

5. Landscape and Visual Assessment

- 5.1. The matter of potential impact to views from residential properties on Mussenden Lane has been raised in public response to the application and further clarification regarding this matter was requested by the Planning Officer in relation to the potential impact to the Listed Buildings along the road.
- 5.2. To assist in understanding the extent to which the proposals would be offset from these properties an annotated photograph has been prepared using photography provided from the Oast House property on Mussenden Lane. This image (included at Appendix 3) shows the location of where the proposed solar panels would be in the view from the property. The proposals are set back from the properties by at least 200m and a new planting buffer is proposed along the closest edge of the development to further reduce the potential for impacts (see paragraph 4.5). The LVIA identified the potential for no greater than a moderate visual effect on the properties and it was noted that the properties generally have some degree of existing vegetation in their gardens or curtilage which would serve to limit views.
- 5.3. As discussed in Section 2, in response to feedback from the PROW Officer, the layout of the panels in Field 9 of the development have been revised in order to increase the offset from



the PROW such that a minimum 11.5m offset (5.75m either side of the PROW) is provided (Drawing Number P22-1221_EN_0012 Rev D – Landscape Masterplan).

- 5.4. It is also confirmed that there is no plan to fence off the PROW in Field 9 or restrict existing views from the route by lining it with hedgerows. Instead, the fences are limited to the boundary of the areas of panels only, with the proposed landscape mitigation in this area being enhanced grassland which would not restrict the openness of the views from the route.
- 5.5. Furthermore, a scheme of enhancements to the existing public rights of way network has been agreed with Kent CoCo PROW. These proposals are detailed on the submitted revised Landscape Masterplan (Drawing Number P22-1221_EN_0012 Rev D). Collectively these updated proposals would serve to further reduce the potential for view effects on the PROW network in addition to the position previously set out in the LVA.
- 5.6. The matter of intervisibility and cumulative impact between the proposed development and the consented solar farm at Horton Wood was also raised by the Planning Officer following public feedback. Potential cumulative effects were addressed in Section 8 of the LVA which confirmed that any potential combined visibility would be extremely limited. It was identified that there may be some localised viewpoints where both schemes could be seen in longer distance views e.g. VP10 on Dartford Road (A225), however, in these instances the two schemes would be well separated and it is not considered that any notable cumulative effects on visual amenity would arise.
- 5.7. There is a 0.5km separation between the consented solar farm at Horton Wood and the proposed Chimmens Solar Farm. Indeed, ensuring an appropriate separation between the two schemes was an important design consideration from the outset of the project. The extent of this separation can be seen in viewpoints such as VP10 where the two schemes may both be seen. In VP10, the area between the two sites, which covers the land lying between School Lane and Mussenden Lane, can be seen to provide a clear visual break in the landscape in the centre of the view. This same visual break can be seen in VP5, where any visibility of the Horton Wood scheme in addition to the Chimmens Solar Farm would be restricted to a very small part of the view beyond the hedgerow which lines School Lane, with the majority of the Horton Wood scheme on the ground sloping to the north, which is not visible beyond the horizon.

Appendix 3



Closest distance is 238m to the redline. Native woodland planting will be in foreground and therefore panels will be screened.

Land in the foreground will continue to be farmed and rotated through crops with skylark plots

Furthest distance circa 1350m

Solar Tables - fixed tilt and south facing

Native Woodland Planting on NW boundary of Chimmens Solar Farm

Closest distance to redline circa 315m from where this image has been taken