

# Appendix 11.5

## Preliminary Residential Visual Amenity Assessment



## APPENDIX 11.5 – Preliminary Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)

### Introduction

This appendix presents the preliminary findings of a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). A detailed RVAA will be provided in the ES once final details of Rosefield Solar Farm have been established; including any mitigation measures adopted as appropriate.

This RVAA been prepared in accordance with:

- *Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 2/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment* (15 March 2019).

In defined in the guidance above ‘Residential Visual Amenity’ is taken to mean:

*“the overall quality, experience and nature of views and outlook available to occupants of residential properties, including views from gardens and domestic curtilage”*

### Background

With respect to visual impact the focus of LVIA is on public views and public visual amenity. RVAA is a stage beyond LVIA and focusses exclusively on private views and private visual amenity and may be used by the decision maker when weighing potential effects on Residential Amenity in the planning balance.

Technical Guidance Note 2/19 (TGN 2/19) identifies that:

*“The purpose of carrying out a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) is to form a judgement, to assist decision makers, on whether a proposed development is likely to change the visual amenity of a residential property to such an extent that it becomes a matter of ‘Residential Amenity’.”*

It further notes that:

*“Changes in views and visual amenity are considered in the planning process. In respect of private views and visual amenity, it is widely known that, no one has ‘a right to a view.’ ...*

*It is not uncommon for significant adverse effects on views and visual amenity to be experienced by people at their place of residence as a result of introducing a new development into the landscape. In itself this does not necessarily cause particular planning concern. However, there are situations where the effect on the outlook / visual amenity of a residential property is so great that it is not generally considered to be in the public interest to permit such conditions to occur where they did not exist before.”*

The RVAA considers only what the resident may see from their property. Views or ‘visual amenity’ are just one component of the wider consideration of residential

amenity and the two should not be confused. The latter is a planning matter and may also include aspects such as noise, air quality, traffic, etc., in addition to visual amenity. This RVAA considers the visual amenity aspects of residential amenity. Where necessary, other aspects of residential amenity will be considered in the relevant chapters of the ES and it is for decision makers to weigh all these aspects, and documents/assessments relating to them, in determining the acceptability the Proposed Development.

Overall residential amenity will be discussed within the Planning Statement that will be submitted in support of the DCO application.

This assessment, and the process of RVAA, seeks to identify where effects on residential visual amenity are of such a nature or magnitude that they may need to be considered in the overall balance of 'Residential Amenity' or 'Living Conditions'. The point at which this happens is referred to as the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold.

## Approach

TGN 2/19 advocates a four-step process to RVAA with the first three falling broadly within the scope of LVIA where the magnitude and significance of visual effects is assessed.

The fourth step involves a further assessment of the change to visual amenity of individual properties identified as "having the greatest magnitude of change" and identifying whether the Residential Visual Amenity threshold is reached.

The preliminary assessment presented in this PEIR identifies the potential effects at each property and the likely requirement for detailed consideration but does not provide that detailed assessment. This will be presented in the ES once final details of the Proposed Development have been established; including any mitigation measures as appropriate.

## Methodology

### Preliminary Residential Property Visits

Residential amenity has been considered from the outset of the Proposed Development and throughout the design process to date. In order to refine the layout resulting in the current parameters plans presented in the PEIR, numerous residential properties have been visited in the LVIA study area (including most of the properties discussed in this appendix).

At an early stage in the design development, all residents of properties within 500 m of the then Site boundary were contacted by letter offering a visit by the project Landscape Architect to understand the outlook from their dwellings.

Table A11.5-1 below sets out the properties contacted and whether property visits were undertaken.

Table A11.5-1 Preliminary Residential Property Visits

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
1 Calvert Cottage, Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining properties
2 Calvert Cottage Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
3 Calvert Cottage Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
4 Calvert Cottage Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining properties
5 Calvert Cottage Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Granary Cottage, Pond Farm Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
The Old Dairy, Pond Farm Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed from the exterior only
Great Pond Farm, Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Knowlhill Farm, Calvert Road, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2HD	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Blackmorehill Farm, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	No	No residential property associated with the farm

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
1 Blackmorehill Cottages, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
2 Blackmorehill Cottages, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
4 Catherine Cottages, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
5 Catherine Cottages, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
6 Catherine Cottages, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
7 Catherine Cottages, Calvert Road, Middle Claydon, MK18 2HA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
Corner house, Weir Lane, Botolph Claydon, MK18 2NF	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
Touchwood, Weir Lane, Botolph Claydon, MK18 2NF	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
Weir Cottage, Weir Lane, Botolph Claydon, MK18 2NF	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property
Bernwood Farm, Weir Lane, Botolph Claydon, MK18 2NF	Yes	Viewed internally and externally
33 Weir Lane, Botolph Claydon, MK18 2NF	Yes	Viewed internally and externally

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
The Annex, Hogshaw Farm, Claydon Road, MK18 3LA	Yes	Viewed externally
Hogshaw Farm Bungalow, Hogshaw Farm, Claydon Road, MK18 3LA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property. Over 400 m from any part of solar PV development and not considered further
Wagtail Cottage, Hogshaw Farm, Claydon Road, MK18 3LA	Yes	Viewed externally. Over 400 m from any part of solar PV development and not considered further
The Barn House, Hogshaw Farm, Claydon Road, MK18 3LA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property. Over 400 m from any part of solar PV development and not considered further
Piglets Place, Hogshaw Farm, Claydon Road, MK18 3LA	No	No response received but outlook established during visit to adjoining property. Over 400 m from any part of solar PV development and not considered further
Borshaw Farm, Claydon Road, MK18 3LA	No	Viewed externally from nearby road
Sion Hill Farm, off Church Way, MK18 2NE	No	Property not visited as permission received after RVAA visits completed but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Station House, East Claydon Road, Winslow, MK18 3NF	Yes	Viewed internally and externally

Property Contacted	Visited by Landscape Architect?	Comment
Berry Leys Farm, East Claydon Road, Winslow, MK18 3ND	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property
Tuckey Farm Cottage, East Claydon Road, Winslow, MK18 3ND	No	No response received but outlook established from public footpath to rear of property

### Refinement of Study Area

The residential property visits outlined in Table **A11.5-1** above influenced the layout of the Proposed Development brought forward in this PEIR. Many of the properties listed above are subsequently now substantially further away from any potential development and it is not necessary to consider all of the above properties in the RVAA.

There is no standard criteria for defining a RVAA study area and this is determined on a case by case basis. TGN 02/19 suggests that for large structures, such as wind turbines, a preliminary study area of 1.5-2km radius may be appropriate to begin identifying properties for inclusion within RVAA. However, it goes on to state that:

*“other development types including potentially very large but lower profile structures and developments such as road schemes and housing are unlikely to require RVAA, except potentially of properties in very close proximity (50-250m) to the development.”*

For this RVAA, the following study area has been used for the purposes of identifying properties for inclusion in the RVAA; an offset buffer is shown on Figure 11.15 to illustrate this study area:

- 200 m of any Solar PV development;
- 400 m of any siting zones for structures up to 6 m; and
- 800 m from any siting zones for structures up to 15 m (i.e. the siting zone for Rosefield substation).

### Initial Assessment of Properties within the Refined Study Area

Within the refined RVAA study area, as defined above, all residential properties have been identified. An initial appraisal has been undertaken and is presented below in Table **A11.5-2** to identify those properties which are likely to experience the greatest effects, therefore requiring further detailed assessment in the ES, and those where effects would be less and are unlikely to approach the RVA threshold.

## Further Detailed Assessment in the ES

For those properties that have been identified at the PEIR stage as requiring further detailed assessment at ES stage, the process will be as follows:

- Evaluation of baseline visual amenity;
- Assessment of likely change to the visual amenity of properties; and
- Forming the RVAA judgement.

Properties are usually assessed individually but may be considered in groups where their outlook or views are essentially the same; for example a row of houses that all share an open outlook towards the Proposed Development. Where properties are grouped for assessment this will be clearly identified and reasons for grouping described.

The existing baseline visual amenity will be described for each property and informed by desk study and field work (including property visits already undertaken). Visual amenity will be described 'in the round' and consider both views from the dwelling itself, the domestic curtilage and views experienced when arriving or leaving the property.

The change to baseline views and visual amenity as a result of the Proposed Development will be described for each property and a judgement on the magnitude of effects likely to be experienced will be provided. This may involve consideration of the following factors:

- Distance between the property and proposed development and their relative locations (e.g. up/down hill);
- Nature of available views (e.g. panoramic, enclosed) and the effect of daily or seasonal variations;
- Direction of view or aspect of property affected;
- Extent to which the proposed development may be visible from various parts of the property (e.g. dwelling, rooms, access, garden);
- Scale of change to views, including the proportion of view occupied by the Proposed Development;
- Compositional changes (e.g. loss/addition of landscape features such as woodland);
- Contrast or integration of new features with the existing views;
- Duration and nature of changes (e.g. temporary/permanent, intermittent/continuous); and
- Visualisation and understanding localised mitigating factors.

Within the ES, the RVAA will be supported by a range of visual aids as required including maps, ZTV studies, photography and visualisations. The choice of visual aids is determined on a case by case basis and may be informed by consultation. In



line with best practice guidance, the type of visualisation should be proportionate to the nature of the Proposed Development and assessment stage.

In the ES, following assessment, an RVAA judgement will be made for each property or group of properties assessed. This final stage is concerned with identifying *“whether the predicted effects on visual amenity and views at the property are such that it has reached the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold, therefore potentially becoming a matter of Residential Amenity”*. All judgements regarding the RVA threshold will be set out clearly and unambiguously.

### Initial Assessment

The initial assessment presented in **Table A11.5-2** below has been undertaken in order to identify those residential properties with the highest magnitude of change where there is potential for the RVA threshold to be reached.

Where it is identified that effects at properties have the potential to reach the RVA threshold this is identified and further detailed assessment will be provided in the ES.

Residential properties referred to in **Table A11.5-2** are illustrated on Figure 11.15.

**Table A8.5-2 Initial Assessment of Residential Properties within RVVA Study Area**

N.B. Measurements taken from the nearest elevation of the property or the nearest part of the primary outdoor garden space (excluding paddocks or fields) to the new infrastructure as indicated on the parameters plan.

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
<b>Parcel 1</b>						
1 and 2 Calvert Cottages	Yes	No	No	The front elevation, driveway and gardens of these properties are orientated south across a field in which development is proposed whilst the rear elevations and rear gardens face north over a field in which no development is proposed. Vegetation to the property frontage is low level and somewhat patchy or missing in places enabling limited lower storey views above the established field hedgerow on the site boundary to gently rising land containing solar PV modules to the south. Views of solar PV development will be prominent from upper storeys facing south and	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				<p>somewhat obliquely to the south-east and south-west.</p>		
3 Calvert Cottages	Yes	No	No	<p>The front elevation, driveway and garden of this property is orientated south across a field in which development is proposed. The rear elevation and garden faces north over a field in which no development is proposed and has open views of Steeple Claydon. A tall evergreen hedgerow marks the southern boundary of the front garden and generally screens lower storey views southwards. Some upper storey views would be possible above the tall garden hedgerow from first floor windows of solar PV modules to the south and more obliquely to the south-east and south-west. Views from the entrance/driveway to the property</p>	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				would be framed by the tall garden hedgerow and viewed above the established field hedgerow to the site boundary.		
4 and 5 Calvert Cottages	Yes	No	No	The front elevation, driveway and gardens of these properties are orientated south across a field in which development is proposed whilst the rear elevations and rear gardens face north over a field in which no development is proposed. Property no.5 also has a driveway and garden to its western side with views to the south. Vegetation to the property frontage consists of low-level shrubs and a number of trees with predominantly clear lower stems enabling limited lower storey views above the established field hedgerow on the site boundary to gently rising	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
Granary Cottage, Pond Farm	Yes	No	No	land containing solar PV modules to the south. Views of solar PV development will be prominent from upper storeys facing south whilst more oblique views to the south-east and south-west are at least partially screened by trees and hedgerows to garden frontages.  The front elevation is oriented eastwards towards the proposed development, albeit the nearest field would be viewed somewhat obliquely to the north-east and predominantly screened by strong hedgerow boundaries. There would likely be views from the upper storey rear roof-lights to the solar PV modules in the field to the west but any views would be at least partially filtered by boundary hedgerow/vegetation to the	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				neighbouring Pond Farm. The property is accessed via a track from Calvert Road between solar fields which would be open in views to the west.		
The Old Dairy	Yes	No	No	The front elevation is oriented westwards towards the proposed development and would have some lower storey views above the field boundary hedgerow of the solar PV modules to the west. Upper storey views from frontage would be limited to a narrow slit window, whilst potential oblique views to the north-west appear screened by the established orchard. Views from north and east facing elevations appear to be screened by mature vegetation and/or outbuildings, albeit the upper storey window and rooflights may	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				afford views of solar PV modules to the east. Views from the south facing side elevation would be somewhat oblique to the south-west and partially screened by strong hedgerow boundaries and the established orchard; potential views from the upper storey of the solar PV modules in the field to the south-west but any views would be partially filtered by intervening vegetation. The property is accessed via a track from Calvert Road between solar fields which would be open in views to the west.		
Pond Farm (currently unoccupied and under renovation)	Yes	No	No	The front elevation is oriented eastwards towards the proposed development, albeit views would be predominantly screened by intervening mature vegetation, outbuildings and neighbouring	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				<p>properties. The rear elevation is orientated westwards with ground floor views predominantly screened by mature vegetation to the property curtilage. There would be views above and between this vegetation from the upper storey rear windows. The ground floor north facing side elevation would have oblique views of solar PV modules above boundary hedgerows, whilst these views would increase from the upper floor rooms. Similarly, the ground floor south facing side elevation would have oblique views of solar PV modules above boundary hedgerows, which would increase in extent from the upper floor rooms. The property is accessed via a track from Calvert Road between solar fields which would be open in views to the west.</p>		



Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
Knowlhill Farm	Yes	No	No	The front elevation is oriented northwards towards the proposed development, albeit the nearest field to the north-west would be screened by intervening built form. Overall, there would be limited upper storey views from the front of the house to solar PV modules at distances over 0.5 km to the north. Views from other aspects of the house and gardens would be to open fields without solar PV modules. The property is accessed via a track from Calvert Road from where solar PV modules and 6 m high structures would be visible above and between the field boundary hedgerow in views to the west.	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
1 and 2 Blackmorehill Cottages	Yes	Yes	No	The front elevation is oriented southwards towards the proposed development. However, in spite of the near distance of solar PV modules in the field to the south, the extent of ground floor views is currently limited by the overgrown hedgerow with hedgerow trees to the site boundary. This would also limit the extent of views from upper the storey facing south, albeit in both cases, views in winter would increase following leaf fall. Views from other aspects of the house and gardens would not be orientated towards the proposed development, albeit there would likely be oblique upper storey views of the proposed development above and between intervening vegetation. be to open fields without solar PV modules. There would be no views of the	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				proposed development from the rear of the property.		
4-7 Catherine Cottages	Yes	Yes	No	The front elevation, driveway and gardens of these properties are orientated north with no views of the proposed development. There would be somewhat oblique views of solar PV modules offset to the south-east and south-west to the rear of properties. Mitigation along hedgerow boundaries and introduction of new planting may reduce the scale of the effect but development would be prominent initially.	Yes	Yes
<b>Parcel 2</b>						
Corner house, 33 Weir Lane,	Yes (borderline)	No	No	These properties and the drive leading to them are surrounded by mature vegetation and/or farm sheds. Whilst the solar development may be	No	No – whilst there may be very limited views of the proposed

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
Weir Cottage, Touchwood				visible the proposed offsets around these properties would greatly limit the extents of views.		development effects are unlikely to be significant
Bernwood Farm, Weir Lane	Yes	No	No	The front elevation and garden of this property is orientated north with no views of the proposed development. Views of the proposed development southwards above the hedgerow to the rear of the property which would increase from the upper storey. The west side of the property has more trees which increase screening whist the landform falls away to the east reducing visibility.	Yes	Yes
Hogshaw Farm: The Annex.	Yes (borderline)	No	No	This property has a gable end window which is orientated across an animal enclosure towards the site with intervening hedgerows in between. Mitigation along hedgerow boundaries and introduction of new planting may	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				reduce the scale of the effect but development would be prominent initially.		
Borshaw Farm	No	Yes	No	This property is surrounded by mature vegetation and other agricultural outbuildings. Whilst there may be distant upper storey views of the proposed development from the property the scale of effect would not be prominent.	No	No – there would be no prominent views of the development from this property.
<b>Parcel 3</b>						
Sion Hill Farm	Scenario 1: No Scenario 2: Yes (borderline)	Scenario 1 & 2: Yes	Scenario 1 & 2: Yes	This property's front elevation and garden face west away with no views of the proposed development. The property also has an open east facing aspect and garden which has views of the proposed development above the intervening garden hedgerow. 15 m structures would be visible from the	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				rear of the property in Scenario 1 and the south facing side in Scenario 2 whilst solar PV modules and 6 m structures would be visible in both scenarios. Mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may reduce the scale of the effect but development would be prominent. The property is approached by an access road that would also experience open views of the proposed development in Parcel 1 and 2.		
Station House	Scenario 1 & 2: No	Scenario 1 & 2: No	Scenario 1: Yes Scenario 2: No	The front elevation of this property faces north-west with no views of the proposed development. The rear aspect faces south-east and together with the rear garden would have potential views of 15m structures in Scenario 1, albeit these would be at least partially screened by the existing	Yes	Yes

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				dog kennels within the garden, National Grid East Claydon substation and intervening mature vegetation. Mitigation along hedgerow boundaries may reduce the scale of the effect but development could be prominent initially.		
Berry Leys Farm	Scenario 1 & 2: No	Scenario 1 & 2: No	Scenario 1: Yes (borderline) Scenario 2: No	The front elevation of this property faces north-west with no views of the proposed development. The rear aspect faces south-east and would have potential oblique views of solar PV modules and 15m structures in Scenario 1, albeit these would be at least partially screened by the National Grid East Claydon substation and mature intervening vegetation; the south-west facing side aspect and garden curtilage would have similar views. Mitigation along hedgerow	No	No – whilst there would be limited views of the proposed development effects are unlikely to be significant

Property/Group of Properties	<200 m from solar array?	<400 m from Siting Zone for Structures up to 6m?	<800 m from Siting Zone for Structures <15m?	Initial Observations	Potentially Significant Effect on Views?	Proposed Inclusion in the RVVA at ES Stage?
				boundaries would reduce the scale of the effect further.		
Tuckey Cottage	Scenario 1 & 2: No	Scenario 1 & 2: No	Scenario 1: Yes (borderline) Scenario 2: No	This property is oriented north-west to south-east and would be screened from the proposed development by mature roadside and garden vegetation and by Berry Leys Farm. Whilst there could be views of 15 m structures in Scenario 1 from the road along which the property is accessed, there would be no prominent view of the development from the property itself.	No	No – there would be no prominent view of the development from this property.





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