LIZ LAKE
ASSOCIATES
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

# Land at Camsiscan Farm, Craigie, Kilmarnock South BESS Project (Scottish Stability)

for Scot Stability Ltd.

November 2022

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Liz Lake Associates have been commissioned by Noriker Power Ltd on behalf of Scot Stability Ltd (The Client), to prepare a report for ''Land at Camsiscan Farm, Craigie, Kilmarnock South, BESS Project (Scottish Stability)", to be referred to hereafter as 'the Site'. This report has been prepared for the benefit of the Client and the contents should not be relied upon by others without the express written authority of Liz Lake Associates. If any unauthorised third party makes use of this report they do so at their own risk and Liz Lake Associates owe them no duty of care or skill.

1.1.2 The report considers the existing baseline conditions and seeks to identify the relevant landscape and visual issues applicable to the Site. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken to assess the likely effects upon the landscape resource, specific views and visual amenity.

1.1.3 A site visit has been undertaken to appraise the character and condition of the Site and the landscape context, and to identify key visual receptors. The assessment was undertaken by an experienced Chartered Landscape Architect once the scheme was sufficiently developed. The weather was clear and bright with a few patches of cloud and good visibility.

1.1.4 All photographs were taken with a digital camera, a Canon EOS 6D (a Full Frame Sensor camera) with a 50mm Focal Length prime lens, in accordance with the guidance contained within LI Technical Guidance Note 06/19.

1.1.5 Liz Lake Associates is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy with over 30 years' experience of master planning, landscape, ecology, urban design, heritage, and environmental impact assessment. The company is a registered practice of the Landscape Institute.

# 2 METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 An LVIA of the Site and the development proposals has been prepared, encompassing the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (GLVIA 3) third edition (published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013), and 'Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland' (published by the Countryside Agency and Scottish National Heritage 2002) and the more recent 'An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Christine Tudor, 2014. In summary, the approach combines information and desktop reviews with on-site surveys and appraisal.

2.1.2 The Site based assessment involves the recording of both objective description and subjective impressions of the landscape / townscape, as well as details of the existing landscape condition. It includes an assessment of the extent and nature of views to and from the Site and the type of receptors that experience these views.

2.1.3 The following relevant studies and documents have been considered as part of the desk-based review and subsequent assessment:

- Scottish Natural Heritage (National) Landscape Character Assessment (2019)
- Ayrshire (County) Landscape Character Assessment (Review) (1998)
- South Ayrshire (District) Landscape Wind Capacity Study (Carol Anderson Landscape Associates, 2013)
- East Ayrshire (District) Landscape Wind Capacity Study (2018)

2.1.4 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the proposed scheme has been based upon the proposals illustrated on drawings prepared by consultants on behalf of the client, including a Landscape Strategy Plan by Liz Lake Associates.

# 3 EXISTING SITUATION

## 3.1 Context

3.1.1 The Site is located approximately 3km to the southeast of Kilmarnock in the northeastern part of South Ayrshire, and close to the boundary with East Ayrshire District. The village of Craigie lies approximately 2km to the west, with the A719 road to the south of the Site, running between the County town of Ayr on the west coast and the interchange at 'Crossroads' on the A76, lying to the northeast, and on to the A71 at Galston.

3.1.2 The Site forms part of the agricultural lowland landscape in South Ayrshire, which is an extensive tract of land extending from Ayr, extending around the southern edge of Kilmarnock into East Ayrshire. It is an undulating pastoral landscape lying at c.105m AOD that is incised by the small-scale wooded river valley to the east, Cressnock Water (within which also lies the Carnell Estate 1km away), a tributary which flows into the River Irvine near Hurlford, east of Kilmarnock.

3.1.3 The wider landscape contains a number of features, including infrastructure elements and energy production. HMP Kilmarnock, Kilmarnock South Substation forming a termination point for numerous overhead wires and pylons that cross the landscape (including the Site), a number of locations have small scale wind turbines (e.g. adjacent to East Mosside Farm), as well as long views towards larger scale windfarms which are present in the landscape and form a backdrop in skyline views to the east of Kilmarnock.

## 3.2 Published Landscape Character Assessments

3.2.1 A brief summary of the published landscape character assessments in the context of the Site is detailed below.

### *National Character Area*

3.2.2 The Site lies in the Scottish Natural Heritage National Landscape Character Assessment, LCT66: Agricultural Lowlands - Ayrshire. The Agricultural Lowlands -

Ayrshire LCT occurs in five places focussed on the northern half of Ayrshire. It covers a large area, including most of the Ayrshire Basin to the north of Kilwinning and Irvine. It comprises inland areas on the mainland between the coastal edge and higher moorland to the east.[1]

3.2.3 The NLCA profile gives the following as a general description for the area:

*"Landform: The Agricultural Lowlands - Ayrshire Landscape Character Type forms extensive areas of agricultural lowland which occupy much of the Ayrshire Basin. Lying between about 10 metres and 150 metres, the area's geology is dominated by coal measures, though basalt, sandstones, limestone's, millstone grit and volcanic intrusions are also present. The landform is surprisingly complex and variable, dissected by many burns and streams draining to incised main river valleys to create an undulating lowland landscape. There is a gentle increase in height from the coastal fringe to the more abrupt transition to upland.*

*Landcover: Landcover is predominantly pastoral, though with some arable areas on lower and better soils. Cattle, sheep and ley grassland are common. North of Kilmarnock, a number of place names include the term 'moss', reflecting the presence of peat bogs and mires. While many of these have been drained and reclaimed for agriculture, some areas of peatland remain such as the more elevated areas close to the North Ayrshire/East Ayrshire border. Fields within this landscape type, probably dating back to the 18th or 19th Century, are often small to medium in scale, regular in shape, and enclosed by beech or hawthorn hedges. For the most part, the hedges are intact and in good condition. Many field boundaries are also marked by mature hedgerow trees. Again, beech trees predominate. These trees give the landscape a surprisingly wooded character, often forming avenues along minor roads. In places this structure has begun to decline as trees have been felled and not replaced. More extensive woodland is limited, concentrated in river valleys and formed into shelter belts in some of the more exposed areas, or around large estates.*

[1] SNH National Landscape Character Assessment LCT 66 Agricultural Lowlands - Ayrshire pg.1

*Settlement: The area's settlement pattern is historic in origin. Unlike Highland areas where a system of joint-tenancy land holding prevailed, resulting in the creation of villages and hamlets, the typical lowland settlement system was based upon larger, more self-contained farmsteads with a hinterland of fields. Many existing farms are on historic sites, though buildings are invariably newer and old field systems lost beneath more recent enclosures. Farms are often sited on low hills and ridges, typically comprising a courtyard with the farmhouse at the centre. Buildings are often limewashed with slate roofs and black painted woodwork. More modern farm buildings, including sheds and barns are rarely intrusive, often dark red or green in colour. It is less densely settled in the broader valleys and Craigs of Kyle than in the south eastern part of the Ayrshire Lowlands at the transition with the more expansive simple uplands.*

*A number of towns and villages are found throughout the lowlands, again many with medieval or earlier origins. Examples include Tarbolton and Kilmarnock. Invariably, the historic cores of such settlements are surrounded with more modern development. This often comprises standard municipal or suburban designs (white render and orange pantiles) which reflect neither the character of the historic core or the surrounding landscape. There is a fragmented pattern of large buildings, roads, transmission lines and other infrastructure on the urban fringes of Ayr, Prestwick and Kilmarnock. This creates visual clutter and intrusion into the lowlands. Field enclosure and woodland patterns are weaker in these areas.*

*Several major road corridors cross this landscape type, principally the A77 between Glasgow and Ayr, but also the A735, A736 and the A76. The A77 in particular has been upgraded over time and it now comprises a dual carriageway route for much of its length. There is inevitably a degree of conflict between the pastoral character of this landscape type and the presence of a major road carrying heavy traffic. There have been few successful attempts to tie the improved roads into the structure of the landscape.*

*This landscape type also contains a dense network of minor roads many of which are very rural in character. Where recent improvements have taken place, modern*

*kerbing has sometimes been introduced at the road edge, introducing an urban feature into the rural landscape. Signage can have a similar effect. On the other hand, Ayrshire retains a large number of milestones which should be retained.*

*Perception: The Agricultural Lowlands - Ayrshire provide a simple rural setting to larger settlements like Troon, as well as the foreground to views to the Firth of Clyde and Arran from roads and settlements. This small to medium scale landscape has a diverse landscape character which ranges from very rural areas to a more fragmented landscape where modern development and transport corridors have eroded the character. Views tend to be informed by the local topography and landcover. From certain areas views open up towards the Firth of Clyde and Arran to the west and the Plateau Moorlands often form a simple, flat horizon in longer distance views to the east however, views of the operational Whitelee Wind Farm and its extensions have somewhat complicated this skyline. The southern hills of Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park provide an immediate backdrop to the western part of this Landscape Character Type."*[2]

3.2.4 The key characteristics of the LCT Agricultural Lowlands – Ayrshire are:

- *"Complex landform, gently increasing in height from the coastal fringe, dissected by many burns and streams draining to incised main river valleys to create an undulating lowland landscape.*
- *Geology dominated by coal measures, though basalt, sandstones, limestones, millstone grit and volcanic intrusions are also present.*
- *Generally small to medium scale landscape.*
- *Landcover is predominantly pastoral, with some arable on lower and better soils.*
- *Fields often regular in shape and enclosed by beech or hawthorn hedges, with mature hedgerow trees giving the landscape a surprisingly wooded character.*
- *Settlement pattern historic in origin based upon larger, more self-contained farmsteads set in a hinterland of fields.*

[2] SNH National Landscape Character Assessment LCT 66 Agricultural Lowlands - Ayrshire pg.2 & 3

- *Number of larger towns and villages with historic cores surrounded by more modern development.*
- *Several major road corridors creating a degree of conflict between the rural character and presence of heavy traffic.*
- *Dense network of often very rural minor roads.*
- *Varying landscape character which ranges from very rural to more fragmented and developed landscapes on urban fringes.*
- *Views tend to be dictated by the local topography and landcover*".[3]

3.2.5 This is a national scale assessment and provides a useful overview of landscape character on a broad scale, although it is recognised that district scale landscape character assessment will assist further in relation to LVIA for development proposals at a more local scale.

*Regional/ County Landscape Character Assessment*

3.2.6 An older document forming part of a SNH review of the landscape of the County of Ayrshire (1998), shows that in broad (Regional) landscape terms, the Site lies in Regional Area 2: Ayrshire Basin. In general terms the basin is a place where,

"*…the landscape is lower and less complex, comprising an extensive basin focused on the coastal town of Ayr, and enclosed by a semi-circle of plateau moorlands and foothills which mark the watershed between Ayrshire and the Clyde and Lanark basins. Although areas of arable cultivation are found on better land along the coast, it is pastoral farming which characterises much of the basin. The area retains a dense network of hedges, hedgerow trees and small fields. Stone farmhouses crown low hills in the undulating basin. In combination, these characteristics create a pastoral landscape which is more intact than many of the parts of England with which Ayrshire is often compared*"[4]

3.2.7 The Ayrshire basin comprises,

*".....the extensive semi-circle of lowland focused on the county town of Ayr. The area is bounded to the north by the Renfrew heights, and to the east and south by the*

[3] SNH National Landscape Character Assessment LCT 66 Agricultural Lowlands - Ayrshire pg.1
[4] Ayrshire LCA, 1998, paras 17 and 18, page v.

*Ayrshire Rim and Carrick Hills and Valleys. The basin varies in elevation, draining from east to west. However, it is the pattern of land use and settlement which provides the area's distinctive character. Compared with surrounding areas, the Ayrshire basin is heavily populated with a dense network of settlements and roads. The principal land use is dairy farming, resulting in the survival of the framework of hedges and hedgerow trees. The basin is cut by a series of narrow river valleys which have become incised as the land has risen relative to the sea".*

*"Draining the basin are a series of river valleys. In their upper reaches, the rivers Gourock, Irvine, Ayr, Glenmuir, Nith and Troon have cut sizeable valleys into the surrounding rim of hills. These valleys became a focus for communication routes, settlement and industrial development, the latter based on the exploitation of water power for textiles and mineral deposits for the coal, iron and steel industries. In their lower reaches, these rivers flow through narrower, often incised valleys cut into the floor of the Ayrshire basin, again acting as a magnet for settlement".*

3.2.8 The assessment identifies some relevant landscape issues as being,

"…***past and future settlement expansion*** *including,*

- *visual effects of past expansion;*
- *nature of the urban fringe;*
- *settlement coalescence;*
- *pressure for expansion of larger settlements;*
- *pressure for expansion of smaller settlements;*
- *issue of settlement capacity and landscape capacity; building design, materials, siting, layout and orientation".*

"…***conservation and restoration of rich lowland agricultural landscape*** *including,*

- *hedges and other field boundaries;*
- *tree lines, avenues and clumps;*
- *minor roads;*
- *vernacular farmsteads and sympathetic newer structures;".*

3.2.9 Within the Regional Area 2 of the Ayrshire Basin, the Site is identified as lying within LCT G: Ayrshire Lowlands, which is described as an extensive area of agricultural lowland lying between approximately 10 and 150m and where,

*"The landform is surprisingly complex, dissected by many burns and streams draining to incised main river valleys to create and undulating lowland landscape. There is a gentle increase in height from the coastal fringe to the more abrupt transition to upland. Landcover is predominantly pastoral, though with some arable on lower and better soils. Cattle, sheep and ley grassland are common".*

*"Fields within this landscape type, probably dating back to the 18th or 19th century are often regular in shape and enclosed by beech or hawthorn hedges. For the most part, the hedges are in good condition, a significant asset at a time when hedgerows in many parts of the country are suffering gradual decline. Many field boundaries are also marked by mature hedgerow trees. Again, beech trees predominate. These trees give the landscape a surprisingly wooded character, often forming avenues along minor roads. In places this structure has begun to decline as trees have been felled and not replaced. More extensive woodland is limited, concentrated in river valleys and formed into shelter belts in some of the more exposed areas, or around large estates".*

*"The area's settlement pattern is historic in origin…….the typical lowland settlement system was based upon larger, more self contained farmsteads with a hinterland of fields. Many existing farms are on historic sites, though buildings are invariably newer and old field systems lost beneath more recent enclosures. Farms are often sited on low hill tops, typically comprising a courtyard with the farmhouse at the centre. Buildings are often limewashed with slate roofs and black painted woodwork. More modern farm buildings, including sheds and barns are rarely intrusive, often dark red or green in colour".*

*"The character of this landscape type shows subtle and gradual differences across the area as a whole. Variations mainly reflect topographic and geological differences, with rich pastures, enclosed by dense, well treed boundaries in the lowest parts of the basin, very slowly giving way to wetter, rushier pastures with lower hedges, fewer*

*trees and a stronger moorland influence. At the scale of this assessment, it has not been possible to define the extremes of character as separate landscape types".*

3.2.10 Key Forces for Change outlined are outlined as being:

- *"**Agriculture:** for the most part, this is a stable and prosperous farming landscape with a remarkably intact pattern of fields and hedges. In some instances the deterioration of hedges or the loss of hedgerow trees is evident, possibly signalling the process of decline which has affected many similar areas throughout the UK. It is important to prevent such change if the local character is to be maintained. As noted above, to date, most modern farm buildings have been of a scale and design which integrates well with more traditional groupings of farmhouses, barns and stables.*
- ***Development:** many historic settlements, often located at bridging points in the lowland river valleys, have expanded into this landscape type. Often such growth has been incremental and apparently related more to infrastructural provision than to landscape fit. Of even greater concern is the poor integration of the urban edge with the surrounding countryside. Again, often stark suburban designs, have predominated and rarely is any form of screening provided. Under such circumstances, these expanded settlements often have quite an extensive impact on the surrounding landscape".*[5]

3.2.11 **Management and Planning Guidelines** are outlined below and provide the basis for an overall aim which is to '*conserve the high quality, pastoral landscape of the Ayrshire Lowlands. Retaining the area's legacy of hedges and hedgerow trees is central to this aim*'[6].

"*Agriculture:*

- *maintain pastoral landscape;*
- *maintain and reinstate hedgerows and hedgerow trees;*
- *maintain and enhance avenues/hedgerow trees;*
- *discourage improvements which result in loss of field boundaries or field boundary trees;*

[5] No 111 Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment, 1998, p. 115
[6] No 111 Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment, 1998, p. 115 - 119

- *investigate the potential for establishing herb rich meadows to enhance the area's wildlife interest;*
- *encourage the conservation and sensitive conversion of redundant dairy buildings;*
- *encourage the placement of new farm buildings in locations which do not compromise the symmetry of traditional farmstead courtyard complexes or detract from their hilltop compositions;*
- *use the agricultural development notification scheme to influence the design, colour, materials, screening and location of new farm buildings. Explore the use of planning conditions attached to new buildings to provide screening where appropriate".*

- *encourage farmers and landowners to replant trees along field boundaries, initially along roads, but also between fields*

*Forestry and Woodland:*

- *encourage a phased programme of replanting, managing and, where necessary, felling hedgerow trees, so as to maintain and restore the historic legacy of trees;*
- *conserve riparian woodland and wetland corridors;*
- *encourage the planting of new tree lines;*
- *examine the potential to create an integrated pattern of new small woodlands and woodland belts in the most open areas;*
- *there may be opportunities for the creation of new woodlands in the area of transition between the more productive parts of the lowland and the surrounding uplands. Where appropriate, therefore, adopt a planting strategy that emphasises the transitional character of the landscape and includes: expansion/regeneration of native woodlands; mixture of broadleaf and conifer species; small to medium sized coupes to reflect the scale of the landscape; concentration of new woodland on steeper slopes, scarps, in gullies and around the lower slopes; retention of key views and open space links to higher ground;*

*• consider opportunities for new woodland planting in terms of: the overall balance of woodland and open space; the importance of preserving less productive land which has high nature conservation values e.g. mosses or herb rich grasslands; the importance of key views and features within the landscape; opportunities to provide screening of urban expansion areas; opportunities to link isolated areas of woodland".*

*Development:*

*• adopt design requirements for new building, possibly incorporating shelterbelt planting around isolated buildings.*

***District Landscape Character Assessment***

3.2.12 South Ayrshire (and East Ayrshire by virtue of its close proximity to the Site) refer[7] to district level character identifying the Site as falling within the South Ayrshire Lowlands (7d). The summary of sensitivity (albeit for large scale wind turbine capacity purposes) states,

"*The South Ayrshire Lowlands have a variable landform which although gently undulating, forming low ridges and valleys, can be more complex and rolling in some areas with some locally prominent small hills. The landform becomes more folded at the edge of the Lowland River Valley (9) where small interlocking hills form prominent skylines, particularly seen from the Ayr and Doon valleys. This is a diverse landscape with small pastures, enclosed by intact hedgerows, small woodlands and field trees and a regular pattern of small farms enriching the overall composition*".

*"Occasional small estates surrounded by wooded policies lie at the foot of the Lowland Hills (16) and the Craigs of Kyle and are more widely dispersed across the remainder of this landscape. Higher, more open hills occur to the south-east in the Craigs of Kyle area at the transition with the larger scale East Ayrshire Lowlands (7c) and Foothills with Forestry and Opencast Mining (17a). This landscape becomes*

[7] South Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study, 2013 (Carol Anderson Landscape Associates), p.39

*more fragmented by larger scale built infrastructure where it abuts the settlements of Ayr, Prestwick and Kilmarnock"*.

3.2.13 In addition, the document recognises the presence of farm buildings and industrial buildings where (in respect of smaller turbines of 15-30m),

"*The rolling landform and often dense pattern of hedgerows, woodlands and roadside trees which could provide intermittent screening of smaller turbines*".

"*There are larger farm buildings and industrial buildings occasionally located in the lowlands and also on the fringes of larger towns or on the coast. These building groups can include tall stacks or other masts".*

"*Turbines up to 12m in height relate well to the size of existing buildings in the landscape, including smaller farm buildings. 12m high turbines are just over twice the height of a single storey house, while a two storey house is about 9m high to roof pitch. Some farm buildings are higher than this".*

*"A well mature forest broadleaved or conifer tree will be about 15m in height. Turbines up to 15m in height will therefore generally relate well to the size of farm buildings and forest trees. They are also similar to small telephone masts and tall telegraph poles*".

3.2.14 The documents outlined above, together with the Site appraisal, have been utilised to establish the baseline conditions for the Site and its surroundings in order to complete this assessment.

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## 3.3 Statutory and non-statutory Designations

3.3.1 **Scheduled Monuments:** There are no Scheduled Monuments on the Site or within the 2km study area of the Site. The closest Scheduled Monuments are some 2.2km west of the Site: *Craigie, fort* (SM4920) and *Camp Castle* (SM2177) (Refer to **Figure 2: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.2 **Listed Buildings**: There are no Listed Buildings on the Site, although there are a number of Listed Buildings in the surrounding landscape; the nearest being Category B *Dallars Mains, including Dovecote* (LB18511), approximately 1.25km to the

northeast of the Site. (Refer to **Figure 2: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.3 **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):** The Site is not covered by any SSSI's. There are also no SSSI's within the 2km study area of the Site.

3.3.4 **Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes**: There are no Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes (HG&DLs) on the Site itself; however, The Carnell Estate is located approximately 0.96km to the east of the Site, whilst Dallars House is approximately 650m to the northeast. Both estates are located within the contrasting steeply sided river valley, and both are bordered by significant belts of woodland on their western edges (Refer to **Figure 2: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.5 **Conservation Areas**: There are no Conservation Areas on the Site or within the 2km study area of the Site.

3.3.6 **Public Rights of Way (PRoW):** There are no Public Rights of Way across the site itself. The closest is a Core Path from Laigh Borland to High Borland to the west of the Site. (Refer to **Figure 2: Landscape and Heritage Designations with Public Rights of Way**).

3.3.7 **Environmental Designations**: Environmental designations in the local context of the Site are limited to regularly or recently cultivated agricultural, horticultural and domestic habitats, grasslands and woodlands. (Refer **Figure 3: Environmental Designations**).

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## 3.4 Landscape Resource

3.4.1 The Site forms part of the agricultural lowland landscape in South Ayrshire, which is an extensive tract of land extending from Ayr, around the southern edge of Kilmarnock into East Ayrshire. It is an undulating pastoral landscape lying at between c. 115m and c.105m AOD and which slopes down from south west to north east. The Site lies between a series of distinctive knolls, for example Maintree Farm to the west sits on one at 131m AOD, whilst a partially wooded one is just near East Mosside

Farm, north east of the Site at 131m AOD. The undulating landform is also incised by a small-scale wooded river valley to the east of the Site, Cressnock Water (within which lies the Carnell Estate 1km away), a tributary which flows into the River Irvine near Hurlford, east of Kilmarnock.

3.4.2 The rolling landform surrounding the Site locally undulates between approximately 100m AOD and 130m AOD, with a slightly higher elevation of c.140m near the east edge of Craigie village but then falls to c.40m towards the outskirts of Kilmarnock in the north. Meanwhile to the east, the course of Cressnock Water at the Carnell Estate sits discreetly within a well wooded incised valley at approximately 70m AOD where,

"…*The deciduous woodland on the western boundary seen from the A719 provides a significant contrast to the surrounding landscape. The parkland is highly significant from the minor access road which runs between the A719 and the B744 from which the house can be seen through the trees*"[8].

3.4.3 The patchwork of small to medium scale fields are generally bounded by a combination of post and wire fencing and well-maintained low-level hedgerows (some fragmented, together with some stone walls in the area) with only small pockets of trees (including a small block or copse of young trees on the north western boundary of the Site), resulting in pastoral fields that are generally open in character. The unnamed road has such a frontage, with hedge planting in part as well as an existing access beside the woody block of trees. A high voltage overhead powerline and pylons crosses the Site northwards straight towards Kilmarnock South Substation (c.1.3km north), which is to the south east of the town, and there are a few small scale turbines present locally, including two just east of the Site at East Mosside Farm.

3.4.4 The land surrounding the Site also contains a strong presence of isolated farmsteads in an open landscape with occasional clusters of trees (for example East Mosside, Sidehead, Camsiscan, Fairwells, Broadyards, Maintree, Laigh Borland, Muggerslandburn, Trees etc,.). The farmsteads are often composed of a farmhouse cluster (finished in grey concrete aggregate or whitewashed brick and render with

[8] www.parksandgardens.org/places/carnell

grey roof tiles, and sometimes set around a courtyard), together with a series of outbuildings which vary in size and scale, but include a range of finishes, including grey steel, or brick and concrete plinth with blue or red steel cladding present too.

3.4.5 Overall, the field parcels are considered to contribute positively to the local landscape character, since the land exhibits attributes or characteristics that are representative of the local landscape, including the agricultural use (pastoral grassland) and gappy native field boundaries, whilst there are a few elements (overhead wires and pylons and turbines) which temper character to a very limited degree. The elements that form the surrounding farmsteads are of variable style, but they nevertheless contribute to the rural integrity and character of farm groups within the landscape pattern; overall, these elements are recognisable features in the landscape and only occasionally integrated by the structural planting and use of varied colours, in an otherwise open landscape.

## 3.5 Visual Resource

3.5.1 The visual amenity experienced by people (visual receptors) in the locality of the Site differs according to many factors. Visual receptors of higher sensitivity with greater susceptibility to change include residents at home (private viewpoints), people engaged in outdoor recreation (including use of PROWs), visitors to heritage assets and other attractions, travellers on recognised scenic routes (public viewpoints) and people at their workplace where views are an important contributor to the setting and quality of their working life. Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes and people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation are considered less sensitive to changes in visual amenity.

Consideration of the study area, via desk research and field survey, has identified a number of locations from which the Site (proposed scheme) will potentially be visible. The following specific, representative and illustrative views have been selected for inclusion in the report to illustrate the visual effects of the proposed scheme, from a range of receptors including private views, local roads and footpaths:

A719 to the south of the Site

B744 (section through Carnell Estate)

Carnell Estate (Edge of Historic Garden & Designed Landscape)

Dallars House (Edge of Historic Garden & Designed Landscape)

Sidehead Terrace

Unnamed rural lane between Boydston, East Mosside and Gatehead farms

Treeswoodhead Road (near Easter Hillhouse and Muggerslandburn)

Unnamed rural lane, including approaches along site frontage

Core Path at High Borland

Farmsteads (eg Sidehead and East Mosside)

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# 4 THE PROPOSALS

## 4.1 General Principles

4.1.1 This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of the proposed scheme.

4.1.2 The design of the proposed development should be well-integrated into the fabric of the rolling agricultural lowland landscape. To assist the design process, the following landscape opportunities could be applied to the emerging landscape scheme based upon site investigations, landscape character assessment and visual effects considerations.

4.1.3 The Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment provides Landscape Management and Planning Guidelines for the landscape typology Ayrshire Lowlands Type G. Those relevant to the scheme are:

- maintain pastoral landscape, including maintain and reinstate hedgerows and hedgerow trees;
- discourage improvements which result in loss of field boundaries or field boundary trees;
- investigate the potential for establishing herb rich meadows to enhance the area's wildlife interest;
- encourage the placement of new farm buildings in locations which do not compromise the symmetry of traditional farmstead courtyard complexes or detract from their hilltop compositions;
- influence the design, colour, materials, screening and location of new farm buildings and potential for screening".
- replant trees along field boundaries, initially along roads, but also between fields
- a programme of replanting to help maintain and restore the historic legacy of trees;

- potential to create an integrated pattern of new small woodlands and woodland belts in the most open areas;
- planting strategy that emphasises the transitional character of the landscape and includes expansion/regeneration of native woodlands; mixture of broadleaf and conifer species; small to medium sized coupes to reflect the scale of the landscape; retention of key views and open space links to higher ground;
- consider opportunities for new woodland planting that preserves less productive land which has high nature conservation values, considers the importance of key views and features within the landscape; considers opportunities to link isolated areas of woodland.
- Consider design and colour finishes for new building, consider shelterbelt planting around isolated buildings.

4.1.4 By taking on board and implementing these points as part of the emerging layout and strategy for the Site, it would provide beneficial opportunities for the land and integration into the wider area, having the potential to deliver benefits for landscape enhancement and green infrastructure in keeping with local landscape character for the area.

## 4.2 Proposals and Approach to Mitigation

4.2.1 The proposed development scheme, which is shown on Noriker Power drawings, includes the following elements:

- Development comprising a series of individual containerised battery stores and inverter/transformer skids (circa 2-3m high), DNO substation including primary transformers and inverters (circa 9m-11.5m high), along with ancillary equipment including switch rooms, backup generator, storage containers and an access track with gravel finish. (It is noted that these slightly taller elements are located to the lowest part of the Site, where they will be shielded by new planting to minimise any impact).

- Where possible visible elements will be powder coated/ finished in an appropriate RAL colour (for example mid grey, green tone or black to be agreed) to recede.
- The proposals will be fenced with a 2.4m high security perimeter fence and accessed from the edge of the existing field along the unnamed road via a new track. The scheme also includes provision for some 3-4m high acoustic fencing which may be needed; although, if required this would be largely set behind proposed planting.
- The proposals include water drainage runs, pump rooms and catchment ponds, as well as a reservoir.

4.2.2 A landscape scheme will be implemented to minimise the effects of change to the character of the Site and its wider views and also seek to secure biodiversity enhancements. The proposed landscape scheme will include:

- Strengthen, reinforce/infill and thickening of the existing hedge and tree planting with native species on all the boundaries of the Site, especially where it adjoins existing vegetation beyond the Site to reinforce the provision of green infrastructure connectivity in the wider landscape.
- New mixed native wooded copses and tree belts with a suitable understorey, will be planted, including at the western and southern boundaries (and connecting to the edge of existing green infrastructure features running south and east), to provide significant depth along with vertical height as a means to soften the scheme and provide a layering effect where possible, with tree clusters that connect to existing features (it is accepted little can be done to alleviate the existing taller pylons however).
- The southeast corner of the Site and eastern edges will comprise a new native woody belt to soften views into the Site from the east and reinforce green infrastructure connectivity with other existing features, where there are public roads and isolated dwellings.
- The western boundary alongside the new access track and fencing will be reinforced by planting a new boundary hedge feature using native scrub and

hedgerow planting, whilst the area below the overhead wires will be enhanced with species rich grassland.

4.2.3 In consideration of the landscape and visual issues relevant to the Site, an approach to the mitigation of the proposed scheme has been considered, incorporating the principles outlined above (and as reflected on the Landscape Strategy Plan). The landscape strategy would be developed in further detail as part of the planning conditions and would successfully ensure that the identified landscape and visual effects are minimised.

4.2.4 Recommendations have been incorporated into the proposals which successfully mitigate potential adverse landscape and visual effects and help to integrate the proposed scheme into this location.

# 5 ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

This section of the report considers the results of the initial baseline work in the context of future potential development of the Site. The landscape effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative.

The following assessment of landscape effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer to Chapter 4).

## 5.1 Identifying the Landscape Effects

5.1.1 The effect of the proposed changes to the Site, specifically on the identified landscape receptors (attributes) has been reviewed including consideration of changes to the existing landscape resource, the introduction of new elements within the landscape and changes to local perceptions of the Site.

## 5.2 Susceptibility

5.2.1 An important element in identifying the effects of a Proposal is to assess the ability (the susceptibility) of the existing landscape to accommodate the specific proposed changes with regard to the consequences on the local landscape character.

5.2.2 The Site (landscape resource) has been deemed to be of ***Medium Susceptibility*** to accommodate proposed development, which contains low level features and nothing of height that would extend above the hedgerows and tree cover. This is an established landscape where change of an appropriate nature could be absorbed without loss of key characteristics, individual elements or features and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects or, overall landscape character.

5.2.3 It is considered that the landscape is able to absorb these changes, which include the addition of the battery energy storage facility and its associated elements, as well as an enhanced landscape scheme, without causing harm to the overall character of

the wider landscape. The proposed landscape scheme will not only help the Site to absorb these changes but will increase the number of key landscape characteristics and biodiversity features in the local area in support of the Landscape Character Area management objectives.

## 5.3 Significance of Landscape Effects

5.3.1 Effects can be adverse or beneficial. Where the Proposals are judged to cause deterioration to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as an adverse effect. Where the Proposals are judged to increase the value of the Site to the landscape resource / local landscape character this is described as a beneficial effect.

5.3.2 The proposals would result in a direct change to the Site itself from one of agriculture to one of infrastructure resource, which would be apparent locally. However, it is considered that the proposals to accommodate the new battery energy storage units and associated infrastructure elements can be accommodated successfully in this location. The development of the Site will represent a degree of change on a relatively small part of the LCA. The proposed scheme includes for significant planting of buffers, trees and hedges to reinforce the landscape structure and provide softening of the battery energy storage facility and help integrate it into the landscape.

5.3.3 Overall, the scale and degree of change on the agricultural lowlands of Ayrshire as a whole would be apparent locally. Accordingly, overall, the significance of the landscape effect with regard to the proposed scheme on land for the 'Land at Camsiscan Farm, Craigie, Kilmarnock South, BESS Project' (the Site) has been assessed to represent a ***Moderate Adverse Effect***.

5.3.4 Once an appropriate landscape management scheme has established the significance of the landscape effects in the longer term will change and is considered to represent a ***Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect*** to the landscape resource and landscape character.

5.3.5 It is also noted that the effects of the scheme are likely to be reversible, as at the time the Site ceases to operate the land could be restored to its current condition;

however, this will occur beyond 15 years (being the time for the effects of the established scheme to be assessed) given the 25-year lease being sought. That being the case, the operational equipment from the Site could subsequently be removed, leaving only the Green Infrastructure elements as maturing landscape features in the location.

# 6 ASSESSMENT OF VISUAL EFFECTS

## 6.1 Identifying the Visual Effects

6.1.1 The visual effects are the changes to the Site, quantitative or qualitative, compared with a scenario without the Proposals. Effects can be adverse or beneficial, direct, indirect or cumulative. The assessment involves a systematic identification and description of the visual effects, accompanied by plans and photographs.

6.1.2 The following assessment of visual effects should be read in conjunction with the approach to mitigation (refer to Chapter 4).

6.1.3 The likely value placed upon views by people or the visual amenity of the locality is evaluated to help assess the effects of proposed development.

6.1.4 Whilst Site visits have been undertaken in winter months when deciduous vegetation has no leaf cover, the assessment has endeavoured to make informed judgements applicable to visual amenity throughout the year and the consideration of seasonal views during summer months.

6.1.5 An important element in identifying the visual effects of a Proposal is to assess the existing visual receptors (people who see the view) and their susceptibility to changes in views and visual amenity. The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of:

- *The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and*
- *The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focused on the views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.*[9]

[9] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition, Para 6.32 (2013)

## 6.2 Significance of Visual Effects

6.2.1 Assessment of the significance of visual effects relating to the proposed development is considered with regard to the sensitivity of the visual receptor, the value attached to the views or visual amenity and the magnitude of change in view. The magnitude of change in view is considered in light of:

- *The sensitivity of the visual receptor (the viewer)*
- *The value attached to the views or visual amenity*
- *The size and scale of the development*
- *The geographical extent of the area influenced*
- *Duration*
- *Reversibility.*

6.2.2 For the identified viewpoints the degree of change which the Proposals will engender is described and assessed. The following section identifies the primary viewpoints and people or visual receptors within the area that are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed scheme. The significance of the visual effect has been assessed upon completion of the scheme and once established (i.e. 15 years plus), being either a Negligible, Minor, Moderate or Substantial Effect overall.

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## 6.3 Identification of Visual Effects

6.3.1 The following section identifies a range of typical receptors within the area which are likely to be affected by the change in views and visual amenity resulting from the proposed development.

It should be noted that for some views the effects are considered to be short lived, largely because they occur on transient routes – e.g. local roads– in these locations, views are often short lived or periodic glimpses whilst moving along a route.

*Private Viewpoints*

*Views from local farmsteads in the vicinity of the Site, (refer example photo views 9, 23 & 30) (High Sensitivity)*

6.3.2 Some residents with facing windows are likely to experience some partial views of the proposals from land surrounding the Site, although these will be limited to a few dwellings, partly due to the orientation and layout of the scattered farmsteads and the nature of the undulating landform (e.g. Sidehead, Camsiscan, East Mosside, Dykehead Cottage, Pockhave, dwelling cluster at Muggersland Burn, bungalow close to Gatehead); however, where visible the new structures will be softened by new planting and the extended tree cover will help integrate the scheme further.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Slight Adverse Effect

*Views from the edge of Kilmarnock, (refer example photo views 12 & 13) (High Sensitivity)*

6.3.3 At the edge of the Shortlees part of town near the A77 Kilmarnock bypass (for example near Treeswoodhead Road and Wyvis Gardens), some residents with south facing windows, may experience some very limited glimpses of the upper portions of the scheme at long distance, although any distant glimpses of the proposals on the elevated landform will be difficult to discern and seen entirely in a context with the existing overhead wire and pylon infrastructure running across the slopes towards the substation. There may be similar views across the undulating rural landscape from similar locations at the southern edge of the town.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Public Viewpoints*

*Views from Carnell and Dollars Mains HG&DLs east of Site, (refer example photo views 24 & 25) (High Sensitivity)*

6.3.4 Both estates are located within the well wooded valley and valley side of Cessnock Water, where views are contained by strong tree cover and the steep landform at the edge of the valley limit views out and across the wider rolling agricultural land to the west. Views from within the Dollars Mains Estate are well contained by a geometric tree belt rising on steep ground to the west, whilst the estate roads through the parkland core at Carnell Estate are bordered by more naturalist woodland planting around Cessnock Water and against main roads such as the A719, where outward views are similarly contained within the valley.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Views from Coldcothill Farm properties south of Site, (refer example photo view 20) (High Sensitivity)*

6.3.5 Long views from the elevated properties west of Coldcothill Wood (and the road heading towards A719) enjoy panoramic vistas across the landscape from their rooms and balconies, orientated north towards the Site. Views of the proposed scheme are unlikely due to the change in landform with the pasture falling away beyond the crest; although, in any event existing views experience farms (such as Camsiscan) and the long line of pylons in these rural views.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Slight Adverse to Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Views from Braefield and Longhouse Farm south east of Site, (refer example photo views 21 & 22) (High Sensitivity)*

6.3.6 Long views from the elevated properties south of Carnell (and the unnamed road heading towards A719 from B744) enjoy panoramic views across the landscape from some windows, orientated north towards the Site. Views of the proposals are unlikely due to the change in landform with the pasture falling away beyond the crest; although, in any event existing views experience farms (such as Sidehead, Camsiscan) and the long line of pylons in these rural views.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Transport Routes*

*Views from Main Street, Craigie village (refer example photo views 18) (High Sensitivity)*

6.3.7 Vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians will not experience any views of the new proposals from within the heart of the village, given the mosaic of vegetation cover situated on the rolling fields to the east of the village; although, to the north of the village where there are elevated views across the landscape, the scheme will be set much lower down and unlikely to be seen, with only partial views of intervening farms already in view.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Views from unnamed road (beyond the end of Treeswoodhead Road (refer example photo views 14, 15, 16 & 33) (Medium Sensitivity)*

6.3.8 Vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians will experience some limited views of part of the proposed scheme (the northern edge) from some of the winding sections of road in the vicinity of Muggerslandburn, Brookbank and Hirst; although, it will be seen in

context with some of the other infrastructure already in view across the undulating landform.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Slight Adverse Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Views from unnamed road (between A719 and A77) (refer example photo views 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11) (Medium Sensitivity)*

6.3.9 Vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians will experience clear views of the proposed scheme from a short section of elevated open road between East Mosside and Gatehead close to the Site; however, views are much more limited along the section of lower lying road near Gatehead and back towards Midton of Balgray (close to the existing substation); however, it is recognised that effects reduce quickly with distance and the changing topography, and in addition the new scheme will be seen in context with other infrastructure already present in rural views across the undulating landform.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Substantial to Moderate Adverse Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Moderate Adverse Effect

*Views from unnamed road (Site frontage) (refer example photo views 3, 4 & 5) (Medium Sensitivity)*

6.3.10 Vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians will experience a clear view of the new scheme from sections of the open road frontage on the northern and eastern boundary of the Site where these would be most apparent locally, and the views will diminish with distance back towards Maintree and East Mosside either side; however, it is recognised that the proposed scheme will be seen alongside other infrastructure already present in rural views across the undulating landform. The addition of new planting will also help soften the views locally, through the inclusion of new planting in the form of new hedgerows and trees, and further small woody copses.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Substantial to Moderate Adverse Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Moderate Adverse Effect

*Views from B744 in wider landscape (east and south of the Site) (refer example photo views 28 &29) (Medium Sensitivity)*

6.3.11 Despite the elevation, vehicle users, cyclists and pedestrians are unlikely to experience distant views of the proposed scheme from short sections of open road due the very long distance and presence of vegetation patterns generally; it is noted that from wider locations, views are often punctuated with woodland blocks and belts (including on some knolls), and the vegetation patterns merge to provide a tapestry of wooded and pasture in rural views across the undulating landform.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

*Views from A719 (refer example photo view 30) (Low Sensitivity)*

6.3.12 Fast moving vehicles and cyclists on the main A road are unlikely to experience clear views of the proposed scheme from sections of open road due the rising foreground topography; it is noted that from slightly elevated wider locations to the west, views towards the Site are punctuated by the existing pylons crossing the landform and will remain very limited.

- Scheme completion (year 1 winter): Negligible Effect
- Established scheme (+15 years summer): Negligible Effect

# 7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has reviewed the existing landscape and visual resource of the Land at Camsiscan Farm, Craigie, Kilmarnock South, BESS Project (Scottish Stability) (the Site) in consideration of the proposed scheme for new battery energy storage facility and associated infrastructure.

7.1.2 The wider landscape contains a number of features, including infrastructure elements and energy production. HMP Kilmarnock, Kilmarnock South Substation forming a termination point for numerous overhead wires and pylons that cross the landscape (including the Site), a number of locations have small scale wind turbines (eg adjacent to East Mosside Farm), as well as long views towards larger scale windfarms which are present in the landscape and form a backdrop in skyline views to the east of Kilmarnock

7.1.3 The Site forms part of the agricultural lowland landscape in South Ayrshire, which is an extensive tract of land extending from Ayr, around the southern edge of Kilmarnock into East Ayrshire. It is an undulating pastoral landscape lying at between c.115m AOD and c.105m AOD that is incised by the small-scale wooded river valley to the east, Cressnock Water (a well contained valley within which also lies the Carnell Estate and Dallars House Estate), a tributary which flows into the River Irvine near Hurlford, east of Kilmarnock.

7.1.4 The field parcel is considered to contribute positively to the local landscape character, since the land exhibits attributes or characteristics that are representative of the local landscape, including the agricultural use (pastoral grassland) and gappy native field boundaries, whilst there are a few elements (overhead wires and pylons, and small turbines) which temper character to a limited degree. The elements that form the surrounding farmsteads are of variable style, but they nevertheless contribute to the rural integrity and character of farm groups within the landscape pattern; overall, these elements are recognisable features in the landscape and only occasionally integrated by the structural planting and use of varied colours, in an otherwise open landscape.

7.1.5 The proposals would result in a direct change to the Site itself from one of agriculture to one of infrastructure resource. The proposals accommodate the new battery energy storage units and associated infrastructure on an area where infrastructure can be accommodated. The development of the Site will represent a degree of change on a relatively small part of the LCA. The proposed scheme includes for significant planting of buffers, trees and hedges to reinforce the landscape structure and provide softening of the battery energy storage facility and integrate it better into the landscape.

7.1.6 Overall, the scale and degree of change on the agricultural lowlands of Ayrshire as a whole would be very limited. Accordingly, overall the significance of the landscape effect with regard to the proposed scheme on Land at Camsiscan Farm, Craigie, Kilmarnock South, BESS Project (the Site) has been assessed to represent a ***Moderate Adverse Effect***. Once an appropriate landscape management scheme has established, which follows the guidance set out for land management in the Ayrshire Lowlands, the significance of the landscape effects in the longer term will change and is considered to represent a ***Moderate to Slight Adverse Effect*** to the landscape resource and landscape character.

7.1.7 The significance of the visual effects is relatively localised due to the location within an undulating and incised landform in an otherwise open agricultural lowland, and form a series of localised views seen principally from the local road network. The proposed scheme will be most apparent from slightly elevated positions looking across or over existing hedges, stone wall field boundaries, for example the unnamed road adjacent to the Site's northern boundary, as well as the short section of road close to East Mosside Farm. There would be no view from within the Carnell or Dallars House Estates which are both located within a steep sided and wooded valley; although the proposed scheme is likely to be glimpsed from surrounding local road network.

7.1.8 Apart from the most noticeable effects which will be experienced along the Site frontage and the short section of road close to East Mosside Farm, the visual effects range from generally Moderate to Slight Adverse and Negligible Effect, although it has been assessed that users closest to the Site will experience the most apparent

effects on views and visual amenity both during construction and immediately following implementation when drivers, cyclists and walkers are particularly close to the Site, albeit seen in the local context of an area which has some overhead wires and pylons crossing; however, the effects (where experienced) are recognised as diminishing quickly with distance.

7.1.9 It should be noted that for some views the effects are considered to be short lived, largely because they occur on transient routes – e.g. roads – in these locations the views are often periodic views experienced whilst moving along a route in an undulating landform, where the presence of agricultural buildings on localised knolls is a characteristic of the local landscape of the lowlands in this location. As such, the change experienced is not always the focus of the view.