity of built development.

6.6.9 Small scale effects would arise north of Abbey Lane within the ZVI; around the junction of B1122 (Abbey Road) and Lover's Lane; and between the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and Saxmundham Road.

- 6.6.10 Beyond the above areas, occasional glimpsed views of the proposed rail extension route would not alter the character of the landscape.
- 6.6.11 For a development of this nature on a greenfield site, it is to be expected that there would be large-scale effects on the character of the site itself, given that it is changing from an open, farmed landscape to a developed area. The extent to which effects diminish beyond the site depends on the scale of the proposed development, the context and visibility of the proposal. In this instance, effects would diminish rapidly due to the limited vertical scale of the proposed rail extension route, the mitigation provided by the proposed landscape bunding, and the context in terms of terrain and vegetation within the wider landscape.
- 6.6.12 In **section 6.4** of this chapter, the Ancient Estate Claylands and Estate Sandlands character types were identified as requiring detailed assessment.

Ancient estate claylands

- 6.6.13 As identified within the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (2008, revised 2011 (Ref. 6.17)), the site is located in the Ancient Estate Claylands LCT. The key characteristics are described as:
- *“Dissected Boulder Clay plateau.*
 - *Organic pattern of field enclosures.*
 - *Straight boundaries where influence of privately owned estates is strongest.*
 - *Enclosed former greens and commons.*
 - *Parklands.*
 - *WWII airfields.*
 - *Villages with dispersed hamlets and farmsteads.*
 - *Timber framed buildings.*
 - *Distinctive estate cottages.*

- *Ancient semi-natural woodland”.*

6.6.14 The Guidance Note supporting the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.17) describes the forces of change acting upon this landscape, and the likely impacts on the landscape. This primarily advises on the potential to accommodate developments such as new residential areas or recreational uses but notes that *“In addition to new planting to mitigate the impact of a development, the option to modify the management of existing hedgerows should also be explored. There are often significant opportunities to retain these boundary features at a specific height.”* The Suffolk Coastal District Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.18) also notes that the *“unspoilt, quiet, and essentially undeveloped rural character of the area”* are elements of the character which are more susceptible to adverse effects from development, despite the ‘estate feel’ in this character area being weaker than in other parts of east Suffolk. Given these indications, the character type is judged to be of medium susceptibility.

6.6.15 The Guidance Note (Ref. 6.17) also prescribes landscape management guidelines, which should inform any development proposals and mitigation measures and have been taken into account in the site selection and design of the proposed development. These are:

- *“Reinforce the historic pattern of sinuous field boundaries.*
- *Recognise localised areas of late enclosure hedges when restoring and planting hedgerows.*
- *Maintain and restore greens and commons.*
- *Maintain and increase the stock of hedgerow trees.*
- *Restore, maintain and enhance the historic parklands and the elements within them.*
- *Maintain the extent, and improve the condition, of woodland cover with effective management.*
- *Maintain and restore the stock of moats and ponds in this landscape.”*

6.6.16 The site and immediate surroundings lie outside both the AONB, which covers the more coastal and heathland zone east of Leiston, and the SLAs, which relate more to the valley character types rather than the plateau as

shown by **Figure 6.1** and **Figure 6.3**. The character type is of community value as set out in **section 6.4** of this chapter. Considering the susceptibility and value together, the character area is judged to be of medium to low sensitivity.

- 6.6.17** The site and surroundings are generally typical of the character type, although features such as enclosed former greens and commons, parklands and estate cottages are less prevalent in this part of the character type and none are present within the site. The characteristic organic field boundaries around the site and the dissected plateau landform would partially screen and filter views of the proposed landscape bunds, which are themselves atypical features, but would also provide further screening.
- 6.6.18** As described above, the short-term effects during construction would be large scale within the limited extent of the site, where there would be direct effects on the character of the landscape from the introduction of the construction activity associated with the proposed rail extension route. Medium scale effects, where the nearby presence of construction machinery and eventually the proposed rail extension route, would occur in the adjacent fields, extending to the boundaries created by Abbey Lane to the north and west and the rear gardens of properties along the B1122 (Abbey Road) and the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to the east and south; affecting a localised extent. These effects would be of medium magnitude, and are assessed to be moderate adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.
- 6.6.19** As noted above, there would also be short-term, small scale effects north of Abbey Lane within the ZVI and between the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and Saxmundham Road. These limited effects would be of negligible magnitude and are assessed to be minimal adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**, as would effects on the remainder of the character type.

Estate Sandlands

- 6.6.20** As identified within the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (2008, revised 2011 (Ref. 6.17)), the eastern edge of the site is located in the Estate Sandlands LCT. The key characteristics are described as:
- *“Flat or very gently rolling plateaux of free-draining sandy soils, overlying drift deposits of either glacial or fluvial origin;”*

- *Chalky in parts of the Brecks, but uniformly acid and sandy in the south-east;*
- *Absence of watercourses;*
- *Extensive areas of heathland or acid grassland;*
- *Strongly geometric structure of fields enclosed in the 18th & 19th century;*
- *Large continuous blocks of commercial forestry; Characteristic ‘pine lines’ especially, but not solely, in the Brecks;*
- *Widespread planting of tree belts and rectilinear plantations;*
- *Generally a landscape without ancient woodland, but there are some isolated and very significant exceptions;*
- *High incidence of relatively late, estate type, brick buildings;*
- *North-west slate roofs with white or yellow bricks. Flint is also widely used as a walling material; and*
- *On the coast red brick with pan-tiled roofs, often black-glazed”.*

6.6.21 The Guidance Note supporting the Suffolk Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.17) describes the forces of change acting upon this landscape, and the likely impacts on the landscape. This primarily advises on the potential to accommodate developments such as new residential areas but notes that *“In respect of visual impact the regular nature of this landscape means that it does have more potential capacity to accept significant settlement expansion than the ancient countryside of the claylands.”* The Suffolk Coastal District Landscape Character Assessment (Ref. 6.18) also notes that the *“the network of pine lines, tree belts and pattern of small plantations”* are elements of the character which are more susceptible to adverse effects from development. Given these indications, the character type is judged to be of medium to low susceptibility.

6.6.22 The Guidance Note (Ref. 6.17) also prescribes landscape management guidelines, which should inform any development proposals and mitigation

measures and have been taken into account in the site selection and design of the proposed rail extension route. These are:

- *“Reinforce the historic pattern of regular boundaries.*
- *Restore, maintain and enhance the pattern of locally distinctive ‘pine lines’.*
- *Restore, maintain and enhance the network of tree belts and pattern of small plantations found across much of this landscape type.*
- *Extend the cover of heathland paying particular attention to areas of commercial forestry as these have lower nutrients and a residual seed bank.*
- *Develop opportunities for locally distinctive species such as the rare Brecks plants.*
- *Protect distinctive geomorphology such as patterned ground.”*

6.6.23 As within the Ancient Estate Claylands, the site and immediate surroundings lie outside both the AONB, which covers the more coastal and heathland zone east of Leiston, and the Special Landscape Areas, which relate more to the valley character types rather than the plateau as shown by **Figure 6.1** and **Figure 6.3**. The character type is of community value as defined by the criteria in **section 6.4** of this chapter. Considering the susceptibility and value together, the character area is judged to be of medium to low sensitivity.

6.6.24 The area to the east of the site is generally typical of the character type, although the landform is more valley sides than a plateau immediately adjacent to the site. The characteristic blocks of commercial forestry, tree belts and rectilinear plantations would partially screen and filter views of the proposed landscape bunds, which would themselves be atypical features, but would also provide further screening.

6.6.25 As described above, the short-term effects would be large scale within the limited extent of the site and medium scale in the adjacent fields to the boundaries created by Abbey Lane to the north and the rear gardens of properties along the B1122 (Abbey Road) to the east, affecting a limited extent. These effects would be of medium to low magnitude and are assessed to be slight adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.

6.6.26 As noted above, there would also be short-term, small scale effects north of Abbey Lane within the ZVI and around the existing junction of B1122 (Abbey Road) and Lover’s Lane. These limited effects would be of negligible magnitude and are assessed to be minimal adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**, as would effects on the remainder of the character type.

iii. Visual Receptors

6.6.27 Annotated photographs and visualisations are shown on **Figures 6.5 to 6.14** supporting this landscape and visual assessment. The method of visualisation selected for each viewpoint has been informed by Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19 Visual representation. Representative viewpoints 1 and 5 have been produced as photowire visualisations (see **Figures 6.13 and 6.14**), in agreement with landscape and visual assessment consultees. Further detail about the visualisation methodology is provided in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES** (Doc Ref. 6.2).

6.6.28 The viewpoint description, description of effects and scale of effect for each viewpoint (see **Figure 6.4** for locations) is set out on the relevant photograph (see **Figures 6.5 to 6.12**). The scale of effect at each viewpoint is summarised in **Table 6.11** below:

Table 6.11: Summary of scale of effects on representative viewpoints

View-point	Location	Approximate Distance/ Direction from Proposed Rail Extension Route Site	Scale of Effect Beneficial, Neutral, Adverse
R1	Leiston Abbey (from top of ruins) looking south	235m, north.	Small Adverse
R2	Footpath E-363/010/0	260m, east.	Medium Adverse
R3	Footpath E-363/006/0	350m, east.	Medium Adverse
R4	Footpath E-363/003/0 near Fisher's Farm	275m, west.	Medium Adverse
R5	Footpath E-363/006/0	Adjacent to the north of site.	Large-Medium Adverse
R6	Footpath E-363/030/0 to Leiston Common	1.2km, east.	Negligible Neutral
R7	Saxmundham Road along permissive footpath	300m, south.	Negligible Neutral

- 6.6.29 Each of the viewpoints is a ‘sample’ of the potential effects, representing a wide range of receptors – including not only those actually at the viewpoint, but also those nearby, at a similar distance and/or direction. In addition, the six illustrative viewpoints (I1-I6) help to confirm the extents of likely visibility. Illustrative viewpoints are provided purely for reference to further ‘illustrate’ observations and judgements made within this landscape and visual assessment. Illustrative viewpoints, which do not contain a description of visual effects, are included within **Appendix 6A** of this volume.
- 6.6.30 From these viewpoints, and the illustrative viewpoints included within **Appendix 6A** of this volume it can be seen that:
- The extent of large-scale visual effects, where the construction of the proposed rail extension route would form a major alteration to key elements, features, qualities and characteristics of the view such that the baseline would be fundamentally changed, would be limited to locations within or immediately adjacent to the site.
 - Medium scale visual effects during construction would be experienced within the boundaries created by B1122 (Abbey Road), Abbey Lane and Saxmundham Road/the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line. Within this area there would generally be open views of construction and when completed, the proposed rail extension route passing through the centre of the area.
 - Effects would reduce to small scale beyond the vegetation and built form along the boundaries created by B1122 (Abbey Road), Abbey Lane and Saxmundham Road/the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line. In particular, the vegetation would soften and/or screen the presence of construction equipment and the emerging bunds and fencing, as well as restricting views of any taller construction equipment and eventually the lighting columns at the proposed level crossings above the vegetation and landscape bunds.
 - Beyond approximately 300m from the boundaries created by B1122 (Abbey Road), Abbey Lane and Saxmundham Road/the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line, the scale of effects would reduce to negligible, as demonstrated by illustrative viewpoints 1 and 3 in **Appendix 6A** of this volume. The combination of topography, the landscape bunds and vegetation around the site; and increasing distance and layers of vegetation within the landscape combine to limit

views to occasional glimpses of any taller construction equipment and eventually the lighting columns at the proposed level crossings.

Receptor groups

- 6.6.31 Local residents and users of recreational routes and roads are judged to have high-medium sensitivity as set out above and within **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.
- 6.6.32 Group 1 – Residents of and visitors to Leiston at their properties, driving through the settlement and using open space/footways/cycle routes within Leiston. This receptor group covers residents of and visitors to Leiston. Representative viewpoints 2 and 3 (**Figures 6.6** and **6.7**) and the photowire for representative viewpoint 2 (**Figure 6.6**) represent views from the western edge of the settlement, closest to the site, where effects would be medium scale and adverse in those locations where there are open views towards the proposed development. These localised effects would be of low magnitude, and are assessed to be minimal adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**. Viewpoint 7 (**Figure 6.16**) and the corresponding photowire (**Figure 6.17**) demonstrate views in the vicinity of a consented residential development (application reference DC/16/1961/OUT) that would extend Leiston. Illustrative viewpoint 6 in **Appendix 6A** of this volume demonstrates views from areas closer to the centre of Leiston, which are often obstructed by built form or intervening vegetation even during the winter. These effects would be negligible as existing vegetation and built form would obstruct visibility of the construction of the proposed rail extension route. These short-term effects would be of negligible magnitude, and are assessed to be minimal adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.
- 6.6.33 Group 2 – Users of public footpaths E-363/003/0, E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0, which currently cross the site. This group of receptors includes people using footpaths that currently cross the site. These routes provide connections out from Leiston to the Cakes and Ale camping site north-west of Abbey Lane and to Leiston Abbey, as well as out into the wider countryside. All these routes would require diversion as part of the proposed development, with footpath E-363/003/0 diverted via the level crossing over Buckleswood Road and footpaths E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0 diverted around the eastern edge of the site and via the B1122 (Abbey Road) level crossing. However, as indicated in **Chapter 8** of this volume, of the three routes, only E-363/010/0 is used relatively regularly (reported as an average of three users per hour). Viewpoints 2, 3, 4 and 5 represent views from these routes and indicate that effects would range from large scale and adverse where the routes run across the site and are

consequently diverted alongside the site boundaries; to medium scale and adverse closer to the boundaries created by Abbey Lane and the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line. These short-term effects would be of localised extent and would be of medium magnitude, and are assessed to be major-moderate adverse, which is considered to be **significant**.

6.6.34 Group 3 – Users of footpaths E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0 north of Abbey Lane and bridleway E-363/013/0, visitors to Leiston Abbey and motorists using minor roads to the north and north-east of the site within 800m. This group of receptors includes people using footpaths north of Abbey Lane and the bridleway along Lover’s Lane, as well as visitors to Leiston Abbey and drivers on the northern stretches of both B1122 (Abbey Road) and Abbey Lane. Viewpoint 1 (**Figure 6.5**) represents views from this receptor group, with a corresponding photowire (**Figure 6.13**), and illustrative viewpoint 4 in **Appendix 6A** of this volume demonstrating ground level views from much of this group, which are often obstructed by intervening vegetation even during the winter. These viewpoints indicate that from the elevated locations within Leiston Abbey effects would be small scale and adverse, but generally at ground level effects would be negligible and neutral. The exception to this would be where the proposed rail extension route crosses B1122 (Abbey Road) and there would be open views of the construction of the proposed level crossing (with the realigned Lover’s Lane junction within the main site beyond it), in the context of the existing road infrastructure, which would be medium scale effects that are adverse. These short-term effects would be of limited extent and would be of low magnitude, and are assessed to be slight adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.

6.6.35 Group 4 - Users of Footpath E-363/003/0 south of the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and the permissive footpath along the northern side of Saxmundham Road from the edge of Leiston to Highbury Cottages, visitors to Leiston Cemetery and drivers using Saxmundham Road. This group of receptors includes a range of different visual receptors. Viewpoint 7 represents views from this receptor group and indicates that effects would generally be negligible and neutral as only the tops of any taller construction equipment and eventually lighting columns associated with the proposed level crossings would be visible through or above the vegetation along the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line. These short-term effects would be of localised extent and would be of negligible magnitude, and are assessed to be minimal adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.

6.6.36 Group 5 - Local road users using Abbey Lane to the west of the site. This receptor group includes users of Abbey Lane only and illustrative viewpoints 2 and 5 in **Appendix 6A** of this volume demonstrate views from

limited locations along Abbey Lane where views towards the proposed rail extension route site are possible due to gaps in the roadside vegetation. From these more open locations, effects would be medium-small scale and adverse due to distance from the viewpoints, reducing to negligible scale and neutral where views towards the site are not possible due to intervening vegetation. These short-term effects would be of localised extent and would be of medium-low magnitude, and are assessed to be moderate adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.

Long distance routes

- 6.6.37 As discussed in **section 6.4** of this chapter, the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route and Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 42 follow the same alignment in the vicinity of the site and are the only long-distance routes through the study area that require detailed assessment. Users of these routes are of high-medium sensitivity (local/district value and medium susceptibility) as indicated by the methodology set out in **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**. Users of the cycle route would experience large-medium scale effects as they pass the construction of the proposed rail extension route at breaks in the vegetation along Abbey Lane closest to the site. These would be a very brief part of a longer journey and the short-term effects during construction would be of limited extent. The effects would be of medium-low magnitude, and are assessed to be moderate adverse, which is considered to be **not significant**.

Specific viewpoints

- 6.6.38 No specific viewpoints have been identified within the study area as requiring assessment.

Landscape designations and value

- 6.6.39 No landscape designations have been identified within the study area as requiring assessment.

iv. Inter-relationship effects

- 6.6.40 This section provides a description of the identified inter-relationship effects that are anticipated to occur on landscape and visual receptors between the individual environmental effects arising from construction of the proposed rail extension route.

- 6.6.41 Inter-relationships would arise from the proposed rail extension route on the landscape features, which also represent habitats that are evaluated in Terrestrial Ecology, **Chapter 7** of this volume. The Terrestrial Ecology

chapter has been referenced in order to inform some judgements concerning the impact to landscape fabric and features.

6.6.42 Cultural and historic designations/attributes have been considered as one of the contributory factors towards overall landscape value and susceptibility. However, the effects of the proposed rail extension route on the historic/cultural receptors are considered within **Chapter 9** of this volume.

6.6.43 In some cases, visual receptors are also recreational receptors assessed as part of the Amenity and Recreation Assessment within **Chapter 8** of this volume.

c) Operation

i. Landscape character

6.6.44 The general scale of effects on landscape character would be no worse than those experienced during the construction phase (as illustrated on **Figure 6.3**). As described in **Chapter 2** of this volume. during operation, the train movements along the proposed rail extension route would predominantly take place at night along the unlit route and therefore would generally have a lesser scale of effect than the preceding construction work. Any effects associated with the operation of the proposed rail extension route are set out below.

Ancient Estate Claylands

6.6.45 The key characteristics and landscape management guidelines for the Ancient Estate Claylands LCT remain as reported in the construction section above. The medium susceptibility and community value are judged to result in medium to low sensitivity.

6.6.46 The effects of the proposed rail extension route would be large scale within the limited extent of the site, where the site would change from open fields to the proposed rail extension route. Medium scale would occur in the fields immediately adjacent, up to the boundaries created by Abbey Lane to the north and west and the rear gardens of properties along the B1122 (Abbey Road) and the existing Saxmundham to Leiston branch line to the east and south where there would be an influence on the character of the landscape from the proximity of the proposed development and associated movement of trains. The medium to long-term effects would occur within a localised extent of the Ancient Estate Claylands LCT. These effects would be of

medium magnitude and would result in a moderate adverse effect that is considered to be **not significant**.

- 6.6.47 There would also be small scale effects north of Abbey Lane within the ZVI and between the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and Saxmundham Road. These medium to long-term, limited effects would be of negligible magnitude, and would result in a minimal neutral effect that is considered to be **not significant**, as would effects on the remainder of the character type.
- 6.6.48 **Appendix 6B.2** of this volume considers the effects of the lighting elements of the proposed rail extension route on the Ancient Estate Claylands LCT. The assessment indicates that the effects of lighting on the Ancient Estate Claylands LCT would be of low magnitude and would result in a slight adverse effect that is considered to be **not significant**.

Estate Sandlands

- 6.6.49 The key characteristics and landscape management guidelines for the Estate Sandlands LCT remain as reported in the construction section above. The medium susceptibility and community value are judged to result in medium to low sensitivity.
- 6.6.50 The effects of the proposed rail extension route would be large scale within the limited extent of the site, where the site would change from open fields to the proposed rail extension route. Medium scale would occur in the adjacent fields up to the boundaries created by Abbey Lane to the north and the rear gardens of properties along the B1122 (Abbey Road) to the east where there would be an influence on the character of the landscape from the proximity of the proposed development and associated movement of trains. The medium to long-term effects would occur within a localised extent of the Estate Sandlands LCT. These effects would be of medium magnitude and would result in a moderate adverse effect that is considered to be **not significant**.
- 6.6.51 There would also be small scale effects north of Abbey Lane within the ZVI and around the existing junction of Abbey Road and Lover's Lane. These medium to long-term, limited effects, as a result of the presence of the proposed development and associated train movements would be of negligible magnitude, and result in a minimal neutral effect that is considered to be **not significant**, as would effects on the remainder of the character type.
- 6.6.52 **Appendix 6B** of this volume considers the effects of the lighting elements of the proposed development on the Estate Sandlands LCT. The

assessment indicates that the effects of lighting on this Estate Sandlands LCT would be of negligible magnitude, and result in a minimal neutral effect that is considered to be **not significant** given the degree of artificial lighting already characteristic of this character type.

ii. Visual receptors

- 6.6.53 The general scale of visual effects remains as described in relation to the construction phase, due to the changes to views that would be introduced by the proposed development, unless indicated otherwise in the assessment below. Local residents and users of recreational routes and roads remain high-medium sensitivity, using the methodology as set out within **section 6.3** of this chapter and **Volume 1, Appendix 6I** of the **ES**.

Receptor groups

- 6.6.54 Group 1 – Residents of and visitors to Leiston at their properties, driving through the settlement and using open space/footways/cycle routes within Leiston. Effects during the operational period of the proposed rail extension route would continue to range from medium scale and adverse in those localised locations where there are open views towards the proposed rail extension route and the associated train movements, on the western edge of the settlement; to negligible scale where existing vegetation and built form would obstruct visibility of the proposed development. Where there would be views of the proposed rail extension route, these medium to long-term effects would be of medium magnitude, and result in moderate adverse effects that are considered to be **not significant**.
- 6.6.55 Group 2 – Users of Footpaths E-363/003/0, E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0, which currently cross the site. These footpaths would remain on their diverted routes between the landscape bunds and site boundaries during operation of the proposed rail extension route and their effects would continue to be large-medium scale and adverse within the site. The effects would reduce to medium scale and adverse at either end of the proposed rail extension route, close to Abbey Lane and the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line. These medium to long-term effects would be of localised extent and would remain of medium magnitude, and result in major-moderate adverse effects that are considered to be **significant**.
- 6.6.56 Group 3 – Users of Footpaths E-363/006/0 and E-363/010/0 north of Abbey Lane and Bridleway E-363/013/0, visitors to Leiston Abbey and motorists using minor roads to the north and north-east of the site within 800m. Viewpoint 1 represents views from this receptor group and indicates that from the elevated locations within Leiston Abbey effects would be small

scale and adverse, but generally at ground level effects would be negligible and neutral. The exception to this would be where the proposed rail extension route crosses B1122 (Abbey Road) and there would be open views of the proposed level crossing, in the context of the existing road infrastructure, which would be medium scale effects that are adverse. These medium to long-term effects would be of limited extent and would be of low magnitude, and result in a slight adverse effect that is considered to be **not significant**.

6.6.57 Group 4 - Users of Footpath E-363/003/0 south of the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line and the permissive footpath along the northern side of Saxmundham Road from the edge of Leiston to Highbury Cottages, visitors to Leiston Cemetery and drivers using Saxmundham Road. Viewpoint 7 represents views from this receptor group and indicates that effects would generally be negligible and neutral as only the tops of lighting columns at the proposed Buckleswood Road level crossing would be visible through or above the vegetation along the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line. These medium to long-term effects would be of localised extent and would be of negligible magnitude, and result in minimal neutral effects that are considered to be **not significant**.

6.6.58 Group 5 - Local road users using Abbey Lane to the west of the site. This receptor group includes users of Abbey Lane only and illustrative viewpoints 2 and 5 demonstrate views from limited locations along the road where views towards the site are possible due to gaps in the roadside vegetation. From these more open locations, effects would be medium-small scale and adverse due to the distance of the proposed rail extension route and the trains travelling along it from the viewpoints, reducing to negligible scale and neutral where views towards the site are not possible due to intervening vegetation. These medium to long-term effects would be of localised extent and would be of medium-low magnitude and would result in moderate adverse effects that are considered to be **not significant**.

6.6.59 **Appendix 6B** of this volume considers the visual effects of the lighting elements of the proposed development on the visual receptor groups at night. For all receptor groups, night time effects would be of negligible magnitude, and would result in minimal neutral effects that are considered to be **not significant**. The exceptions to this would be for motorists using Saxmundham Road and Abbey Lane to the south-west and west of the site, where effects would be of medium-low magnitude, and would result in slight adverse effects that are considered to be **not significant** and low magnitude for motorists using Buckleswood Road, and would result in slight adverse effects that are considered to be **not significant** due to the introduction of the proposed lighting of the level crossings.

Long distance routes

- 6.6.60 As discussed in **section 6.4** of this chapter, the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route and Sustrans Regional Cycle Route 42 follow the same alignment in the vicinity of the site and are the only long-distance routes through the study area that require detailed assessment. Users of these routes remain of high-medium sensitivity. Users of the cycle route would experience large-medium scale effects as they pass the proposed rail extension route, at breaks in the vegetation along Abbey Lane closest to the site. These would be a brief part of a longer journey and the medium to long-term effects would be of limited extent. The effects would be of medium-low magnitude and would result in moderate adverse effects that are considered to be **not significant**.
- 6.6.61 **Appendix 6B** of this volume considers the visual effects of the lighting elements of the proposed development on users of these cycle routes. The assessment indicates that the effects of lighting on these cyclists would be of low magnitude, resulting in a slight adverse effect (**not significant**).

Specific viewpoints

- 6.6.62 No specific viewpoints have been identified within the study area as requiring assessment.

Landscape designations and value

- 6.6.63 No landscape designations have been identified within the study area as requiring assessment.

iii. Inter-relationship effects

- 6.6.64 This section provides a description of the identified inter-relationship effects that are anticipated to occur on landscape and visual receptors between the individual environmental effects arising from operation of the proposed rail extension route.
- 6.6.65 Inter-relationships would arise from the proposed rail extension route on the landscape features, which also represent habitats that are evaluated in **Chapter 7** of this volume. The Terrestrial Ecology chapter has been referenced in order to inform some judgements concerning the impact to landscape fabric and features.
- 6.6.66 Cultural and historic designations/attributes have been considered as one of the contributory factors towards overall landscape value and susceptibility. However, the effects of the proposed rail extension route on

the historic/cultural receptors are considered within **Chapter 9** of this volume.

6.6.67 In some cases, visual receptors are also recreational receptors assessed as part of the Amenity and Recreation Assessment within **Chapter 8** of this volume.

d) **Removal and reinstatement**

6.6.68 As described in **Chapter 2** of this volume, the reinstatement of the proposed rail extension route would involve works to clear the site and replace the soil previously stored within the landscape bunds. The removal and reinstatement works would take approximately five months. It is anticipated that removal and site reinstatement would follow a programme broadly the reverse of construction and involve the movement of demolition plant and vehicles, storage of materials, task lighting and gradual transformation of the site to remove the proposed rail extension route and level crossings (but not the junction between the realigned Lover's Lane and the B1122 (Abbey Road)) and return the site to existing use.

6.6.69 Given that the removal and reinstatement phase would follow a programme broadly the reverse of construction, the effects of the removal and reinstatement works would not be notably different from the construction effects. The judgements relating to the significance of effects on the different landscape and visual receptor groups are assessed to be the same as for construction, with significant effects assessed to occur for receptor group 2 only as a result of the visibility of demolition plant, vehicles and activity to remove the proposed rail extension route in close proximity. A full summary of effects during removal and reinstatement phase is provided at **Table 6.14**.

6.6.70 This section provides a description of the identified inter-relationship effects that are anticipated to occur on landscape and visual receptors between the individual environmental effects arising from removal and reinstatement of the proposed rail extension route.

6.6.71 Inter-relationships would arise from the proposed development on the landscape features, which also represent habitats that are evaluated in **Chapter 7** of this volume. The Terrestrial Ecology chapter has been referenced in order to inform some judgements concerning the impact to landscape fabric and features.

6.6.72 Cultural and historic designations/attributes have been considered as one of the contributory factors towards overall landscape value and

susceptibility. However, the effects of the development on the historic/cultural receptors are considered within **Chapter 9** of this volume.

6.6.73 In some cases, visual receptors are also recreational receptors assessed as part of the Amenity and Recreation Assessment within **Chapter 8** of this volume.

6.7 Mitigation and monitoring

a) Introduction

6.7.1 Primary and tertiary mitigation measures which have been accounted for as part of the assessment are summarised in **section 6.5** of this chapter. Where other mitigation is required to reduce or avoid an adverse significant effect, this is referred to as secondary mitigation and where reasonably practicable, secondary mitigation measures have been proposed.

6.7.2 No secondary mitigation measures are proposed for the landscape and visual assessment, given that the Sizewell C Project is not intended to be permanent and that diversion of public footpaths that run through the site cannot be avoided. However, this section describes the proposed monitoring required of specific receptors/resources or for the effectiveness of a mitigation measure. The requirements, scope, frequency and duration of a given monitoring regime are set out, as far as possible, in this section.

b) Monitoring

6.7.3 The proposed planting would require maintenance and management during the lifetime of the proposed rail extension route, with replacement of plant failures during the first few years of establishment (usually 5 years) as required.

6.8 Proposed rail improvement works

6.8.1 As identified in **section 6.3** of this chapter, the Saxmundham to Leiston branch line upgrades are not considered to have the potential to result in significant environmental effects during their construction or operation and therefore none have been assessed in further detail.

6.9 Residual effects

6.9.1 The following tables (**Table 6.12**, **Table 6.13** and **6.14**) present a summary of the landscape and visual impact assessment. They identify the receptor/s likely to be impacted, the level of effect and, where the effect is

deemed to be significant, the tables include the mitigation proposed and the resulting residual effect.

Table 6.12: Summary of effects for the construction phase

Receptor	Impact	Primary Tertiary Mitigation	or	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
Landscape Character						
Ancient Estate Claylands	Effects on character type within the site and up to Abbey Lane, the branch line and properties along Abbey Road.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	or	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
	Effects on remainder of character type.	Retention of existing vegetation.	or	Minimal adverse	None	Minimal adverse (not significant)
Estate Sandlands	Effects on character type within the site and up to Abbey Lane and properties along Abbey Road.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	or	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)
	Effects on character type north of Abbey Lane and around the junction of Abbey Road and Lover's Lane.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	or	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Visual Receptors						
Group 1: Residents of and visitors to Leiston.	Views of construction activity from edges of the settlement, progressing towards occasional views of level crossings and associated lighting from limited locations.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	or	Minimal adverse	None	Minimal adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
Group 2: Users of recreational routes that currently cross the site.	Change of views for the sections of the routes that are diverted. Views of construction activity, progressing towards views of the track and level crossings and associated lighting.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Major-moderate adverse	None	Major-moderate adverse (significant)
Group 3: Users of recreational routes, visitors to Leiston Abbey and motorists using minor roads, to the north and north-east of the site within 800m.	Glimpsed views of construction activity through vegetation and over along Abbey Lane. Views of construction of level crossing and track at Abbey Road.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)
Group 4: Users of recreational routes and Saxmundham Road to the south of the site within 350m.	Views of construction activity, progressing towards views of top of proposed lighting columns at Buckleswood Road level crossing. Glimpses of bunds and fencing through existing vegetation.	Retention of existing vegetation to screen and filter views.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Group 5: Local road users using Abbey Lane to the west of	Views of construction activity, progressing towards views of	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of bunding to	Moderate, adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
the site.	track, bunds and fencing, as well as level crossing and associated lighting columns.	screen and filter views.			
Users of the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route and Sustrans Regional Cycle Route.	Views of construction activity, progressing towards views of track, bunds and fencing, as well as level crossing and associated lighting columns.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of bunding to screen and filter views.	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)

Table 6.13: Summary of effects for the operational phase

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
Landscape Character					
Ancient Estate Claylands	Effects on character type within the site and up to Abbey Lane, the branch line and properties along Abbey Road.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
	Effects on remainder of character type.	Retention of existing vegetation.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
	Night-time effects on character type.	Retention of existing vegetation; bunding and proposed planting to screen and filter views. Best practice approach to lighting design.	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Impact	Primary Tertiary Mitigation	or	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
Estate Sandlands	Effects on character type within the site and up to Abbey Lane and properties along Abbey Road.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	of	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
	Effects on character type north of Abbey Lane and around the junction of Abbey Road and Lover's Lane.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	of	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
	Night-time effects on character type.	Retention of existing vegetation; bunding and proposed planting to screen and filter views. Best practice approach to lighting design.	of	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Visual Receptors						
Group 1: Residents of and visitors to Leiston.	Views of trains, bunds and fencing along route from edges of the settlement, with occasional views of level crossings and associated lighting from limited locations.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	of	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
	Visibility of proposed lighting at night.	Best practice approach to lighting design.		Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Group 2: Users of recreational routes that	Change of views for the sections of the routes that are diverted.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of	of	Major-moderate adverse	None	Major-moderate adverse

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
currently cross the site.	Views of trains, bunds and fencing along route, with occasional views of the track and level crossings and associated lighting.	landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.			(significant)
	Visibility of proposed lighting at night.	Best practice approach to lighting design.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Group 3: Users of recreational routes, visitors to Leiston Abbey and motorists using minor roads, to the north and north-east of the site within 800m.	Glimpsed views of trains and bunds through and over vegetation along Abbey Lane. Views of level crossing and track at Abbey Road.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)
	Visibility of proposed lighting at night.	Best practice approach to lighting design.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Group 4: Users of recreational routes and Saxmundham Road to the south of the site within 350m.	Views of top of proposed lighting columns at Buckleswood Road level crossing. Glimpses of trains, bunds and fencing through existing vegetation.	Retention of existing vegetation to screen and filter views.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
	Visibility of proposed lighting at night.	Best practice approach to lighting design.	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)
Group 5: Local road users using	Views of trains, track, bunds and fencing, as well	Retention of existing vegetation and	Moderate, adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
Abbey Lane to the west of the site.	as level crossing and associated lighting columns.	introduction of bunding to screen and filter views.			significant)
	Visibility of proposed lighting at night.	Best practice approach to lighting design.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Users of the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route and Sustrans Regional Cycle Route.	Views of trains, track, bunds and fencing, as well as level crossing and associated lighting columns.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of bunding to screen and filter views.	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
	Visibility of proposed lighting at night.	Best practice approach to lighting design.	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)

Table 6.14: Summary of effects for the removal and reinstatement phase

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
Landscape Character					
Ancient Estate Claylands	Effects on character type within the site and up to Abbey Lane, the branch line and properties along Abbey Road.	Retention of existing and proposed vegetation where possible, and landscape bunds to screen and filter views, to remain until late in the removal and reinstatement phase.	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
	Effects on remainder of character type.	Retention of existing vegetation.	Minimal adverse	None	Minimal adverse (not significant)
Estate Sandlands	Effects on character type	Retention of existing	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
	within the site and up to Abbey Lane and properties along Abbey Road.	vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.			significant)
	Effects on character type north of Abbey Lane and around the junction of Abbey Road and Lover's Lane.	Retention of existing vegetation; landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Visual Receptors					
Group 1: Residents of and visitors to Leiston.	Views of construction activity associated with removal and reinstatement works from edges of the settlement.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Minimal adverse	None	Minimal adverse (not significant)
Group 2: Users of recreational routes that currently cross the site.	Views of construction activity associated with removal and reinstatement works, and reinstatement of original footpath alignments.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Major-moderate adverse	None	Major-moderate adverse (significant)
Group 3: Users of recreational routes, visitors to Leiston Abbey and motorists using minor roads, to the north and north-east of the site within	Glimpsed views of construction activity associated with removal and reinstatement works through vegetation and over along Abbey Lane, including at level crossing and proposed rail extension route	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of landscaped bunds to screen and filter views.	Slight adverse	None	Slight adverse (not significant)

Receptor	Impact	Primary or Tertiary Mitigation	Assessment of Effects	Additional Mitigation	Residual Effects
800m.	at Abbey Road.				
Group 4: Users of recreational routes and Saxmundham Road to the south of the site within 350m.	Views of construction activity associated with removal and reinstatement works.	Retention of existing vegetation to screen and filter views.	Minimal neutral	None	Minimal neutral (not significant)
Group 5: Local road users using Abbey Lane to the west of the site.	Views of construction activity associated with removal and reinstatement works.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of bunding to screen and filter views.	Moderate, adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)
Users of the Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route and Sustrans Regional Cycle Route.	Views of construction activity associated with removal and reinstatement works.	Retention of existing vegetation and introduction of bunding to screen and filter views.	Moderate adverse	None	Moderate adverse (not significant)

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