

# LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT 11

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## INTRODUCTION

11.1 This section addresses the potential landscape and visual impacts that may be caused by the proposed New England Resource Recovery Centre (located within the existing quarry area) and the proposed access road which would link the development to the A38 at Lee Mill. Full details of the proposed development are contained within Chapter 3 – Description of Development and the Design and Access Statement (Volume 5).

11.2 This section is split into five main sub-sections as follows:

- an **INTRODUCTION, OUTLINE METHODOLOGY** and identification of potential landscape and visual receptors;
- a **BASELINE** assessment of the existing landscape and visual amenity;
- a review of the potential landscape and visual effect sources within the **DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS**;
- an examination of the likely **RESIDUAL IMPACTS** for both landscape and visual; and
- a **CONCLUSION** on the likely landscape and visual impact of the proposed development.

11.3 The nature of landscape and visual impact is outlined as follows:

*“Landscape and Visual assessments are separate, although linked procedures”*

*“Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how it is experienced.”*

*“Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes, and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Outline Methodology

11.4 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraph 2.13, 2.14 and 2.15.

<sup>2</sup> Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. (2002) Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 2nd Ed.  
New England RCC

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- 11.5 Full details of the methodology are included in Appendix 11/1 at the end of this section. A brief summary of the methodology is outlined below, but reference to Appendix 11/1 should be made for full details.
- 11.6 A desk top review and site visit of the existing site was undertaken to identify potential landscape and visual receptors, such as footpath users, residents, designated landscapes and landscape character areas. This information was used to inform early development design work.
- 11.7 The nature of the proposed development was reviewed as details emerged to identify the aspects of the development likely to cause landscape and visual effects. Mitigations measures were formulated to limit or modulate these effects and used to develop the proposed landscape master plan.
- 11.8 Sensitivities to the proposed development were assigned to the identified receptors. The potential magnitude of change caused by the proposed development was assessed with reference to site survey work, photographs, the proposed development drawings, computer modelling and visualisations of the proposals. A combination of the sensitivity and magnitude of change was used to identify the likely level of final effect. This process was designed to be based on objective measurement of various criteria, but ultimately is a matter of professional judgement.
- 11.9 Identified effects can have a variety of characteristics as follows.<sup>3</sup>

*“Effects can be negative (adverse) or positive (beneficial); direct, indirect, secondary or cumulative and can be permanent or temporary (short, medium or long term). They can also arise at different scales (local, regional or national) and have different levels of significance (local, regional or national).”*

## Consultations

- 11.10 Consultation was carried for the project as a whole as identified in Volume 1 – Planning Supporting Statement and through the process of seeking a scoping opinion.
- 11.11 A scoping opinion dated 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009 from Devon County Council (ref; Ivybridge/ESR10) which made reference to landscape and Visual issues. This document states the following for consideration within the assessment and/or proposals:

*“The proposed installation is within a sensitive landscape and visible from both the Dartmoor National Park and South Devon AONB – an assessment of the landscape impacts needs to follow the methodology given in “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Second Edition*

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<sup>3</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraph 7.6

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2002”, *The Landscape Institute and the Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment.*”

## Dartmoor National Park

*The landscape assessment will need to address the impact of the proposed development on views of and from the National Park.*

*Sensitive receptor points (open access land, public rights of way, highways etc.) will need to be identified within the national park to understand the Zone of Visual Influence. Consideration will need to be given to the local topography, as the visual impact may extend further into the National Park than the fringe areas close to the A38 corridor. A range of receptor points at varying heights, directions and distances from the proposal need to be agreed.*

*Photomontages, cross referenced with maps should be used to determine the extent of visibility and assess the landscape impact – these need to include existing and proposed views, taking into consideration any mitigation strategies proposed and the timescale, for any new planting to establish.*

## South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

*The choice of viewpoints for landscape impact assessment as seen from South Devon AONB should take account of the way elevation increases southwards away from the inland AONB inland boundary. The sites selected should therefore use more elevated AONB sites which are not necessarily the closest. The Visual Impact Assessment should also assess the impact of any power lines.*

- 11.12 Due to the requirement in the scoping opinion for receptor points to be agreed in the case of the National Park, direct consultation was sought on this matter. Louise Smith of the Dartmoor National Park Authority was contacted by phone with regard to requirements for specific viewpoints within the National Park. It was agreed that the general approach by SLR to the LVIA, using Zone of Theoretical Visibility studies (ZTVs) and consideration of views from Henlake Down and Hanger Down was acceptable. The need for consideration of other more distant viewpoints in the area of Western Beacon/Butterdon Hill was discussed and agreed. It was also agreed that views from far distant locations such as Penn Beacon are unlikely to perceive the proposed development due to distance. The consultation was of an informal and general nature and no specific viewpoint locations were requested.

## **Documents Referenced**

- 11.13 A full list of documents referenced in the production of this assessment is listed in the methodology section of Appendix 11/1 at the end of this report.

## **Potential Landscape and Visual Receptors**

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- 11.14 The initial study area for the landscape and visual assessment has been resolved by the Zone of Theoretical Visibility studies and the area chosen is shown on drawing 11/1 – Landscape Receptors. This area has been chosen to reflect the nature of the proposed development and has been defined with the benefit of professional experience of similar projects.
- 11.15 A desktop review has been undertaken to identify landscape and visual receptors that might be sensitive to the proposals within the study area, as well as identifying the nearest landscape designations. This review also included use of the MAGIC (Multi Government Geographical Information for the Countryside) for a 10 km radius around the site (please see Appendix 11/2 for details). Table 11.1 below includes a list of these receptors, and their approximate direction and distance from the nearest application boundary. The positions of the receptors that are present within the study area are marked on drawings 11/1 – Landscape Receptors and 11/2 – Regional and District Landscape Character Assessment.

**Table 11.1  
POTENTIAL RECEPTORS**

Potential Landscape and Visual Receptor	Location	Distance (km)	Comment
<b>National Landscape Designations</b>			
Dartmoor National Park (NP)	N	2.2(A) 3.4(B)	Principally covers elevated land to the north and northeast of the study area
South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	S	2.2(A) 2.7(B)	Located to the south of the study area below the A379
<b>Local Landscape and Landscape Related Designations</b>			
Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV)	NE, E, NW	1.2(A) 2.4(B)	Includes landscape between the National Park and AONB to the east and area mostly covered by woodland to the north west of the study area
<b>National Character Assessment (Natural England)</b>			
Dartmoor (150)	N	1.5(A) 2.8(B)	Covers a large proportion of the northern half of the study area
South Devon (151)	SE	N/A	Includes application site
<b>South Devon Landscape Character Assessment (South Hams District Council)</b>			
Open Coastal Plateaux	S,SE	2.7(A) 3.2(B)	Just visible
River Valley Slopes and	S,SE	2.2(A)	Area to south east of study area

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Potential Landscape and Visual Receptor	Location	Distance (km)	Comment
Combes		2.7(B)	and within AONB along southern edge of study area
Moorland Edge Slopes	N	2.0(A) 3.2(B)	Large areas within the northern half of the study area
Upper Farmed Wooded Slopes	NW	3.3(A) 3.4(B)	Distinct area to the northwest of study area
Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes	N/A	N/A	Includes part of the application area, the Yealm river valley in a northerly direction and A38 corridor as it heads east towards Ivybridge
Estuaries	SW	4.2(A) 4.7(B)	Just reach into the study area in the south west.
Unsettled Farmed Valley Floors	SW	2.5(A) 3.8(B)	Just reach into the study area in the south west.
Lowland Plains	N/A	N/A	Includes part of the application area and cover most of the southern half of the study area, to the north this area forms the broad transition between Unsettled Marine Levels and Moorland Edge Slopes
Urban	W	2.4(A) 2.6(B)	Covers Plympton and eastern edge of Plymouth; to west of study area
<b>Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest</b>			
Saltram House	W	5.7(A) 6.0(B)	Situated to the south west of Plympton, to the far west of the study area on the A38.
Flete	SSE	2.7(A) 3.3(B)	Situated to the south of the A379 in the south eastern corner of the study area.
Plympton House	WNW	4.7 (A) 4.9 (B)	Located within the settlement of Plympton
<b>Recreational Receptors</b>			
Erme Plym Trail	S, W	2.7(A) 3.3(B)	Extends along the southern and eastern edge of the study area passing through the AONB, AGLV and NP
West Devon Way / Devon Coast to Coast cycle route	E	7.3(A) 7.6(B)	Follows the River Plym Valley (covered by AGLV) to the north west of the study area.
<b>Historic Features (Scheduled Ancient Monuments)</b>			
Many scattered across study area; nearest notable	W	1.5(A) 1.9(B)	The closest grouping (including Wasteberry Camp) are located to

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Potential Landscape and Visual Receptor	Location	Distance (km)	Comment
feature being Wasteberry Camp (Iron Age Hillfort)			the east of the application site in an area which the ZTV demonstrate as having limited visibility.

Note; Distances are shown from both the nearest point on the application boundary (A) and centre of proposed EfW building (B) to the boundary of the receptor.

11.16 A number of viewpoints are used to assess the significance of potential landscape and visual effects caused by the proposed development. These viewpoints are listed below in Table 11.2. These 18 viewpoints were chosen from a total of 33 viewpoints identified by field work on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009, and in relation to the criteria set out in paragraph 11.89 below. A number of these viewpoints were chosen to reflect issues raised by the scoping responses, and from consultation with Dartmoor national Park. The position of these viewpoints is illustrated on drawings 11/5 and 11/6.

**Table 11.2  
VIEWPOINTS**

Viewpoint		Grid Reference		Description
		Easting	Northing	
A	Rook Tor	260292	61449	Distant view from Dartmoor National Park directly north
B	Public Footpath, Near Lee Mill	259662	55941	Edge of Lee Mill and potential housing development
C	Beach Road, Near Superstore	260353	55924	Busy road network and access to superstore
D	Uppaton	261638	58038	Edge of Hanger Down
E	A38 Bridge near Lee Mill	260146	55661	Overlooking junction and A38 access to Lee Mill
F	Henlake Down	262817	57052	View from Down above Ivybridge
G	Ivybridge	262863	56573	View from residential area of Ivybridge
H	Western Beacon	264895	57383	Distant view from Dartmoor National Park and area of Two Moors Way to northeast
I	Coyton Farm	260808	54143	Local road to east
J	Near Knap Cross	260207	53392	Local road between Knap cross and Winsor Cross to southeast
K	South Devon AONB, Near Splatt	259686	51499	View from Erme Plym Trail and AONB
L	Treby Farm	258405	53489	Secondary road to southwest
M	New England Rd,	259043	54391	Local road to west

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	Near Southwood Barn			
N	Sherford	255435	54299	Local road near to edge of proposed new settlement
O	Plympton	256196	55240	View from road near to the edge of Plympton
P	Lower Langage	257685	56306	View from local road to northwest
Q	Headon Down Near Ledgate Lane	257724	58686	Distant view from near Headon Down
R	New Park Road, Near Lee Mill	259236	55660	Access road from A38

## LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS & POLICIES

### Introduction

- 11.17 Landscape designations and the value attached to particular landscapes are two of a number of criteria considered in identifying the relative sensitivity of the landscape to a proposed development. Appendix 11/3 contains a list of relevant landscape policies found within the South West Regional Spatial Strategy, Devon Structure Plan 2001-16, South Hams Local Plan 1989-2001, Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-2012, South Devon AONB Management Plan 2009-14 and the Devon County Council Waste Local Plan.
- 11.18 Aspects of planning guidance and policy which are of particular relevance to this landscape and visual assessment are examined in greater detail below, as these reflect the value placed upon the landscape. Full details of the planning context are set out in Chapter 4 – Planning policy Context.

### National Landscape Designations

- 11.19 There is both a National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within the study area.
- 11.20 The Dartmoor National Park covers most of the north eastern quarter of the study area; this is recognised as a landscape of high value and sensitivity, the Dartmoor National Park Management Plan 2007-12 (December 2007) sets out key principles and policy which relates to not only the control of development within the National Park but also that which may impact on its setting. It states the following;

*“Key Principle: Protecting Dartmoor’s special qualities*

*3.All significant and intrusive developments within the National Park or which impinge upon Dartmoor’s special qualities will be strongly resisted”*

*“TR.M3:Controlling intrusive development (TR=Tranquillity and Remoteness)  
Planning policies and the planning process are used to resist new intrusive development both on Dartmoor and where they impact on its setting*

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*(achieved through the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks of the DNPA and constituent and neighbouring District, Borough and Unitary Councils)."*

- 11.21 The South Devon AONB is also a landscape of high value, and is supported by the South Devon AONB Management Plan 2009-14 – Final Draft (26 Feb 2009). This document includes a number of policies which relate to conservation and enhancement of the AONB. The following policies are of particular relevance to the type of development which is proposed at New England;

*"Introduction*

*The natural beauty of the AONB is strongly influenced by activities that take place beyond the boundary marked on the original designation map. A neighbouring 'area of significance' exists that extends both inland and seawards, from which a range of AONB special qualities are derived. A further 'zone of influence' exists beyond this. This plan should also be used to guide decision making for these surrounding areas that has the potential to affect the integrity of the AONB itself and the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB.*

*Section 1. The South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (P.12)*

*The South Devon AONB is:...*

- *A landscape of unspoiled rural character with limited large scale development...*
- *Unspoilt wide expansive panoramic views from plateaux locations.*

*"Lan/P4 (P.30)*

*Suitable alternatives to infrastructure responsible for visual intrusion will be sought together with improvements to reduce the visual impact of unsightly past development. Priorities include: intrusive energy generation, transmission and communications infrastructure; external lighting that creates night time scenic intrusion or skyglow; and visually dominating buildings that are inconsistent with landscape character."*

*"Lan/M5 (P.31)*

*Monitor the number of visually intrusive tower structures over 10m tall (Source: AONB Local Planning Authorities, South Devon AONB Unit)"*

*"Plan/F11 (P.59)*

*Certain forms of development such as wind turbines, telecommunication masts and (if poorly sited) new farm barns, can be particularly intrusive to the open skylines of the AONB. There are currently 43 telecommunication and energy transmission structures over 10m high in the AONB. Government policies and incentives for increasing energy from renewables is starting to create demand for installations in and around the area, including large commercial turbines."*

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## “Plan/P2 (P.60)

*Planning policies will be advocated which will conserve and enhance the natural beauty, distinctive countryside, settlements, buildings, undeveloped coast, estuaries and seascape of the AONB while supporting development that positively contributes to its special qualities.”*

## “Plan/P3 (P.60)

*Local Planning Authorities will consult the AONB Unit on planning policy and significant planning applications, and use the AONB Management Plan to aid their understanding of how to give "great weight" to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the AONB in their decision making as required by Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.”*

## “Plan/P4 (P.60)

*The character of skylines and open views into, within and out of the AONB will be protected. A rigorous approach will be taken to the siting of proposed skyline installations and industrial scale renewable energy installations. Whenever possible, development of this form should be located outside and away from the AONB boundary and sites designated for their nature conservation importance.”*

## “Plan/O3 (P.61)

*To ensure that no development is permitted outside the AONB which would damage the natural beauty, character and special qualities of the AONB itself.”*

## “Plan/O4 (P.61)

*To ensure that land use change is consistent with the distinctive landscape character of the AONB, and conserves and enhances its natural beauty and special qualities.”*

## *Regional Level Landscape Designations and Policy*

- 11.22 The final draft of the South West Regional Spatial Strategy includes a general policy which refers to the National Park and AONB which states;

### “Policy ENV3 Protected Landscapes

*Particular care will be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside the National Park or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which would damage their natural beauty, character and special qualities or otherwise prejudice the achievement of National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty purposes.”*

## *County Level Landscape Designations and Policy*

- 11.23 An 'Area of Great Landscape Value' (AGLV) has been identified within the study area. The area covered by the AGLV is approximately defined within the key diagram which forms part of the Devon Structure Plan 2001-16. The Structure plan also includes policy CO4 that states the following;

*"The Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLVs) are identified as areas of high landscape quality having strong and distinctive characteristics which make them particularly sensitive to new development. Within these areas the primary objective will be the active conservation and enhancement of their landscape quality and individual character. New development should therefore only be provided for where it would be limited in its visual impact. Local Plans should refine the boundaries of the AGLVs as illustrated on the Key Diagram in the context of more detailed assessments of landscape characteristics within each area."*

- 11.24 The Devon structure plan includes a number of policies which relate not only to designations found exclusively within the authority boundary but also those which extend further afield such as the afore mentioned National Park and AONB.

Policy CO2 relates to National Parks and states;

*"In Dartmoor National Park, the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage will be given priority over other considerations in the determination of development proposals. Particular care will also be taken to ensure that no development is permitted outside Dartmoor or Exmoor National Parks which would damage their natural beauty, character and special qualities or otherwise prejudice the achievement of National Park purposes."*

Policy CO3 relates to AONB and states;

*"In designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the conservation and enhancement of their natural beauty will be given priority over other considerations. Within these areas, development will only be provided for where it would support their conservation or enhancement or would foster their social and economic well-being provided that such development is compatible with their conservation. Particular care will also be taken to ensure that any development proposed adjacent to such areas does not damage their natural beauty."*

While they do not relate to specific designations there are several other policies are relevant to the type of development proposed; these state the following;

*"High Level Policy Aim 1*

*Conservation and Enhancement of the Devon Environment*

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1e) *Provide for new development where it would not conflict with the need to conserve and enhance the special environment and heritage of Devon.*"

"High Level Policy Aim 2 - Prudent Use of Resources

2e) *Reduce and minimise waste generated in Devon, encouraging all schemes which promote the recycling and re-use of raw materials and minimising the adverse environmental effects of waste disposal.*

2f) *Minimise energy usage, conserve energy resources and facilitate energy generation from renewable resources.*"

"Devon's Rural Areas

3.27 *Development in the rural areas should be limited in scale and primarily related to meeting the needs of the local community and promoting rural regeneration. The strategy provides for small scale development in Local Centres in rural areas but limits development in the open countryside.*"

"Policy ST1 Sustainable Development

2) *protecting environmental assets – including landscape, the natural, built and historic environment - and ensuring that development proposals are well designed and sympathetic to Devon's distinctive character.*"

"Policy CO6 Quality of New Development

*In planning for new development the Local Planning Authority should maintain and improve the quality of Devon's environment by requiring attention to good design and layout that respects the character of the site and its surroundings and by providing for regeneration and conservation, townscape enhancement, traffic management and the retention and provision of open space.*"

## Registered Parks and Gardens

11.25 The Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England was established and is maintained by English Heritage.

*"Registration is a material consideration in planning terms (Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, 2.24, September 1994) so, following an application for development which would affect a registered park or garden, local planning authorities must, when determining whether or not to grant permission, take into account the historic interest of the site."*<sup>4</sup>

11.26 The MAGIC search (see Appendix 11/2) identifies four Registered Parks and Gardens within 10km of the development site. These are:

- Saltram House;
- Flete;
- Plympton House; and

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<sup>4</sup> English Heritage - <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.1413>

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- Langdon Court Hotel.
- 11.27 Drawing 11/1 – Landscape Receptors indicates the position of the first three of these Registered Parks and Gardens as identified in Table 11.1. **Langdon Court Hotel** is outside the chosen study area at a distance of 8.8km, the ZTV study indicates visibility unlikely and no effects are anticipated.
- 11.28 **Saltram House** is described in the register as follows;
- “Saltram lies c2km south-west of Plympton and c2km east of Plymouth, on the east bank of the Laira or River Plym some 1.5km north of Plymstock. The c 180ha site comprises some 15ha of gardens around the House, and c 130ha of parkland, woods and agricultural land.”*
- And
- “To the south and south-east a soft boundary is formed by agricultural land enclosed by hedges and ornamental plantations including Sellar Acres and Pomphlett Plantation, the latter being bounded to the south by C20 disused quarry workings. Hardwick Wood and further parkland to the north-east, bisected by the cutting accommodating the late-C20 A38 dual carriageway, are bounded by late-C20 housing. Generally, the site slopes west to the Laira from high ground at Hardwick Wood, and in the C18 and C19 significant vistas were created from the House, the Castle and the wider park to the river and Plymouth. Some of these views were recorded in a series of late C18 paintings by William Tomkins (d 1792). A further important vista was created from Saltram house to the Arch at Boringdon in 1783. The Arch (not included in the registered area but listed grade II\* and part of Scheduled Monument 33780), stands c 2km north-north-east of the house,…”*
- 11.29 The focus of the house and important views is thus away from the proposed development site which lies 5.7km directly to the east. In addition woodland and plantations are found along the eastern boundary and the landform of Saltram generally slopes west away from the development site.
- 11.30 **Flete** is described as follows in the register;
- “Flete is situated c 2km south-west of the village of Ermington, to the south of the A379 Kingsbridge to Plymouth road, some 3km west of Modbury. The 190ha site comprises c 10ha of formal gardens and pleasure grounds, c 130ha of parkland and c 50ha of woodland.”*
- 11.31 The ZTVs indicate that no views of the proposed development would exist from the area of this designation.
- 11.32 **Plympton House** is located within the centre of the built up area of Plympton with over 1km of urban development between the designation and the edge of Plympton in the direction of the development site.

## EXISTING ENVIRONMENT - LANDSCAPE BASELINE

### *Introduction*

- 11.33 The landscape baseline represents a study of the existing and developing landscape, against which changes caused by the proposed development can be assessed.
- 11.34 Current landscape assessment practice utilises landscape character assessment as the methodology for analysing and assessing the potential impacts of any development upon the local landscape.
- 11.35 The former Countryside Agency (now Natural England) guidelines make a clear distinction between the characterisation process (in which the attributes of the landscape are described) and the judgement making process. This section of the assessment examines existing character studies and undertakes a characterisation process, to form the landscape baseline. Later sections make judgements about the potential effects of the proposed development based upon the landscape.

### *Existing Landscape Appraisals of the Application Site and its Surroundings*

- 11.36 The Countryside Agency guidelines identify three main levels of Landscape Character Assessment:
- National and regional scale;
  - County, district and unitary authority scale; and
  - Local, parish and site scale.

### *National/Regional Character Assessment*

- 11.37 Appendix 11/3 contains details of National Character Areas the study area. These National Character Areas (NCAs) provide the national and regional scale assessments for the study area. The boundary between these NCAs is shown on Drawing 11/2 – Regional and District Landscape Character.
- 11.38 The application area is located within NCA 151 – South Devon. This character area includes all land to the south of the development site and to the west. NCA 150 – Dartmoor includes the remaining section of the study area to the northeast. These two NCAs extend well beyond the limit of the study area and the full text associated with each NCA is recorded in Appendix 11/2.
- 11.39 The key characteristics relevant to the proposed development in NCA 151 – South Devon are as follows:
- Rounded hills, without a strong pattern, separated by steep, intricate wooded valleys;

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- Red and pink soils appear when parts of this mixed farming area is ploughed;
- Sunken lanes link numerous farmsteads and hamlets, with cob, slate and thatched buildings;
- Wildflower rich, often treeless, Devon banks; and
- Wooded rias with large expanses of tidal water and mudflats, extending far inland.

11.40 The description of this NCA includes the following relevant sections;

*“South Devon is a much-dissected plateau where steep, wooded valleys separate rounded hills, forming a complex and intricate pattern, although the plateau is apparent from the higher ground.”*

*“At its core, South Devon is a remote, fertile, agricultural landscape. The rivers Dart, Avon, Erme and Yealm are separated by smooth, rounded hills and deep valleys, with an underlying east-west pattern. It is a patchwork landscape, with larger fields on high, flatter land and a more intact, smaller field pattern on the valley sides. This complexity is emphasised by the network of Devon banks, which separate fields of irregular shape in mixed cultivation. The hedges on the banks are often closely trimmed and have a profusion of colourful wildflowers. The hedges give a sense of enclosure, particularly where they lie alongside the sunken lanes that connect the farmsteads and hamlets.”*

*“At its northern edge, the area merges with the predominantly pastoral landscape of the Dartmoor fringe, where patches of heathland are present.”*

*“Although there is a transition northwards, there is a strong contrast with Dartmoor beyond.”*

11.41 All of the key characteristics for NCA 150 – Dartmoor are found within the section of NCA within the study area and are summarised below:

- Strong contrasts between open, windswept moors with wide views and sheltered landscapes of valleys and fringes;
- Central high moorland with a wild landscape of tors, clitters, bogs, grassland, heather and bracken;
- Around the moorland core is a gentler landscape of small, irregular pasture fields with dry stone walls and banks, cut by large, terraced, wooded valleys which shelter farmsteads and hamlets. The valleys have steep-sided, fast-flowing streams and a network of sunken lanes;
- Main villages and towns lie beyond the outer edge of moor but are linked to it by ancient roads and lanes;

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- Granite and slate in cottages, farmhouses, villages, abandoned mine buildings and walls, unifies the landscape;
- Mining industry has made a strong impact on the landscape, with dramatically-sited spoil heaps and ruins; and
- Very high historic interest from Bronze Age onwards: particular features include highly visible features such as hut circles, standing stones, reaves, field systems, hillforts.

11.42 The description of this NCA includes the following relevant sections;

*“The few stunted and distorted trees are an essential part of the bleak, windswept upland character of the moor which is dominated for much of the year by sombre colours such as browns and greys. The Dartmoor mists and fogs, the absence of settlement and the evocative views of prehistoric monuments, such as standing stones, stone circles, reaves and hillforts, are the essence of this landscape, where only forestry plantations and reservoirs are evidence of modern influence.”*

*“At the moorland edge, failed enclosures have reverted to heathland and bracken and there are small clumps of woodland, some conifers, and clusters of sycamore and beech around the farmsteads.”*

### *County and District Character Assessment*

11.43 The site is located within the South Hams District of South Devon. A draft Landscape Character Assessment and Guidelines was produced by South Hams in July 2001.

11.44 Currently a Landscape Character Assessment is being prepared for the whole of Devon. Data for the area of South Devon AONB and South Hams District Council is available in draft format from the South Hams District Council web site. This assessment supersedes the previous 2001 assessment and has thus been used in this assessment (hence referred to as the South Devon Study). The Landscape Character Types identified in this assessment are illustrated in Drawing 11/2 – Regional and District Landscape Character and the development site includes both the ‘Lowland Plains’ and ‘Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes’. Although this assessment may not be finalised and published the desk top and field survey work undertaken for the landscape descriptions and character information will remain relevant.

11.45 Given the greater level of detail provided by the South Devon Study it has been used in this assessment to assess the potential effects of the proposed development on the landscape of the study area.

11.46 A total of eight Landscape Character Types (LCTs) have been identified within the study area. However, some areas lie wholly within the Dartmoor

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National Park and have not be classified within the South Devon Study. No equivalent recent landscape study is identified by the Landscape Character Network Database (<http://www.landscapecharacter.org.uk>). The areas concerned are a limited section of the northeast of the study area, and it is thus proposed to use the Dartmoor NCA to assess the potential effects of the proposed development on this area. The full text associated with the South Devon Study is included in Appendix 11/2.

11.47 The Key Characteristics for the and 'Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes' area are as follows;

- Gently rolling landform, sloping up from valley floor;
- Variable size fields with wide, low boundaries and irregular pattern;
- Pastoral land use, often with wooded appearance;
- Many hedgerow trees, copses and streamside tree rows;
- Settled, with varied building ages, styles and settlement size;
- Much use of stone;
- Winding lanes, often with very tall earth banks;
- Streams and ditches; and
- Tranquil and intimate.

11.48 The Key Characteristics for the 'Lowland Plains' area are as follows;

- Level to gently rolling plains;
- Densely settled, with a mixed pattern of residential development and isolated farms with extensive outbuildings;
- Local dominance of stone as building material, but great variety of materials and styles throughout;
- Mixed farmland, with arable just dominant and many other land uses, including extensive extractive industry;
- Irregular medium to large-scale field pattern;
- Very treed field boundaries with low roadside hedges;
- Small discrete woodlands and linear amenity planting;
- Sparse highway network; and
- Long views marred by pylons and communication masts.

11.49 These two LCTs represent the landscape in the general area of the proposed development, but not that of the development site specifically. The character of the development site and adjacent landscape includes additional Key Characteristics, derived from field work and desktop study undertaken for this landscape and visual impact assessment, as follows:

- Dense woodland along narrow valley floor;
- Modified by previous mineral extraction, creating a sharp transition between plain to valley; and
- Tipping and land-raising activities to the north.

## *Local, Parish and Site Character Assessments*

- 11.50 No character assessments have been identified for the site and its surroundings at this scale. However, the following section assesses the components of the landscape and attempts to identify the important aspects to enable a characterisation process to be undertaken.

## **Landscape Appraisal**

- 11.51 The Countryside Agency guidance on landscape appraisal recommends that landscapes are initially characterised, and that judgements about the nature and sensitivity of these landscapes are then based on this characterisation process. The Agency's guidance recommends that the characterisation process should be based on an assessment of natural factors, cultural social factors and aesthetic and perceptual factors.
- 11.52 These factors have been examined for the application site and the local landscape within the study area. Each of these factors is assessed below. Drawing 11/4 – Landscape Context is based on an aerial photograph of the local area and provides additional information not present on the Ordnance Survey (O.S.) 1:25,000 map used as the base for many of the other drawings. The Landscape Context drawing illustrates the rural location of the proposed development site, south of Lee Mill, the A38 and two landfill sites. A site survey plan is contained in Volume 1 Planning Supporting Statement and shows the proposed development site and adjacent areas, illustrating the topography of the site.

## *Natural and Semi-natural Characteristics*

- 11.53 The topography of the study area is illustrated in Drawing 11/5 – Topography which also shows the extent of the study area as illustrated by the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map data.
- 11.54 Drawing 11/5 illustrates the topography of the area through colour coding between contour levels at 40m intervals. This drawing identifies the higher ground of the Dartmoor as red/brown in the northeast corner of the study area, with the highest elevation in the study area, including Penn Beacon (429m AOD) to the north and Ugborough Moor (461m AOD) to the northeast. The lower surrounding 'downs' such as Hanger Down (229m AOD) and Headon Down (220m AOD) appear as yellow, around the edges of Dartmoor. The area of rolling landscape that comprises the majority of the study area is shown as a range of greens between 40-160m AOD. Major rivers and valley floors such as the Yealm, Erme and Plym are identified by a paler blue/green (0-40m AOD), with areas of estuary and sea (0m AOD) in blue.
- 11.55 The topography within the area of the development site is largely comprised of the rolling and undulating plain landscape with hill top elevations ranging

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from 80-120m AOD to the immediate west and 80-140m to the east. The plain is dissected at the location of the development site by the valley of the River Yealm (circa 30-40m AOD), running north to south. The Yealm valley is narrow at the position of New England Quarry and directly south, until Yealmbridge is reached. To the north the valley widens out around the Lee Mill area before becoming confined again as it approaches the 'Downs' and higher ground of Dartmoor.

- 11.56 The drainage pattern is influenced by the radial drainage of Dartmoor to the northeast, with the Plym, Yealm and Erme draining west, southwest and south respectively from Dartmoor to the coast. A number of drowned river valleys (rias) are present where rising sea level has flooded old river valleys near to the coast. This includes the ria of the River Yealm, circa 5km to the southwest.
- 11.57 Land cover generally consists of mixed farming with a tendency towards pasture on the lower ground and arable on the higher hill tops. Hedgerows and hedgerow trees are widespread, with oak being the main hedgerow tree. Tree lines occur along streams and ditches in the lowland areas. Along the Yealm valley and some nearby valleys such as Brook Lake (1km to east of EfW), and Silverbridge Lake (2km east of EfW), the valley floors contain linear woodlands. In the case of the Yealm adjacent to the development site, this woodland is extensive and ancient in origin.
- 11.58 In the more exposed parts of the study area within the Dartmoor National Park, the mixed farmland gives way to rough grassland and heathland, with pasture and woodland confined to valleys.

### *Cultural and Social Factors*

- 11.59 A period of early settlement from the Neolithic to mid Iron Age led to the clearance of the Dartmoor woodlands and resultant open landscape. A large number of important historic sites are present from this period as indicated by the scheduled monuments illustrated on Drawing 11/1. Early settlement in the remaining parts of the study area has been hidden by latter settlement and cultivation. Some features are recorded such as Wasteberry Camp, an Iron Age hill fort some 2km west of the development site.
- 11.60 Settlement of the majority of the study area occurred in the 7th Century with the arrival of the Saxons, including the resettlement of Dartmoor. From this period the demand for land resulting in a gradual extension of seasonal grazing up to the higher moors and clearance of remaining woodland area. The more fertile lowland was given over to pasture, with wool and cloth becoming major medieval industries. Orchards around most farms also creating a thriving cider industry. Land use was since been superseded by dairying and more recently mixed and arable land use.
- 11.61 Mining in the area of Dartmoor became a significant industry from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards with the main product being tin, but including lead, copper, iron and arsenic. Exploitation of mineral continued on Dartmoor from the

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- 1830s with the extensive working of china clay at the Lee Moor works, which remains active.
- 11.62 Settlement patterns consist of dispersed farmsteads and hamlets, and a wider pattern of nucleated villages. Settlements are generally located in sheltered valleys or at river crossing points or ports such as Yealmpton (circa 3km to southwest), Ermington (circa 3.5km southeast) and Ivybridge (circa 2.5km to northeast).
- 11.63 Yealmpton is located on the A379, which links the villages of Brixton (circa 4km southwest) and Modbury (circa 6km southeast) to Plymouth. Ermington is located off the A379, on the A3121.
- 11.64 Ivybridge has expanded to become a town due to its development as a 'mill town' and position on the Exeter to Plymouth railway. The development of the A38 bypass has furthered the communication network of the town, and facilitated additional growth.
- 11.65 The settlement of Lee Mill is located adjacent to the A38, directly north of the proposed development site. Lee Mill consists of a small village to the west of an original crossing point of the River Yealm, but did not developed much beyond the original settlement. Recent development has seen the establishment of Lee Mill Industrial Estate to the east of the Yealm, making use of the A38 access (drawing 11.4).
- 11.66 Plympton (circa 3km west) developed initially as a port prior to the River Plym silting up and trade moving downstream to Plymouth. Its importance developed due to its connection with local tin mining, but it has since become a suburb of Plymouth. The new Langage Power Station is sited on the eastern edge of Plympton, and construction of this new power station is nearing completion.
- 11.67 To the south of Plympton, the suburban edge of Plymouth is formed by the settlements of Elburton and Plymstock (circa 5.5km west).
- 11.68 A network of small winding unclassified roads link the various villages to the main 'A' road network and larger settlements.
- 11.69 The development of tourism in the region dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Within the study area tourism is largely linked to Dartmoor and informal recreation. A number of long distance paths are present in the study area consisting of the Two Moors Way, Erme Plym Trail and West Devon Way. The Two Moors Way and Erme Plym Trail combine to form a long distance coast to coast route from Lynmouth in North Devon to Wembury in South Devon. Within the study area the Two Moors Way has wide open views across South Devon as it descends down from the upland moors of Dartmoor, prior to connecting to the Erme Plym Trail at Ivybridge. The Erme Plym Trail follows a meandering route across the rolling and undulating landscape of South Devon, winding its way in and out of the South Devon AONB, to the south of the proposed development.

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- 11.70 The Devon Coast to Coast cycle route is also located within the study area running north along the Plym Valley to the far west of the study area, along the same path as the West Devon Way.
- 11.71 National Cycle Routes within the area are confined to National Route 2, which roughly follows the route of the A38 from Ivybridge to Plympton. Proposals exist for extending the route from Plympton to Elburton / Plymstock on the edge of Plymouth, via the new settlement of Sherford. There are also proposals to extend National Route 2 from Elburton / Plymstock eastwards towards the south of Yealmpton, and then through the small hamlet of Dunstone, before heading south out of the study area.

## *Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects*

- 11.72 The aesthetic qualities of the background landscape of the study area are summarised in Table 11.3, divided into the main categories identified within the guidance<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 11.3**  
**AESTHETIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE GENERAL**  
**LANDSCAPE OF THE STUDY AREA**

<b>Aesthetic Factors</b>	
<b>Enclosure</b>	Open exposed moorland on Dartmoor and around the 'Down' fringes, grades into more enclosed undulating land, with enclosure formed by hedgerow, trees and banks. In some areas narrow wooded valleys begin to create a tight scale of enclosure.
<b>Balance</b>	Generally a harmonious and balanced landscape whether considering the open spaces of Dartmoor or the undulating plan and valley landscape elsewhere. However some discordant elements can be found, around settlements, within the large china clay landscapes to the north of the study area, are caused by pylons routes and their convergence on the Langage power station.
<b>Pattern</b>	The study area is generally a long settled agricultural landscape with an organised/regular pattern of settlement and agricultural use.
<b>Diversity</b>	The combination of deep valleys and rounded hills creates a complex landscape for much of the study area. The area of Dartmoor is less complex due to its more open nature and land cover, although the irregular nature of its moorland still provides a degree of diversity, within a simple combination of landscape components
<b>Scale</b>	Scale varies considerably across the study area from the vast

5 Landscape Character Assessment – Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) – Paragraph 5.12 and Box 5.1

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	scale of Dartmoor to the deep, intimate, wooded valleys.
<b>Form and Line</b>	The smooth rounded hills give a rolling form to the landscape and distort the larger straight field boundaries, to give gently curving lines over the hill tops. The smaller fields on the hill sides have a more sloping angular character leading down to sinuous valleys snaking through the hills. The higher ground and larger scale of Dartmoor reveals a more sloping and angular character as latter enclosures extend up the fringes of Dartmoor. Such form is reflected in the regular slopes and rounded angles of the moorland skyline.
<b>Colour</b>	Dartmoor is dominated by muted browns and greys for much of the year, with a fringes of stark white around the china clay area of Lee Moor. Whereas South Devon can reveal warm red arable soils, amongst the muted yellow and green pasture and woodlands of dark green and winter brown. In contrast the A38 supplies an regular passage of coloured cars, and modern development has introduced large white and grey sheds into the valley landscapes.
<b>Movement</b>	This is a still landscape away from the artery of the A38 and bustle of the market towns and suburbs, with movement often limited to occasional farm traffic and little else.

- 11.73 The aesthetic qualities of the landscape of the development site and adjacent areas are summarised in Table 11.4, divided into the main categories identified within the guidance.

**Table 11.4  
AESTHETIC ATTRIBUTES OF THE APPLICATION SITE  
AND ADJACENT LANDSCAPE**

<b>Aesthetic Factors</b>	
<b>Enclosure</b>	The development site is generally enclosed by the narrow Yealm valley, adjacent rounded hills and excavated mineral void. The extent of woodland and developing scrub within the valley and on the valley sides increases the level of enclosure. The adjacent landscape and development site open out towards the north where the Yealm forms a wider valley just south of the A38. The surrounding hills are enclosed by hedgerow and tree vegetation but have restricted views out and across the study area.
<b>Balance</b>	The development site is generally harmonious in nature given the rounded quarry void and lake, side of valley setting and wooded nature. The adjacent area becomes discordant to the north due to the influence of the landfill areas, pylons and A38.
<b>Pattern</b>	A random pattern is evident in the rock faces and encroaching scrub thickets and remnants of its quarrying history.
<b>Diversity</b>	This is a diverse landscape, due to the varied landform, quarrying components, woodland, river and landfill operations to the north.

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<b>Scale</b>	The scale of the development site is medium within the old quarry area and to the north, becoming small scale and even intimate on the floor of the Yealm valley as it passes east of the quarry void.
<b>Form and Line</b>	The site area has a rounded curving nature defined by the natural landform and round extraction void. The pylons to the north introduce a linear feature which is mirrored by the A38.
<b>Colour</b>	Muted greens, browns and weathered rock.
<b>Movement</b>	A still landscape of no movement, enlivened by the swift flowing river.

## *Landscape Dynamics*

11.74 It is recognised that most landscapes are constantly evolving and changing. Given the potential timescale of the proposals it is important to identify these aspects as part of the baseline against which to assess potential impacts.

11.75 The South Devon NCA records general pressures on the landscape as follows;

*“The move to intensive arable farming on the plateau in recent decades has led to the removal of many Devon banks. The rate of loss has now lessened but lack of management and erosion by livestock has resulted in the continuing deterioration of the remainder.*

*Tourism has expanded in recent years, with road schemes bringing improved access to the area. This has, in turn, resulted in increased demands for development of more or better facilities and accommodation, such as chalets and caravan sites. It has also led to an increase in road traffic, resulting in congestion along narrow lanes, with damage to verges and hedgebanks, as well as parking problems.*

*There is pressure for the development of retirement homes and bungalows, which have already brought a suburban quality to many villages.*

*On the Dartmoor fringe, fragments of heathland are vulnerable to change and management.”*

11.76 The Langage Power station has been identified as a major consented development within the Landscape and Visual Impact study area and is currently being constructed. Langage is the first new power station to be built in the country for 5 years and generates electricity from gas. It was originally due to start operation in spring 2009, but has been delayed by approximately

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12 months. The development<sup>6</sup> includes a wide oval shaped stack housing, circa 10m at its narrowest and circa 20m at it's widest. The stack height is circa approximately 65m, reaching to a noted 155m AOD height. The development also includes a number of large scale buildings such as the gas compressor building, turbine hall, and air cooled condensers. These buildings have various heights ranging from a noted 115.7m – 118m AOD (circa 30m in height). Also present on the site are two pylons at a noted 144.235m AOD (circa 45m in height). The total area of the power station plan is estimated at 8.6ha.

- 11.77 Sherford is a planned new settlement on the outskirts of Plymouth and would involve the expansion of the urban edge of Elburton north eastwards to meet the A38 on the outskirts of Plympton. The edge of the settlement development area would be circa 3.3km from the proposed EfW development boundary, with a green buffer, sports area and park extending closer to the proposed EfW development by circa 500m.

*“Sherford will deliver at least 4,000 dwellings by 2016, and in accordance with Policy ST8 of the Devon Structure Plan will be planned in such a way to allow for further development beyond 2016. The strategic proposal for a new community at Sherford is contained within Policy CS4 of the adopted Core Strategy.”<sup>7</sup>*

- 11.78 The further development referred to would be westwards away from the proposed EfW development. Plymouth and South Hams have resolved to grant outline planning permission for the Sherford proposal, subject to the completion of legal agreements. Permission is expected to be granted in near the end of October 2009.<sup>8</sup>
- 11.79 A proposed minor housing development of 65 homes is proposed on the northern edge of Lee Mill approximately 1km to the north of the EfW building. Although no indication of intent to consent exists at this stage, a request was received via the scoping responses to consider the potential effects of the proposed EfW development on this site, due to its perceived local importance and value to the community.<sup>9</sup>
- 11.80 Landfilling at the Strashleigh Hams landfill site to the north of the application site has been completed and the site is currently partly restored.

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<sup>6</sup> Details are approximate estimates only scaled from pdf drawings dated December 2006 and present on the South Hams District Council web site ([http://www.southhams.gov.uk/onlinedocuments?ref\\_no=49/2443/06/F](http://www.southhams.gov.uk/onlinedocuments?ref_no=49/2443/06/F)).

<sup>7</sup> Adopted Sherford New Community Area Action Plan August 2007

<sup>8</sup> As at 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 (<http://www.southhams.gov.uk/index/sherford.htm>)

<sup>9</sup> Scoping response from Sparkwell Parish Council

## *Landscape Character, Classification and Evaluation*

- 11.81 The detailed landscape appraisal has further identified the main components of the landscape of the study area and in the locality of the site, and is sufficient to allow an accurate assessment to be conducted in conjunction with the identified South Devon landscape character types.

## *Potential for Landscape Enhancement*

- 11.82 Landscape enhancement within the local landscape could be achieved through the following
- restoration of the Strashleigh Hams landfill site;
  - management of woodland within the Yealm Valley; and
  - re-vegetation of parts of the existing quarry void.

## **VISUAL BASELINE**

### *Introduction*

- 11.83 Visual Impact Assessment relates to “changes that arise in the composition of the available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to peoples’ responses to the changes and to the overall effects with respect to visual amenity”, (“Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment”, Second Edition, *op.cit*). Initially, it is necessary to define the extent of visibility both within and outside the site.
- 11.84 The theoretical extent of visibility was initially identified by Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies at an early stage of the preparation of the proposals, using an early design iteration based on a similar building located at the site. These studies allowed the potential visual effect of the proposed development to be understood at an early stage, and taken into consideration in the design of the various components of the overall development.
- 11.85 Final ZTV studies were carried out after the design of the building was finalised to illustrate the worst case visual effects. The ZTVs are based on Ordnance Survey ‘Profile’ height data, combined with a model of the final building design as detailed in the development section. The results of the final studies are illustrated on drawings 6/4 – ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Main EfW Building)’, and 6/5 – ‘Zone of Theoretical Visibility (Twin 90m tall stacks)’. The stacks represent the tallest development elements proposed and have a more extensive visual envelope than the remaining development due to their height above the surrounding landscape. The main EfW building is the next tallest component and has a greater mass than the stacks, in terms of visible width and opacity. Other components of the proposed development have not had separate ZTV studies run for them as they are

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lower than the main EfW building and would thus have smaller visual envelopes in comparison.

- 11.86 These studies are based on a bare earth landform and take no account of the screening effects of vegetation. However, they do illustrate the worst case scenario. The individual viewpoint assessments describe the effects of existing vegetation and mitigation proposals on the views achieved. The full methodology used in the production of these ZTV studies is described in Appendix 11/1.

### *Field Work*

- 11.87 Analysis of the initial ZTV studies and Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 maps was undertaken to identify potential viewpoints and areas for field investigation based on the following criteria:
- Identified as potential receptors in the baseline;
  - Proximity to the site;
  - High concentrations of viewers, such as settlements, local recreational facilities etc;
  - Views from designated areas, private properties, footpaths and other receptors;
  - Views illustrating the visual character of the surrounding area;
  - Views illustrating the range and type of views present; and
  - Areas identified as having a high potential for visual impact from the ZTV.

### *General Visibility*

- 11.88 The field work identified the importance of the existing landform and the surrounding vegetation in limiting the extent of the visual envelope of the proposed development. The natural landform is illustrated on drawing 11/3 – Topography and drawing 11/4 – Landscape Setting illustrates the level of adjacent woodland and vegetation, which further mitigates views.

### *Choice of Final Viewpoints*

- 11.89 The final choice of viewpoints was made to illustrate the general visibility and visual character of the landscape and represent the most important landscape and visual receptors. The viewpoints chosen illustrate:
- views from residential properties;
  - views from important communication routes;
  - views from adjacent receptors; and
  - views from designated landscapes.

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- 11.90 The final viewpoints were chosen based on the above factors in paragraph 11.89 and after consultation as outlined in paragraph 11.11. A photograph of each existing view is included on the individual viewpoint drawings 11/7 - 24. The viewpoints are also shown on drawing 11/5 in relation to the ZVI of the proposed EFW buildings and listed in Table 6/2.
- 11.91 A number of the initial viewpoints were used to inform the early building design and rough visualisations were produced as part of this process. Examples of these early visualisations were included in the early design panel review drawings and architects submissions.

## *Viewpoint Photographs*

- 11.92 The viewpoint photographs have been mathematically scaled to match the actual view. To achieve this match the viewer should hold the photograph at a distance of 300mm from his/her eye, by doing so the size of elements shown within the photograph will match those of the actual view. This process will not replicate the complex nature of the human eye, binocular vision or the visual perception of a view. However, photographs reproduced without this methodology will either, under represent elements of the view because the photograph is too small, or over represent them because the photograph enlarges the view. This method thus represents an objective method of representing an actual view.

## *Viewpoints*

- 11.93 **Viewpoint A, Rook Tor.** This viewpoint is located directly north of the proposed development site on access land<sup>10</sup> within the Dartmoor National Park. The viewpoint was chosen in response to the landscape designations present at this location, the findings of the ZTV studies and consultations with the National Park Authority. More elevated viewpoints such as Penn Beacon were considered in consultation with the National Park Authority, but rejected due to the increased distance and thus reduced perception of the proposed development. The location of the viewpoint is within the 'Moorland Edge Slopes' landscape type of the South Devon landscape character assessment.
- 11.94 The view is a panoramic view partly directed south by the valley landform of the River Yealm. The moorland of Dartmoor (Butterdon Hill and Western Beacon) forms the skyline to the southeast, with the lower ground of Hanger Down slightly further south. To the southwest Headon Down, with its

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<sup>10</sup> Land depicted as 'Access Land' on the Ordnance Survey Explorer maps. Normally available for access on foot, for example access land created under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, National Trust land, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust land.

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associated China Clay activity, forms the upper valley side, gradually descending in elevation to the south. The new Langage power station stack is visible beyond Headon Down. To the south the village of Cornwood can be seen in the mid-ground, with undulating hills beyond screening the Lee Mill area. The South Devon plain and proposed development site are visible in the distance, with the plain extending to the AONB and beyond to form the skyline.

- 11.95 **Viewpoint B, Public Footpath near Lee Mill.** The A38 embankment crosses the Yealm Valley to the south of Lee Mill and form an effective screen to views looking south. However, further north but within the settlement of Lee Mill views over the A38 become possible. This viewpoint was chosen to reflect this and the worst case views from existing housing within Lee Mill and effects on the potential residential expansion of Lee Mill. The viewpoint lies on the boundary of the 'Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes' and the 'Lowland Plains' character types.
- 11.96 This is a partial view over hedgerow vegetation in winter. A degree of skyline clutter is present due to pylons and electricity poles in the fore ground and mid-distance. The residential edge of Lee Mill can be seen, with the Yealm valley apparent beyond, and marked by the break in the skyline hills.
- 11.97 **Viewpoint C, Beach Road near Superstore.** This viewpoint was chosen to illustrate views for motorists either using the local road network or gaining access to the A38. Beach Road descends to its junction with New Park Road and other roads providing access the Lee A38. The viewpoint lies on the boundary of the 'Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes' and the 'Lowland Plains' character types.
- 11.98 This is an open view directed along the line of the road by adjacent planting and hedgerows. The elevation of the viewpoint allows views south over the top of the A38 (glimpses of which are visible) to the land filling areas and pylons immediately north of new England Quarry.
- 11.99 **Viewpoint D, Uppaton.** This viewpoint was chosen to represent views from Headon Down and the type of view possible from residential properties within the Yealm valley to the north of Lee Mill. The location of the viewpoint is within the 'Moorland Edge Slopes' landscape type of the South Devon landscape character assessment.
- 11.100 This is an open panoramic view across pasture land. To the south the lower slopes of Headon Down descend to the railway line at the base of the Down. The landscape beyond consists of rolling hills, with Ivybridge screened by the landform and hedgerow to the southeast and Lee Mill and its industrial estate screened by intervening hills. Beyond the South Devon plain is visible between intervening hills, with the area of New England Quarry site visible on the side of the Yealm Valley.
- 11.101 **Viewpoint E, A38 Bridge near Lee Mill.** This viewpoint represents the glimpsed view possible for motorists heading west on the A38 towards Plymouth. It also focuses on the area of the proposed access road

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connection to the development site. The viewpoint lies within then the 'Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes' character type.

- 11.102 The view is glimpsed between planting along the A38 embankment and looks southwest across existing access roads to the Yealm valley beyond.
- 11.103 **Viewpoint F, Henlake Down.** This viewpoint represents views from the elevated publically accessible land above Ivybridge likely to be used for local informal recreation. The location of the viewpoint is on the edge of the 'Moorland Edge Slopes' landscape type of the South Devon landscape character assessment, with no data for the character type higher up on the moor available from the Devon assessment work at present.
- 11.104 This is an open panoramic view across pasture land. The settlement of Ivybridge is visible at the foot of the Down, with the characteristic rolling landform beyond. The suburbs of Plymouth and the Langage power station are visible to the west close to the skyline.
- 11.105 **Viewpoint G, Ivybridge.** This viewpoint represents the type of view possible from residential areas within Ivybridge. The viewpoint lies on the boundary of the 'Moorland Edge Slopes' and the 'Lowland Plains' character types, but is heavily influenced by the urban nature of Ivybridge.
- 11.106 The view is open and looks out across a residential area within Ivybridge. Directly south views are contained by the rising edge of the South Devon lowland plain, with views extending out eastwards and westwards along the line of the A38. To the west views extend out towards the Yealm valley and Lee Mill.
- 11.107 **Viewpoint H, Western Beacon.** This viewpoint represents distant views form elevated moorland within the national park and the types of view possible form the Two Moors Way long distance route. The viewpoint lies on the boundary of the 'Moorland Edge Slopes' landscape type of the South Devon landscape character assessment, with no data for the character type higher up on the moor available from the Devon assessment work at present.
- 11.108 The view is panoramic and includes views across a large proportion of South Devon to the south and south west, and views of Hanger Down and the Lee Moor China Clay beyond, to the northwest. Ivybridge extends along the foot of the descending landform to the southwest, with Lee Mill visible further west. The Langage power station is visible in the distance directly west.
- 11.109 **Viewpoint I, Coyton Farm.** This viewpoint represents views from the adjacent rolling landscape to the east, the network of local roads and a number of isolated farmsteads and properties. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.110 The view is a glimpsed view through a farm access point and looks west across the Yealm valley. New England Quarry is visible as a series of rock faces within woodland, and the Langage power station is visible beyond. The A38 is visible crossing the low land, with the current landfill operations and

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Lee Mill visible to the northwest. To either side of the viewpoint location the view is generally screened by hedgerows and banks. A number of isolated dwellings are present within the local area, including Coyton Farm, Fursdon and Oakhill Farm.

- 11.111 **Viewpoint J, Near Knapp Cross.** This viewpoint was identified through public consultation and represents a similar type of view to Viewpoint I. The viewpoint also lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.112 The view is a glimpsed view through a farm access point and looks north and northwest across the rolling landscape. The edge of Plymton and Langage power station are visible to the northwest. The top edge of New England Quarry is visible within the well wooded pasture land within the Yealm valley, with Lee Mill visible beyond. The distant landscape beyond Lee Mill rises to Headon Down, with some china clay tips visible on the horizon. To the north the large scale buildings of Lee Mill Industrial Estate and superstore are visible, with Dartmoor above, forming the distant skyline.
- 11.113 **Viewpoint K, South Devon AONB.** This viewpoint was chosen to reflect potential views from an elevated position within the AONB, as requested through the scoping responses. The position also illustrates the type of views possible from a narrow belt of land identified through the ZTV studies; and views from the Erme Plym Trail which passes through the AONB at this point. The view represents the views from the Trail and open countryside, and not from residential properties which are closer to the more sheltered valley floor. The viewpoint is located in the 'River Valley Slopes and Combes' landscape character type.
- 11.114 The view is open but broken by tree cover into a view west towards Dunstone and Yealmpton, and a view north towards along the Yealm valley towards Dartmoor. The Yealm valley has a wooded appearance and is partly screened by intervening landforms. The distant skyline to the west of Dartmoor shows the evidence of china clay tips.
- 11.115 **Viewpoint L, Treby Farm.** Public consultation identified the need for a viewpoint to the southwest of the proposed development. Public access in this area is restricted and this viewpoint position was chosen to reflect such potential effects. It is located just off a secondary road linking Yealmpton to the Lee Mill area on the edge of the ZTV area for the main building. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.116 The view is from a field access point and looks across sloping arable land, which descends into the Yealm valley. The woodland of Furzehill Plantation screens views directly north and direct the views northeast across the valley. The Lee Mill industrial estate and edge of Ivybridge are visible to the northeast. New England Quarry is hidden behind the intervening landform of the western valley shoulder.

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- 11.117 **Viewpoint M, New England Road.** This viewpoint was chosen to reflect the nearby views from the rolling landscape to the west of the development site. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.118 The view is from a short section of hedgerow along the local public road leading east towards Popple's bridge. The path of the Yealm is marked by the woodland just visible above the shoulder of the valley. Beyond, the existing land filling operations and pylons are visible leading on to the large scale retail and industrial buildings of Lee Mill industrial estate are visible at the apparent foot of Dartmoor.
- 11.119 **Viewpoint N, Sherford.** This viewpoint has been chosen to reflect potential effects on the proposed new settlement of Sherford, as identified through the scoping responses. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.120 The view is from a field access, looking out across undulating farmland. Pylons and electricity poles to the northeast are visible on the skyline, with the peaks of Dartmoor beyond.
- 11.121 **Viewpoint O, Plympton.** This viewpoint was chosen to reflect views from the edge of Plympton and was the only clear and open view identified through the field work. The degree of potential screening in this area can be seen in the viewpoint photograph. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.122 The view is from the B3416 close to it's crossing of the A38, and is open in nature, although dominated by the A38 and associated traffic. The undulating plain of South Devon extends out beyond the A38, with a number of pylons visible above the skyline.
- 11.123 **Viewpoint P, Lower Langage.** This viewpoint illustrates views from the northwest, close to the location of the Langage power station. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.124 The view from this location is focused on the small valley to the east and southeast. An area of hard standing and disturbed grassland are visible within the view, but of unknown use or origin. Beyond the valley the distant South Devon hills are visible forming a skyline.
- 11.125 **Viewpoint Q, Ledgate Lane.** This viewpoint was chosen to reflect the views from the 'Downs' to the northwest. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.126 The view is from the area of a public footpath adjacent to a transmitter aerial. The actual photograph used was taken from the top of a screen bund around the aerial enclosure. Langage power station is just visible through screening vegetation along the line of the bank. The open panoramic view includes the edge of the china clay workings to the northeast, around to the distant English Channel beyond the South Devon countryside to the south. Views from the public footpath (and not the elevated screen bank) are much more

restricted in extent, with intervening hedgerow vegetation screening lower ground to the south.

- 11.127 **Viewpoint R, New Park Road.** This viewpoint reflects views from traffic exiting the A38 to the northwest, views from local properties and views for local traffic passing by this location. The viewpoint lies in the 'Lowland Plains' character type.
- 11.128 Views from this area are very dependent upon the management used on the intervening hedgerow. Original photographs taken in February 2009 (apparently after recent hedge trimming,) have clear views across the hedgerow towards the New England Quarry within its wooded setting, with the land filling areas and pylons visible between. By September 2009 the re-growth of the hedgerow has screened most of the view from road level.

### *Potential for Visual Enhancement*

- 11.129 Visual enhancement within the local landscape could be achieved through planning and screening belts to screen the adverse effects of industrial and commercial development. However, the character of the agricultural areas are of open low lying fields, and mass planting would not be in character with this aspect of the landscape.
- 11.130 It is thus important to retain existing trees and vegetation where possible. Additional planting has the potential to enhance where directly linked to potential developments, but is unlikely to screen large developments.

### *Analysis of the Visual Baseline*

- 11.131 Appraisal of the viewpoint, ZTVs, field work and visualisation models have been used to identify the main visual character of the study area in relation to the potential visual effect of the proposed development. The main conclusions are as follows with the actual changes to views and level of effect recorded from paragraph 6.231 onwards.
- 11.132 The same pattern of visibility is apparent for the main EfW building as for the stacks, only the extent of potential visibility changes. General visibility is partially confined by the Yealm valley, with views restricted to the west and east, but extending out to the north and south. Views of the majority of the proposed development will be screened from the west and east, by the landform.
- 11.133 Views of the top of the EfW dome will extend out to the west and east, although woodland, trees, hedges and banks, will greatly restrict the extent of views particularly from the narrow sunken lanes that provide the main communication links directly east and west. The ZTV on drawing 6.4 illustrates the maximum extent of such visibility, with Viewpoints I and M illustrating the type of view possible where gaps in hedgebanks and other vegetation occur. The level of visibility for the stacks would be slightly greater

to the east and greater still to the west, as shown in the ZTV on drawing 6.5. Viewpoints N, O and P illustrate the type of view possible further west where the stacks would be visible, and include the new settlement of Sherford and edge of Plympton.

- 11.134 Views from the immediate south would be partly screened by the narrow valley of the River Yealm, with some views from the shoulders of the valley as at Viewpoints J and L. Again these are views that occur at breaks in the nature screening when looking towards the site from the local road network. The extent of views south of Worston would be restricted to a narrow band, due to intervening higher land. Where the valley of the Yealm swings westwards at Yealmbridge (on the boundary of the South Devon AONB), views extent out of the valley confines onto the higher ground of the AONB. This would allow a small area of north facing slopes in the AONB to have views north along the Yealm valley towards the site. Viewpoint K illustrates the type of view that would be possible, and the degree of intervening screen vegetation present.
- 11.135 To the north the widening of the Yealm valley allows visibility to extent out in a wide arc to the north from Sparkwell to Ivybridge. The A38 embankment and associated planting would reduce the level of visibility shown by the ZTVs and provide screening for areas immediately north of the A38 in Lee Mill. However, viewpoints with a higher elevation would have views over the A38 embankment to the EfW development. The existing views from the areas are illustrated by Viewpoints B, C, E and R.
- 11.136 As the landform rises to the north and Dartmoor, more distant views would be possible looking down onto the proposed development from the 'Downs' and Dartmoor itself. The existing views for these areas are illustrated by Viewpoints A, D, F, G, H, P and Q.
- 11.137 The visual baseline illustrates the visual character of the study area and landscape adjacent to the application site. The chosen viewpoints illustrate the range of views of the application site within the study area, as well as illustrating the main conclusions identified above.

## DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

### *Potential Landscape and Visual Elements of the Proposed Development*

- 11.138 The extent of the proposed development is described in Section 3 – Description of Development. The drawings associated with that Section 3 illustrate the proposed built development and landscape works. The following items have been examined in detail due to their specific landscape and visual implications and potential to generated landscape and visual effects.

## *Landscape and Visual Effect Context*

11.139 The South Devon NCA identifies a number of issues as important in 'Shaping the Future' of the local landscape, these include the following;

- The contrast between different parts of the area needs to be maintained by emphasising the characteristic pattern of features associated with the plateau, the valleys and the rias;
- Any new development should reflect the overall pattern and form of settlement, especially its relationship with landform and with water;
- Further hedgerow or woodland loss would be detrimental to the character of the landscape. The conservation and appropriate management of existing woodlands, hedgerows and hedgerow trees should be considered;
- Sustainable or 'green' tourism initiatives, which respect the natural setting and landscape character of the area, could be supported; and
- Incremental improvement of the road network, with verge and function alterations, and signing needs to be addressed.

11.140 No specific development guidance is identified in the South Devon AONB and South Hams District Council Landscape Character Assessment 2007. However, the previous South Hams assessment (Draft for Consultation July 2001) does contain 'Strategic Guidance' for developments for the area of the Yealm valley and adjacent plateau. This includes the following points:

- No large scale housing or employment development on the plateau surface due to potential visibility over a wide area;
- Care is also needed with development on the upper valley slopes to avoid appearance on skyline;
- In the western part of the district some extension of urban development onto the plateau surface may be necessary;
- Strategic development should not take place on valley floors, to safeguard flood plains and landscape corridors alongside rivers;
- Where strategic development must take place, valley sides are in principle the most appropriate;
- Within valleys strong sense of enclosure created by woodland can be used to contain development proposals;
- Particular care needs to be given to the siting of buildings on the steep valley sides to ensure the building sits compatibly in the landform and grain of the land; and
- Planting of small woodlands and significant hedgerows should be required to assimilate development into the local landscape and strengthen existing vegetation links.

11.141 The earlier South Hams study also makes specific reference to the need to manage the woodland around New England Quarry and ensure long term restoration of the existing landfill site.

- 11.142 The effect of the proposed physical development in conjunction with Langage power station is a consideration given the potential cumulative visual effects caused by the combination of the two developments. Effects caused by potential plume visibility also need to be considered.
- 11.143 The identified viewpoints and receptors have been considered at an early stage to identify potential landscape and visual effects and build in mitigation to the proposed development.
- 11.144 The proposed main development area is located within the old New England Quarry site, but includes the construction of an access road through woodland to the north. The site has developed since the closure of the quarry and established partial vegetation cover as illustrated on Drawing 11/4 - Landscape Setting. The main landscape components of value include the following:
- The River Yealm;
  - Ancient woodland along the Yealm and parts of the valley side;
  - The old quarry stocking area and scrub vegetation;
  - The old quarry faces/benches and developing grassland
  - The lake within the base of quarry void;
  - The old quarry weighbridge area and southern access;
  - The old partly restored landfill to the north; and
  - Adjacent agricultural fields to the west and east.

### *Main Elements of the Proposed Development likely to cause landscape and visual effects*

- 11.145 The proposed development consists of the following components likely to affect the local landscape.
- New access to A38;
  - On site access road from A38 link to EfW development;
  - Construction of new bridge over River Yealm;
  - Earthworks to create development platform for EfW;
  - EfW construction works;
  - Water attenuation facilities for EfW facility;
  - Site landscape and habitat management proposals;
  - Landfill development in old quarry void;
  - Ancillary landfill facilities; and
  - Landfill restoration.

#### *Site Access Road*

- 11.146 The access road for the development would link to the existing road network to the north close to the slip road for the A38. Detailed plans of the proposals for the junction and route are included in Chapter 6 – Highways.

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- 11.147 Initially the access road would run south between the western edge of the old partly restored Strashleigh Hams tip and the River Yealm. The access road would continue southwards into part of the Strashleigh Hams Ancient Woodland, before swinging westwards to cross the River Yealm on a new bridge. After the new bridge (soffit level 40m AOD) the access road would rise up out of the river valley onto the EfW building platform (60m AOD). Some cut and fill operations would be required along the length of the access road to create suitable gradients along its length.

### *Proposed Bridge*

- 11.148 The proposed access road would cross the River Yealm by a new bridge. Permission exists for a river crossing to the south, but the iterative design process identified the proposed crossing as having less effect on the Ancient Woodland in terms of lost area, and minimising potential views of the access road south of Strashleigh Hams. Details of the bridge design are included in Chapter 6 – Highways.

### *EfW Platform Earthworks*

- 11.149 The old, existing, partly vegetated and sloping stocking yard would be regraded to a level platform of 60m AOD, by a cut of material from the west side and fill to the east side. This process would leave a cut batter sloping up to the west of approximately 12m, to intercept existing levels to the west of the stocking yard. To the east a slope would be created down from the 60m level to circa 51m and an interception of the existing slope down into the river valley. To the north adjacent to the proposed air cooled condensers the platform level would be roughly level with the existing ground level, which then slopes down to the north in the form of a scrub vegetated slope. To the south some infill of the existing quarry void would be required to extend the platform southwards and provide sufficient area for car parking and road circulation around the EfW building.
- 11.150 The construction of the EfW buildings would be carried out on the development platform and would involve the use of cranes to construct the building and stacks.

### *EfW Water Attenuation*

- 11.151 Surface water runoff from the EfW area would be treated by interceptors first, and then directed westwards to attenuation features in the adjoining fields. These fields form part of a county wildlife site (including the north section of the EfW platform), and include important wetland vegetation species in these adjoining fields. The attenuation features proposed would cover a large section of these fields, but have been designed to extend and increase the value of the wetland habitat through a habitat creation scheme. This scheme also aims to ensure sufficient attenuation volume for the proposed development. Water would be discharged into a ditch along the northern site boundary with additional purification of water within the ditch by reed planting prior to final discharge into the River Yealm.

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## *Site Landscape and Habitat Management Proposals*

11.152 A conceptual master plan of the proposed landscape design is illustrated on drawings 3/L1 and 3/L2, with details of the landscape proposals around the EfW illustrated on detail plan 3/L3 and associated sections 3/L4 and 3/L5. These proposals include structural and ornamental planting around the site roads, car park and buildings, and the design of water attenuation features as follows:

- Woodland planting between the River Yealm and proposed access road from the A38 to existing ancient woodland within the Yealm valley;
- A total of 6.2ha of Ancient Woodland compensation planting to the east of the Yealm and south of the main block of Ancient Woodland;
- Woodland planting belts and hill top planting along the west and south edges of the proposed landfill area to strengthen existing boundaries and provide wildlife corridors;
- Woodland planting along cut batters and slopes to the east of the landfill area;
- Screen planting between the EfW and landfill operations;
- Structure and ornamental planting around the EfW; and
- Restoration hedgerow and woodland planting on the proposed landfill.

11.153 It is also proposed that a variety of management operations are carried out to improve the ecological value of the site. These would also provide screening and a landscape setting for the EfW building.

11.154 Some of the proposed management and planting works are conditional and linked to previous inherited planning permissions. These include the following elements:

- Management of New England Fields County Wildlife Site; and
- Replanting and management of felled Ancient Woodland at Strashleigh Tip.

11.155 Proposed management and planting operations that would be mitigation against the proposed development would include the following

- Enhanced habitat creation of New England Fields County Wildlife Site to develop water attenuation features;
- Management of river valley and retained woodland to compensate for loss of Ancient Woodland;
- Enhancement of woodland corridor east of River Yealm; and
- Retention of residual quarry faces and bare ground to the west of the landfill.

### *Landfill Development*

- 11.156 The existing quarry faces, benches and water feature would be lost through the development of a land fill void, landfill and final restoration.
- 11.157 The landfill would be phased as illustrated in 00350/010 to 012 and involves placing material into the base of the quarry void first and building up the levels to the final pre-settlement height.
- 11.158 The final height of the pre-settlement landfill including cap and restoration would be 91.8m AOD, settling to around 84m AOD as a maximum height. A screen bank would be constructed as part of the EfW platform to the north of the landfill with a height of 68m AOD. This would be planted with fast growing species to provide a back drop the EfW and screen to the landfill operation in views from the north. Existing land to the east and west (elevation of around 80m AOD) and vegetation along the site boundaries would combine to screen and limit views from these directions. A sloping bank ranging from 66 -75m AOD exists to the south, and is well vegetated with semi mature scrub and trees providing screening from the south.
- 11.159 The timescale of the landfill phasing would allow time for the proposed boundary planting to the west, south, and planting on the screen bank between the landfill and EfW to establish and obtain a level of growth. The height of such planting is dependent upon the quality of the plants, planting technique and maintenance. Phase 4 of the landfill achieves a level of 75m AOD and would thus just begin to be visible over the top of intervening land and vegetation to the west and south. This stage would be reached in 2033 after a starting date of 2014 for the landfill development. The proposed planting would therefore have over 19yrs between the start of the landfill until the end of Phase 4, when screen planting would be required. A vegetation height of 10m at that stage would appear to be a conservative estimate assuming good management.
- 11.160 Thus with respect to the screen bank between the EfW and landfill areas (68m AOD) a tree screen extending in height to 78m AOD would be feasible providing at least a partial screen of the landfill operations for views from the north. However, the EfW dome would be a significant screening feature from that direction from the end of the construction period.
- 11.161 The western boundary of the landfill area has an elevation of around 80m AOD and thus a screen height of 90m AOD is feasible for views from the west. Thus all but the highest pre-settlement levels (max 91.8m) would be screened from the west, with the post settlement restoration (max 84m AOD) screened from view. The width of the proposed planting along this boundary is a minimum of 20m wide, this with additional scrub planting margins and the existing hedgerow vegetation would form an effective screen for the summer months and a fairly dense partial screen for the winter months.

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- 11.162 The southern landfill boundary is formed by a ridge of retained land at over 70m AOD and thus a vegetation screen of planted woodland and existing scrub and tree species would form a potential screen up to 80m AOD.
- 11.163 To the east the site falls into the Yealm valley and the proposed planting is unlikely to have a significant screening effect on views from this direction. However the existing woodland within the Yealm valley and on its valley side is mature and provides a level of screening to the lower landfill operations. As the views of the landfill are most likely to effect views from the east a series of photomontages have been prepared to illustrate the phasing of the landfill from Viewpoint I (drawing 11/35). These photomontages illustrate the progression of the landfill from the end of Phase 3, the end of Phase 4, end of Phase 5 and the final restored post settlement landform.

### *Ancillary Landfill Development*

- 11.164 To support the development of the landfill, a number of ancillary operations would be located in the old weighbridge and access area. These would include a water attenuation feature for the landfill treatment facilities. These elements would be well hidden at a low level and only likely to be visible from the old access to the quarry workings.

### *Landfill Restoration*

- 11.165 The final landfill would be restored as illustrated by the Conceptual Master Plan (3/??) and associated drawings. The restoration landform would replace the original landform lost through the quarry workings and would be restored to a mixture of wildflower meadow and species rich grassland. A hedgerow would be planted across the landfill reminiscent of the traditional hedgerow patterns found within the area. Some areas of woodland planting to the east and south would occur to integrate the edges of the landfill into the surrounding woodland setting.

### *Fencing*

- 11.166 Security fencing would be required around the EfW and landfill areas to the west of the River Yealm. An existing security fence is present to the south, at the old New England Quarry access, adjacent to the public road. This fencing is located inside the boundary hedgebank and associated planting, which screen the security fence form outside the site. However, the gates and adjacent areas are visible, and it is proposed to retain this access although not for regular use. Thus this area would be subject to landscape treatment to tidy up the access point and prevent views into the southern area by the use of additional hedgebanks and planting. Existing fencing to the southern boundary would thus be retained and tied into new fencing to the east and west.
- 11.167 To the east security fencing would run north along the edge of the existing and retained woodland being screened from the west by the site landform and from the east by mature woodland. To the northeast the fencing would

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cross the new access road down slope of the new weigh bridge area, with woodland planting proposed in front of its position.

- 11.168 To the north security fencing would be positioned along the top of the slope leading up to the EfW platform and would be visible from the north. It is proposed to use high quality anti-climb security fencing at this position, with a pale colour where it is seen against the grey condensers and bottom ash storage walls. In areas where the fencing would be seen against planting or woodland, this colour would be substituted for dark green with the change point hidden by strategic planting. Planting below and adjacent to this section of fencing would reduce its impact in the long term.
- 11.169 To the western boundary security fencing would be screened by existing vegetation when viewed from the west. However its elevated position would allow views from east of the site to be effected, thus scattered tree planting and scrub, inside of and off set from the fencing, would be used to break up the line of the fence. A dark green colour would be used for the fencing to merge it into its vegetated background.
- 11.170 Outside the security fencing and in other areas of the site a variety of agricultural fencing would be used to control grazing animals. Close to the EfW area these would be timber post and rail in other area post and wire.

### *Phasing of Development*

- 11.171 The proposed development consists of five distinct stages as summarised below and detailed in the development section
- Groundworks;
  - main construction;
  - commissioning;
  - EfW operation; and
  - Landfill operations.

### *Ground Works*

- 11.172 Site clearance works would initially occur and would include the removal of scrub and trees not being shown as retained in the proposed landscape scheme (Drawings 3/L1 and 3/L2). Details of this process are contained within Section 3.
- 11.173 A cut and fill operation to adjust the levels within the site would occur using earthmoving equipment. Equipment which would need to be transported to the site along the public road system.
- 11.174 After the ground works the resultant site would be more open especially to the north, due to vegetation removal.

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## *Main Construction*

- 11.175 The construction process would involve a period of increased movement within the site area and by traffic accessing the site delivering materials and equipment. Cranes would be used in the construction process resulting in effects on the skyline from the identified viewpoints.

## *Commissioning*

- 11.176 Commissioning of the building would mostly take place from the inside of the building and thus additional landscape and visual impacts from this stage would be unlikely. The commissioning period has thus been assessed as part of the construction period for the purpose of this landscape and visual assessment.

## *Operation*

- 11.177 Landscape and visual change would relate to the dimensions, form and colour of the proposed building and associated elements. Full details of the mass and dimensions of the building are recorded on Chapter 3 and the Design and Access Statement (Volume 5) and the visualisations (Drawings 11/25 to 11/35) indicate the massing and form of the proposals. The potential effects of the proposed buildings are assessed the 'Predicted Residual Effects' section below.

## *Lighting*

- 11.178 The proposed site access and internal access roads would be illuminated to allow working at times of darkness, mainly within the winter period. All external lighting would be designed to minimise the effect of light within the surrounding rural landscape and would follow the recommended guidance<sup>11</sup>.
- 11.179 The building would have translucent panels to allow daylight to illuminate the interior of the building, but the building would also be illuminated from within, in times of darkness. The translucent panels and facades, as identified in the Design and Access Statement, would minimise light spill, but would have a bright appearance during periods of darkness when seen against the remaining building form and adjacent landscape. The higher level of translucent panel around the upper edge of the dome would introduce a light glow into the adjacent landscape at a height of around 100m AOD and would thus be visible from the surrounding landscape. The lower level of translucent panels would be partly screened by the surrounding vegetation and structures.

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<sup>11</sup> Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice – DETR (20.02.2001)

## *Form and Colour of EfW*

- 11.180 The proposed EfW buildings have been carefully designed as a result of an iterative design process, including early work on viewpoint selection and the potential visual effect of the proposed development. This work is illustrated in the initial design submissions and the building details.
- 11.181 The principle colour is a darkish copper brown, chosen to match the red brown soils of the area (as revealed through arable farming) without being too prominent within the landscape and reflecting the more muted greens of the application areas woodland setting.
- 11.182 The dome building form is a reflection of the naturally rounded hill tops present within the local landscape.
- 11.183 Reference is made in the assessment of residual effects section to the colour and form of the proposed development.

## *Stack Plume*

- 11.184 The proposed stack would create a plume under certain conditions, normally low temperature and high relative humidity. The plume would be visible within the surrounding landscape at such times. Similar plumes are likely to be visible from other chimney stacks present within the area at the same time, including Langage power station.
- 11.185 A study on plume generation indicates that a plume could be produced for around 11.62% of the time (data assessed from 2004 – 2008). This figure includes night time hours when the plume would not be visible.

## *Grid Connection*

- 11.186 No details of a grid connection are available at the time of the assessment.

## *Alternative Options*

- 11.187 A number of early visual studies were carried out to aid in the design of the final proposals illustrating alternative building layouts.

## *Proposed Mitigation Measures*

- 11.188 The proposed mitigation measures and final landscaping of the site are illustrated on Drawings 3/L1 to 3/L2 and described in detail in Chapter 3 – Description of Development.
- 11.189 The proposed landscape details are illustrated on Drawing 3/L3. The final site design is based on an iterative assessment process which includes the

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following measures in relation to landscape and visual mitigation, and to match with local landscape character assessments:

- the positioning of the building within the valley side;
- limitation of Ancient Woodland removal;
- woodland management proposals;
- planting proposals;
- choice of materials and colours for EfW;
- building landscape proposals; and
- landfill restoration proposals and phasing

11.190 The sections (3/L4 and 3/L5) show the building platform level of 60m AOD and how this is cut into the side of the valley landform allowing elements such as the bottom ash storage area to be screened by retained landform to the west. These sections illustrate the rounded dome form of the building and proposed colour. Viewpoint L (drawing 11/18) looks out across a local arable field revealing the reddish brown colour of the worked soil and the inspiration for the proposed colour scheme. The photomontage (11/32) illustrates how the building would relate its setting from this viewpoint. Evidence of the extent of arable fields is indicated on the Landscape Setting drawing (11/4), with arable land concentrated around Treby Farm and Choakford. The rounded hill landform is best revealed from Viewpoints I and M (drawings 11/15 and 11/19 and montages 11/29 and 11/33).

11.191 The sections illustrate the slope down from the EfW platform to the northeast. This slope would be planted with a mixture of fast growing native birch species, with ornamental birch species nearer to the building, to form a fast developing screen of vegetation and contrast of colour with the dome. The intervening grassland would be developed as a wildflower meadow, to form a semi-natural habitat. To the base of the slope a belt of native woodland planting is proposed to link with the existing Ancient Woodland of the Yealm Valley to the east and narrower belt of existing woodland along the northern edge of the EfW Platform. Along the northern edge of the platform existing vegetated slopes drop down into mature native woodland which would provide screening for the lower building elements from the north. Large size (i.e. extra heavy standard) fastigate tree species would be planted around the waste transfer building to provide a measure of scale and break up the linear nature of the waste transfer building.

11.192 To the west of the platform the existing landform would be retained with levels circa 13m above the 60m building level. Existing scrub and boundary vegetation on this retained land would be retained and additional planting undertaken to screen the lower elements of the EfW proposals.

11.193 To the south a rock filled gabion wall would create an enclosed area for the proposed car park and office/visitor entrance. This wall would be a reflection of the Devon hedge banks while supporting a screen bank between the EfW and landfill areas. Steel pergolas and wire structures would be extended across parts of this space to form an artificial woodland canopy of climbing plants and specimen trees linking the Ancient Woodland in the Yealm valley

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with the retained and strengthened vegetation along the western boundary of the EfW area. In the long term this vegetation will provide a screen to the latter stages of the landfill site when viewed from the north.

- 11.194 The proposed landfill site would be located within the void of the existing quarry and thus the early stages of the landfill would be well screened by the existing landform and dense woodland along the Yealm valley. The shoulder of land to the south (between the quarry void and old weighbridge site at Popple's Bridge) would be retained. This is well vegetated already, but additional planting would be carried out where-ever space allowed to ensure maximum screening potential for the landfill phases when viewed from the south. The existing un-quarried hillside to the west of the landfill would be retained with its existing hedgerow and scrub vegetation. This would be supplemented by woodland planting to maximise screening from the west. To the east some regrading of the existing vegetated slopes would be required to create a suitable access route from the EfW to the landfill and landfill operation land to the south. Where possible existing vegetated slopes would be retained and infill planted with woodland. All new slopes would be planted with native woodland species to blend with the adjacent Ancient Woodland.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESIDUAL IMPACTS

#### *Predicted Residual Landscape Impacts*

- 11.195 Having assessed the landscape baseline and identified the potential elements of the development likely to cause change to that baseline, a detailed assessment of the potential changes can be made to identify any significant effects.

#### *Landscape Sensitivity*

- 11.196 Landscape sensitivity is defined by a number of factors and it does not necessarily follow that a highly valued landscape or landscape feature, such as a National Park or long distance right of way, will always be defined by a high sensitivity.

*“Landscape designation (as a reflection of value to society) is thus only one of a number of criteria that are considered in identifying the relative ‘sensitivity’ of the landscape to a proposed development. It should not be used in isolation.”<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraph 2.32

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- 11.197 The overall sensitivity of the existing landscape resource is based on the following key criteria, which are taken from the stated guidance<sup>13</sup>:
- the value placed on the landscape;
  - compatibility of the proposed development with the existing land-uses and landscape character;
  - condition of the landscape;
  - contribution of the landscape within the site to the overall landscape character;
  - the scope for mitigation of the proposed development; and
  - degree to which landscape elements and characteristics can be replaced or substituted.
- 11.198 The overall sensitivity of a landscape is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible for the purposes of this assessment.
- 11.199 The sensitivity criteria have been derived from the key characteristics and descriptions of the landscape character types, the results of the ZTV studies, the baseline research and field work. Also taken into account is the type of development proposed, distance, existing land use, the presence of existing development detractors within the area, and the size and extent of the character type..
- 11.200 Table 11.5 summarises the main findings effecting landscape sensitivity and makes a judgement on the general sensitivity of each one of the local landscape character types present within the study area.

**Table 11.5  
POTENTIAL SENSITIVITY OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTER TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

Character Area	Criteria	Sensitivity
<b>South Devon Landscape Character Types</b>		
Open Coastal Plateaux	Value is reflected by the AONB, Heritage Coast and remote nature of the area. The distance of the development site, intervening screening, and focus on the coast limit any contribution the site has to this area or the scope for mitigation.	Medium
River Valley Slopes and Combes	Value is reflected by the AONB designation for this type within the study area. Focus is on the river valleys which this landscape type overlooks including the lower Yealm valley.	High
Moorland Edge	Value is reflected by the national park	High

13 Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Second Edition) Paragraph .7.16 & 7.17

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Slopes	status for most of this type within the study area. Focus to south, with development area part of settled lowlands.	
Upper Farmed Wooded Slopes	Part of national park to north outside study area. Focussed on Plym valley and urban edge of Plymouth within study area	Medium
Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes (includes part of site)	Strongly influenced by A38 within study area and extending north and south along the Yealm. North part of development site contributes to character of this type, with strong physical and visual links to rest of development site.	High
Estuaries	Within AONB and connect to Heritage coast. Combine with River Valley Slopes and Combes to create highly valued landscape. Enclosed and linked to coast.	High
Lowland Plains (includes part of site)	Mostly outside AONB. Variety of land uses including extensive extraction industry. Links to adjacent settlements and long views often including pylons, masts and other structures. Main section of development site included in this type.	Medium
Unsettled Farmed Valley Floors	Tranquil unsettled and focussed inwards on small scale valleys	Medium

11.201 Table 11.6 uses the same criteria to assess the more specific sensitivity of the development site and its adjacent landscape in more detail.

**Table 11.6**  
**SENSITIVITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT SITE AND ADJACENT**  
**LANDSCAPE TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

<b>Landscape Element</b>	<b>Description</b>
Land Use	The development site is located within a disused quarry and linked by a proposed access road passing along the edge of a landfill area. Vegetation on these areas is generally sparse or dominated by scrub. The surrounding area has a high proportion of woodland, especially within the valley adjacent to the River Yealm. To the east and west agricultural fields are present on the sloping hill sides.
Scale and Pattern	The scale of the site landscape is generally medium, but becomes small/intimate near to the river and south of the landfill.
Value and Quality	The ancient woodland along the river has great ecological value and the valley and river have a high landscape quality. The quarry area has a distinctive not unattractive

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	character but is considered poor in landscape quality.
Nature of Views	The development site is generally well contained by the adjacent value sides and surrounding woodland.
Landscape Designations	No landscape designations are present at the site.
Scope for Mitigate	Additional planting, landscape improvement works and location options within the development site provide good scope for mitigation

### Overall Landscape Sensitivity

**HIGH-MEDIUM**

- 11.202 The high sensitivity of the site and adjacent landscape is concentrated in the river valley south of the land filling areas, where the ancient woodland and stream create a landscape of high value. Away from this area, the sensitivity is lower in the disused quarry and landfill areas and adjacent pasture fields.
- 11.203 This change in landscape sensitivity across the site from high to medium is reflected by the change in landscape character type across the development site.

### *Magnitude of Landscape Change*

- 11.204 The magnitude of landscape change is reflected through visual change at the identified viewpoints, or assessed through visual change interoperated through the assessment process in other areas. Landscape change is based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:
- Distance of the viewpoint from the development;
  - Duration of the predicted impact;
  - The scale, degree or extent of the change at the site or as perceived in views of the development, e.g. the horizontal angle subtended by the development;
  - Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
  - Degree of contrast;
  - Opacity of proposed development;
  - Background to the development;
  - Extent and nature of the change; and
  - The extent of other built development visible;
- 11.205 The magnitude of change is categorised as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible.
- 11.206 The proposed development is illustrated on drawings 3/L1 to 3/L5 and described within Chapter 3 – Description of Development. These drawings shows the proposed EfW buildings and landscape works around the

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development. The components likely to cause landscape and visual change are identified above in paragraph 11.105 onwards.

- 11.207 The ZTV drawings 11/4 and 11/5 illustrate the worst case extent of the visual effects for the proposed development. However, these drawings do not take account of the large extent woodland present within and around the development site and the screening provided by buildings in urban areas.

### *Changes in Natural Characteristics*

- 11.208 The nature of the existing site is recorded on the survey drawing, and illustrated by the aerial photograph used in drawing 11/3 Landscape Setting.
- 11.209 A full arboricultural survey of the Ancient Woodland within the corridor of the proposed access road and fringe of the EfW platform would be undertaken to identify all trees likely to be effected by the proposed development. This survey would be carried out to BS 5837:2005<sup>14</sup>. Consideration of their archaeological and ecological value is considered in Chapters 12 and 13.
- 11.210 Using the results of the arboricultural survey as defined in the previous paragraph, the most beneficial route in terms of tree preservation would be defined within the general route of the access road. Options and methods to retain trees affected by the proposed route would be reviewed and implemented where practical. However, the ancient woodland present along the final line of the access road would be felled. The total area of this woodland based on the proposed road alignment amounts to approximately 0.4 ha. The additional area of woodland likely to be lost due to secondary felling of trees just outside the road path may amount to an additional 30% in area terms. However this area would still remain part of the existing ancient woodland; the trees would be removed essential for health and safety issues with the road construction and replanting would be undertaken to return these areas to woodland.
- 11.211 Other areas of Ancient Woodland around the EfW would need to be felled to allow for regrading and earthworks. This would include woodland on east of the EfW (steep slope down from the quarry workings to the River Yealm), and woodland to the north of the proposed EfW. The total area would amount to 1.35 ha. However, the nature of the woodland (mostly scrub) and position (on areas appearing to have been regraded in the past) raises doubts over its correct identification as Ancient Woodland by MAGIC. Further site investigation work would be required to confirm its status.
- 11.212 In addition to the Ancient Woodland removed as part of the proposals, a number of habitat areas within the disturbed quarry site would be lost. These would include 3.62 ha of scrub, 4.43 ha of rough grassland and 3.33 ha of partly vegetated quarry benches and faces. These areas would be lost due to the EfW development or the proposed landfill development.

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<sup>14</sup> British Standard 5837:2005 Trees in relation to construction – Recommendations

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- 11.213 Once vegetation was cleared, regrading operations would occur. Drawing 3/L3 illustrates the development footprint, regrading of the site, areas of disturbance and vegetation clearance required to accommodate the proposed development. The site regrading would involve the creation of a platform at 60m AOD on which the EfW development would be located. It would also require the regrading of the line of the access road from its junction with the public road system to the north to the EfW platform. Some regrading of quarry void and disturbed land to the east of the existing quarry void would also be required to accommodate the proposed landfill development.
- 11.214 Proposed planting and seeding works are shown on drawing 3/L1 – Landscape Masterplan Context. The proposed planting would re-enforce the woodland setting of the proposed development and provide wildlife corridors for woodland species around and through the site. The proposed planting consists of 4.9 ha of woodland and 2.26 ha of open woodland/scrub. In addition 3.34 ha of wildflower meadow and 3.38 ha of species rich grassland would be developed. These habitats would include the areas of the restored landfill. The un-vegetated area of the existing quarry and water body are roughly equivalent to the hard landscaped area of the proposed EfW development, although within this area a small amount of formal amenity shrub, grassland and individual tree planting would occur.
- 11.215 Additional woodland planting is proposed to the east of the Yealm on land under Viridor's ownership. Planting within this area (6.2 ha) would be less disturbed than the planting around the EfW and landfill areas, and would thus be of greater ecological benefit. Woodland planting is also proposed between the River Yealm and access road adjacent to the Strashleigh Hams Landfill area (2 ha).
- 11.216 The proposed water attenuation feature would be located within fields to the west of the EfW for most of the site. These fields currently support a wetland ecology of rushes and are designated as part of a County Wildlife Site which includes the EfW platform. Instead of proposing deep engineered depressions as attenuation lagoons, the intention is to improve and extend the existing habitats of value through a suitable high quality design. Water from the EfW area would be treated and feed into a peripheral ditch to discharge into the attenuation area. The intention would be to encourage water to percolate into the ground within the attenuation area, as well as providing increased areas of wetland vegetation. Excess water from the attenuation area would be discharged into ditches running through the wooded valley which runs eastwards to the north of the EfW and links into the River Yealm. The sensitive design of this feature is critical for it to be successful and not cause greater loss of habitats. However, the successful design and implementation of such a feature would be a great benefit to the ecology of the area.
- 11.217 Attenuation from the landfill area would be diverted southwards and collected in a lagoon within the old quarry weighbridge area.

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## *Changes in Cultural and Social Factors*

- 11.218 The proposals would not cause the loss of any field boundaries. Although a small area of agricultural land would be lost to the proposed woodland planting outside the quarry area. New field boundaries would be created as part of this process.
- 11.219 No buildings, other than disused quarry buildings would be lost through the development. Although some buildings potentially used by wildlife may be retained in the old weighbridge area.
- 11.220 No roads or settlements would be directly affected by the proposals.
- 11.221 The proposals would involve the loss of the New England Quarry void and its replacement with a temporary landfill operation. This would eventually return the quarry void area to its approximate pre-quarrying landform. The EfW platform and building would rise above the site, particularly when viewed from the north and form a landmark within the local area
- 11.222 The proposed building would be industrial in nature and create employment within an area of disturbed landscape (New England Quarry), within a partially disturbed (land filling operations, pylons and A38) but essentially rural setting.

## *Changes in Aesthetic and Perceptual Aspects*

- 11.223 Full details of the building are contained in the Design and Access Statement and Development Section. The basic mass, form and colour are considered in this section to gauge the effect the building would have on the aesthetics and perception of the landscape.
- 11.224 The proposed EfW building is 39.9m high on a platform at 60m AOD, thus the height of the highest section of the building would be at 99.9m AOD. The width of the building is approximately 125m in diameter and has the form of a dome. Two narrow stacks (2m diameter each) would project from the dome to a height of 90m (150m AOD).
- 11.225 It is proposed that the main surface of the dome would be coloured a dark brown (RAL 8016) to reflect the deep red brown soil colour of the local landscape when it is ploughed and wet. Within the woodland setting of the development site this colour would be recessive and in character with the local landscape. The mass and form of the dome would also be in character with the rolling hills of the 'Lowland Plain' character type. The scale of the proposed dome prevents it from being screened from the surrounding landscape, although the valley side setting does limit the extent of its visual influence. However, the dome would be visible from a number of locations and the main mitigation would be the high standard of design and construction proposed.
- 11.226 A bottom ash storage area would be located to the west of the EfW building and is built into the rising landform so that its presence is screened entirely

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from the west. This would be 10m tall but reduce in height towards the dome. A waste transfer building would be located to the east of the EfW, with a height of 8m. Both of these building would be curved to reflect the radius of the EfW dome and are located on the 60m AOD development platform.

- 11.227 The air cooled condensers would be located to the northwest of the dome, this structure would be trapezium shaped roughly 35m wide at the widest and 29m tall, included its base supports. These supports raise the base of the condensers 5m above the 60m AOD platform, and give the condensers a maximum height of 89m AOD.
- 11.228 The condensers would be a silver grey colour (RAL 9022) and would act as a contrast to the dome. The condensers would be prominent in views from the north, but mostly hidden from other directions. Their prominence and colour would tend to reduce the mass of the dome when viewed from the north.

### *Landscape Character, Classification and Evaluation*

- 11.229 The shape and colour of the proposed EfW dome is in character with the local landscape. However the scale of the proposed building would make it a prominent new feature and focus within the landscape, particularly from the 'Lower Rolling farmed and Settled Slopes' character type to the north, which covers the Yealm Valley as it widens, the A38 and parts of Lee Mill. The effect of this would be to alter the character of this landscape type.
- 11.230 However, the existing land filling operations are clearly visible from a number of the local viewpoints and have a negative aspect on the local landscape. The proposed development can be seen as an opportunity to improve the quality of the landscape within this area, through habitat creation and good design.

### *Summary of Magnitude of Landscape Change*

- 11.231 No designated landscapes or features of value, within the surrounding landscape or site, would be directly affected by the proposed changes to the permitted landfill development and/or proposed buildings.
- 11.232 Table 11.7 summarises the levels of landscape effect considered likely for the identified character areas found within the study area.

**Table 11.7  
POTENTIAL MAGNITUDE OF LANDSCAPE CHANGE TO  
THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

Character Area	Nature of Change	Magnitude of Change
<b>South Devon Landscape Character Types</b>		
Open Coastal Plateaux	Potential for very minor theoretical views of proposed development. In reality no perceived views are expected	Negligible/ none

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River Valley Slopes and Combes	Very limited areas of potential visibility largely corresponding to view south along Yealm valley (Viewpoint K)	Negligible/none
Moorland Edge Slopes	Landscape type has potential for extensive views from more elevated areas at distance (Viewpoints A and H). Lower elevations would be much more influenced by vegetation screening (Viewpoints D, F and Q)	Slight
Upper Farmed Wooded Slopes	Some lesser potential effects on views, but extent likely to be restricted by woodland.	Slight/negligible
Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes	Landscape type Likely to be effected extensively in the Yealm valley, but only to a very limited extent to south of Ivybridge (see Viewpoints B, C, and E)	High
Estuaries	No potential views of Proposed Development considered likely	Negligible/None
Lowland Plains	Potential effects across extensive area of character type within 3km of development (Viewpoints B, C, I, J, L, M, N, O and P)	Moderate
Unsettled Farmed Valley Floors	No potential views of proposed development identified by ZTVs	None

11.233 Table 11.8 summarises the identified changes, with respect to the criteria for the magnitude of landscape impacts set out above for the site and adjacent landscape.

**Table 11.8**  
**MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE CAUSED BY THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE SITE AND ADJACENT LANDSCAPE**

Parameter	Description
<b>Distance</b>	Views within the local landscape would tend to be within 2km of the development site.
<b>Duration</b>	The changes would be permanent.
<b>Extent</b>	The proposed development is within a limited enclosed area, with the main visible components limited in their extent.
<b>Angle of View</b>	Views from the adjacent landscape would vary in their angle and many would be glimpses at an angle to the direction of travel. However some would be views from dwellings orientated towards the development.
<b>Degree of Contrast</b>	The careful choice of colour and form for the EfW would reduce the degree of contrast with the adjacent landscape.
<b>Opacity</b>	The proposed EfW would form a solid feature and focus within the adjacent landscape
<b>Background</b>	The proposed development would be seen against a

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<b>Extent and Nature of Other Development</b>	woodland background and rolling hills Land filling operations, pylons, the A38 and development of large scale retail and industrial buildings at Lee Mill.
<b>Overall magnitude of landscape change</b>	<b>Substantial to Moderate</b>

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11.234 The worst case magnitude of landscape change would be substantial, and this reflects the construction of the EfW buildings and their prominence within the local landscape. The 'Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes' landscape character type would be effected most due to it's limited extent and proximity to the development.. the proposed dome of the EfW would be a focus to a large section of the character area south of the A38.

11.235 The 'Lowland Plains' character type would be less effected by change due to its extent in comparison with the development site and restricted visibility.

### *General Landscape Effect of the Proposed Development*

11.236 Landscape effects either occur as direct changes to landscape fabric or changes to aesthetics and perceptions principally through visual change.

11.237 The proposed development is well contained within its proposed setting and would have a limited effect on the surrounding landscape. Within the site area, a variety of habitats would be lost, with some replaced or expanded as part of the proposals.

## *Predicted Residual Visual Impacts*

### *Introduction*

11.238 The potential visual effects of the proposed development on the surrounding landscape, and in particular the views from the identified viewpoints, have been assessed with the aid of plans and computer models, and are described in detail below.

### *Sensitivity of Viewpoints*

11.239 The list of the identified viewpoints set out below also includes a brief assessment of their sensitivity. Sensitivity depends on the following factors:

- Location and context of the viewpoint;
- Land use and main activity at the viewpoint;
- Frequency and duration of use; and

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- Character and quality of intervening landscape.

11.240 The sensitivity of viewpoints is categorised as high, medium, low or negligible.

## *Magnitude of Visual Impacts*

11.241 For each of the viewpoints the potential magnitude of the residual visual impacts, taking into account the proposed mitigation, is assessed. The magnitude of visual impacts is mainly dependent upon the following factors:

11.242 The magnitude of change arising from the proposed development at any particular viewpoint is described as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible based on the interpretation of a combination of largely quantifiable parameters, as follows:

- Distance of the viewpoint from the development;
- Duration of the predicted impact;
- Extent of the development in the view, e.g. the horizontal angle subtended by the development;
  
- Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- Degree of contrast;
- Opacity of proposed development;
- Background to the development; and
- Extent and nature of other built development visible.

11.243 The magnitude of change is categorised as substantial, moderate, slight or negligible.

## *Viewpoint Visualisations*

11.244 A number of photomontages have been produced to illustrate the potential visual effects. These have been scaled to match the actual view in the same way as the photographs on the viewpoint sheets. Thus, when viewed at 300mm distance, these visualizations represent a true interpretation of the scale of the effect of the proposals. Montages have been produced to illustrate the range of views and receptors found within the study area.

## *Viewpoints*

11.245 **Viewpoint A, Rook Tor.**

11.246 The viewpoint is located on the lower fringes of Dartmoor within the national park. The china clay extraction area around Lee Moor is visible to the west (circa 2km) and the Langage power station is visible to west (6km). The view looks south across the fringes of the national park towards South Devon, with the intervening landscape being well wooded and rural in nature.

11.247 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is assessed as **High**.

- 11.248 The viewpoint is 6.7km distant and the main visible change would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent landfill proposal. No features, including the stacks would be visible above the skyline and the distance of the view would make the various components difficult to perceive, especially given the colouring of the EfW dome and broken variable nature of the landfill.
- 11.249 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Negligible**.
- 11.250 **Viewpoint B, Public Footpath near Lee Mill.**
- 11.251 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium** to reflect the location and context adjacent to existing housing, but with regard to detracting elements such as the pylons.
- 11.252 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers which would rise above the intervening houses, with the EfW dome appearing level with the adjacent hill tops, and the EfW stacks projecting above. The viewpoint is located 1.2km from the EfW dome, and the effect would be permanent, although planting around the EfW would gradually mature to partly envelope the dome. The extent of the visible development would be restricted by the intervening houses, most of which would appear to have views south towards the development from upstairs windows. The proposed building has been designed to be complimentary to the local landscape, but in this location would be visible as a skyline feature. The landfill development would not be visible from the viewpoint position.
- 11.253 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Substantial**, given the prominence of the proposed building.
- 11.254 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/25. The montage is indicative of worst case scenario views from the residential sections of Lee Mill.
- 11.255 **Viewpoint C, Beach Road near Superstore.**
- 11.256 This viewpoint is located adjacent to a superstore, on a busy section of road. The existing disturbance of landfill and old quarry operations are visible beyond the raised A38 dual carriage way. The intervening landscape contains urban development, disturbed land, a major road and prominent pylons, although a well wooded agricultural background is present.
- 11.257 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**.
- 11.258 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers. The condensers would appear to rise to the same height as the background plain, with the EfW dome rising slightly above, with their lower levels screened by intervening vegetation. The EfW stack would be a skyline object rising above

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the dome. The landfill development would not be visible from the viewpoint location. The viewpoint is 1.4km from the EfW, and the change would be permanent. The dome would form a solid development on the skyline, but would have a relationship to the other urban development present from the viewpoint. The potential is for the EfW to become a landmark building and focus for the existing urban development from this location.

11.259 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Moderate**, as it is considered that the development and proposed dome would sit well within its context when viewed from this location.

11.260 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/26. This montage indicates the worst case views from the road network and retail facilities around Lee Mill.

### 11.261 **Viewpoint D, Uppaton.**

11.262 This viewpoint is located with the fringe of the national park and near the edge of Hanger Down. Views naturally look southwest with the fall of the land and a number of houses and small farmsteads are present within the adjacent area. The landscape is dominated by agricultural use, with pasture present at the viewpoint and within much of the visible landscape, although the red soils of some arable fields are visible.

11.263 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **High** to reflect its location and potential views from residential properties within the area.

11.264 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers. These would be visible at a distance of 3.9km within an area of woodland and scrub developing at New England Quarry. The buildings would all be below the skyline with the exception of the top half of the stack. The bases of the buildings would be screened by intervening woodland and scrub, and proposed planting around the EfW. The landfill area would be visible beyond the EfW dome to the east, partly screened by the screen mound and planting to the south of the EfW. A number of barns, houses and large units are visible within the existing landscape.

11.265 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight**, relating to distance and the extent of change visible.

### 11.266 **Viewpoint E, A38 Bridge near Lee Mill.**

11.267 This viewpoint is located on the A38 adjacent to an access bridge linking the A38 to Lee Mill. The access and areas of existing land filling area are visible through belts of planting (linked to the A38 junction arrangements).

11.268 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Low**.

11.269 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the top of the proposed EfW building potentially being visible through the uppermost

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sections of the tree planting adjacent to the existing pylon; most likely visible only in winter. The stacks would be visible above this vegetation but in the context of a couple of prominent pylons.

11.270 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight** given its glimpsed nature and transport link nature.

11.271 **Viewpoint F, Henlake Down.**

11.272 This viewpoint is located within the national park on an area used for informal recreation and linked by public footpaths to Ivybridge. Parts of Ivybridge and Lee Mill are visible within the rural landscape visible.

11.273 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **High** to reflect its location and recreational value.

11.274 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building, and landfill development to the south. The very tops of the stacks would be close to the skyline, but given the distance (4km) these features would be difficult to perceive. The EfW buildings would be a small component within the overall view, with the proposed colours helping to blend the buildings into the overall landscape. The Langage power station chimney is visible within the view to the west, although more distant (6km) the substantial mass of that chimney gives it greater bulk and effect than the stacks of the proposed EfW. Existing woodland and planting around the EfW would screen the lower level of the dome and on site activity, as well as the edges of the proposed landfill development. The landfill development would occupy the area of the existing quarry visible within the viewpoint photograph

11.275 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight**.

11.276 **Viewpoint G, Ivybridge.**

11.277 This viewpoint is located within a residential area of Ivybridge with views out to the west towards Lee Mill, with some large scale buildings visible in that direction.

11.278 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **High** to reflect the dominance of residential use at the viewpoint

11.279 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers, although these would be below the skyline, with the stacks being the only element to break the skyline. A number of pylons are also visible on the skyline leading towards the site. The landfill development would be visible lower down, to the south of the EfW dome.

11.280 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight**.

11.281 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/27. This montage is indicative of the types

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of view possible from the edges of Ivybridge and fringes of the Dartmoor National Park.

11.282 **Viewpoint H, Western Beacon.**

11.283 The viewpoint is located on the lower fringes of Dartmoor within the national park and close to the line of the Two Moors Way long distance path. The view looks southwest across the fringe of the national park towards Ivybridge, and the broken areas of urban development stretching to Lee Mill. Beyond the plains of South Devon extend towards the distant coast.

11.284 The sensitivity of the viewpoint is assessed as **High**.

11.285 The viewpoint is 5.9 km distant and the main visible change would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent landfill proposal. No features, including the stacks would be visible above the skyline and the distance of the view would make the various components difficult to perceive, especially given the colouring of the EfW dome and broken variable nature of the landfill.

11.286 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Negligible**.

11.287 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/28, this montage is indicative of elevated views from Dartmoor National Park.

11.288 **Viewpoint I, Coyton Farm.**

11.289 This viewpoint represents glimpsed views from the local road network, views from within local fields and potential views from nearby dwellings. The ZTVs identify this area as having the potential for more extensive views, than other nearby locations. The existing view looks west across the void of New England Quarry to Plympton and the Langage power station.

11.290 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**.

11.291 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent landfill proposals. The EfW dome would be visible to the south of the Langage power station and would remain below the skyline of urban development that is Plympton. The EfW stack would project above the skyline higher than the power station stack, but would also be amongst various skylined pylons. The proposed landfill would be visible to the south and slightly in front of the EfW dome. The proposed development would be 1.4km distant and would form a significant proportion of the mid-ground landscape.

11.292 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Substantial**.

11.293 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/29, illustrate the visual change anticipated after the construction of the EfW. The effect of the phased landfill

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development is shown by photomontage on drawing 11/35. These are indicative of the worst case views from the local countryside to the east of the application site.

### 11.294 **Viewpoint J, Near Knapp Cross.**

11.295 This viewpoint represents a glimpsed view from the local road network, views from within local fields and potential views from nearby dwellings. The ZTVs identify this area as having the potential for more extensive views, than other nearby locations. The existing view looks west across the void of New England Quarry with Plympton and the Langage power station to the west, and Lee Mill and Ivybridge to the east.

11.296 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**.

11.297 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent landfill proposals. The EfW dome would be visible to the east of the Langage power station and would remain below the skyline. The EfW stack would project above the building but would not project above the skyline of Headon Down in the background. The proposed landfill would be visible to the south and in front of the EfW dome. The proposed development would be 1.5km distant and would form a significant proportion of the mid-ground landscape.

11.298 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Substantial**.

### 11.299 **Viewpoint K, South Devon AONB.**

11.300 This viewpoint is located within the South Devon AONB and on the line of the Erme Plym Trail. Few dwellings are present within the area of potential views as identified by the ZTVs. A view north along the Yealm valley is present towards the development site. The woodlands of Treby Wood and that adjacent to Lotherton Ham are visible above the valley landform. New England Quarry is screened by intervening vegetation to the southwest of Worston.

11.301 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **High** to reflect the designation and tranquil nature of the landscape.

11.302 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW stack (3.2 km) which would rise above the valley side of the River Yealm and vegetation southwest of Worston. However the stack would not be visible above the skyline due to the mass of Dartmoor in the background. It is possible that glimpses of the top of the EfW dome might be visible through the screening vegetation, but such a view would be very marginal if it occurred. The magnitude of change that would occur at the viewpoint is considered to be negligible.

11.303 An attempt was made to find the clearest view with an elevated position during the field work, as requested by the scoping response. However, this has proved to have limited visibility. It is possible that other unidentified views

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exist within the area that have a clearer view of the proposed development as indicated by the 3D model used in the assessment process. Assessment of the model alone indicates that a higher magnitude of effect might occur.

- 11.304 This final magnitude of change is therefore assessed as **Slight** to reflect the potential for clearer views. These may include the top section of the EfW dome as well as the stack, but it is not considered that any more of the proposed development would be visible than this.
- 11.305 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/30. This is indicative of the worst case views from restricted areas of the South Devon AONB.
- 11.306 **Viewpoint L, Treby Farm.**
- 11.307 This viewpoint represents views from a secondary road and potentially indicates the type of view possible from local properties such as Treby farm. The main use would be by local motorists passing the field access where the viewpoint photograph was taken from. The view looks across a rural landscape towards the distant southern edge of Dartmoor.
- 11.308 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**
- 11.309 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and stacks. These would project above intervening hedgerows and vegetation to be partly visible against the backdrop of the Lee Mill Industrial Estate and superstore. The tops of the stacks would be level with the Dartmoor skyline, and the dark colour of the dome would be recessive and would be likely to merge with the dark green vegetation.
- 11.310 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Moderate**.
- 11.311 **Viewpoint M, New England Road.**
- 11.312 This viewpoint is a glimpsed view from a local road and would be partly screened by hedgerow vegetation in summer. The main viewers would be passing motorists and users of the land.
- 11.313 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**.
- 11.314 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers, rising above intervening vegetation and vegetation around the edge of New England Quarry. The stacks would rise well above the skyline and the dome would be a prominent part of the view. The proposed landfill development would be visible at its maximum pre-settlement level, but would be contained by adjacent planting and would not break the skyline.
- 11.315 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Substantial**.

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- 11.316 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/31. This is indicative of the worst case views from the adjacent countryside to the west of the application site.
- 11.317 **Viewpoint N, Sherford.**
- 11.318 This viewpoint looks out across the undulating South Devon plain and is the location of the eastern extent of the proposed residential development of Sherford. The sensitivity of the viewpoint at present is medium and would be representative of a glimpsed view from passing traffic.
- 11.319 However given the likely permission of the Sherford development the sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **High** to reflect the potential views from the new settlement.
- 11.320 The only visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW stack (4.1 km distant), which would be visible amongst the numerous pylons present to the east.
- 11.321 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Negligible**.
- 11.322 **Viewpoint O, Plympton.**
- 11.323 This view represents the most open view from the edge of Plympton identified by the field work and the ZTVs. The passing traffic on the A38 and B3416 provide a high level of distraction at the location of the viewpoint, and within the view in the case of the A38. The Langage power station is visible to the northwest of the viewpoint. Otherwise the view is rural in nature stretching eastwards to the southern extent of Dartmoor and across the rolling South Devon plain.
- 11.324 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Low**.
- 11.325 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and proposed landfill, although these would be small elements within the overall view and difficult to perceive amongst the cluttered view of rolling fields and hedgerows and pylons to the south of the A38. The stacks would project above the plain and skyline, but would be amongst the visible pylons already on the skyline.
- 11.326 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight**.
- 11.327 **Viewpoint P, Lower Langage.**
- 11.328 The view is essentially rural but influenced by the development in the foreground. The view would be experienced by passing road users or users of the land.
- 11.329 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**.

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- 11.330 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and stack. The dome would be visible rising above the intervening vegetation within the adjacent valley and would blend into the landscape as a dark recessive feature. The stack would rise above the distant skyline.
- 11.331 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight**.
- 11.332 The degree of visible change is illustrated by a photomontage from this viewpoint position on drawing 11/32. This is indicative of the worst case views from countryside on the edges of Plympton to the northwest of the application site.
- 11.333 **Viewpoint Q, Ledgate Lane.**
- 11.334 The viewpoint is positioned close to a transmitter aerial with rural views out across South Devon.
- 11.335 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **Medium**.
- 11.336 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers. However distance (4.3km) would make perception of the change difficult for the human eye within the overall view and existing scattered built development visible. The stacks would not break the skyline.
- 11.337 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Slight**.
- 11.338 **Viewpoint R, New Park Road.**
- 11.339 This viewpoint is from the edge of the New Park Road and represents views for passing road users and potentially a number of isolated settlements such as Challonsleigh, Higher Challonsleigh, Combe Farm and Mount Pleasant. The view is far more restricted in summer and prior to hedgerow trimming .
- 11.340 The sensitivity of this viewpoint is assessed as **High** to reflect potential residential views.
- 11.341 The main visible change from this viewpoint would be caused by the proposed EfW building and adjacent air cooled condensers which would be visible above vegetation around the periphery of the New England Quarry. The EfW dome would be a prominent feature in the landscape, but would remain below the skyline. Its dark colour would help it to blend into the adjacent planting. The condensers would be visible in front of the dome and their grey/silver colour would provide a strong contrast with the dome.
- 11.342 This magnitude of change is assessed as **Substantial**.

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## *General Visibility of the Proposed Development*

- 11.343 The assessment of the above viewpoints illustrates the nature of the general visibility of the proposed development. Drawing 11/4 and 11/5 also help to illustrate the potential visibility, but without the mitigating effect of screen vegetation and banks.
- 11.344 The visual effect of the proposed EfW building would be restricted by the valley sides of the River Yealm and the lowland plain to the east and west. The undulating landform to the east and west would generally restrict views of the proposed buildings to adjacent hills within 1-2 km of the EfW building. However such views would be broken up by hedgerows, hedgebanks and woodlands. Views from local roads would be restricted to a few passing glimpses from motor traffic. The main effect would be on isolated dwellings and farmsteads, views from private farmland and a few views from the limited number of Public Rights of Way that cross the area. The majority of views from properties are likely to be screened to some degree by trees and planting associated with the dwellings, further restricting views. However, where clear views occur within this area they are likely to experience a high magnitude of change due to the proposed buildings.
- 11.345 The nearest isolated properties to the proposed development are listed below. Viewpoints close to these properties are identified, and in most case these represent the worst case scenario for views from the properties. Where adjacent viewpoints don't exist computer modelling has been used to provide a description of the likely visual changed caused by the proposed development. The properties are:
- Strashleigh – Potential views from edge of barns of the EfW platform and buildings rising above the existing mature woodland within Yealm Valley. Landfill operations likely to be screened by intervening landform and existing mature woodland on the valley side. Views from residential buildings are likely to be screened by the barns and farm buildings;
  - Hunsdon Farm – Top levels of the EfW dome and air cooled condensers likely to be visible above intervening hedgerows. Proposed landfill likely to be partially visible at its highest levels above intervening landform and existing mature woodland. Intervening barns, farm buildings and vegetation around settlement likely screen views from residential buildings;
  - Swainstone – View of top of the EfW dome and stacks rising above intervening hill and woodland. View of higher levels of landfill pre settlement landform visible along line of dipping landform;
  - Brook – Potential for very top of EfW dome to be visible, but intervening woodland likely to screen all such views. Stacks would be visible above intervening woodland/hedgerows. Hedgerows and trees around settlement may well screen most of the elements potentially visible;
  - Fursdon – EfW dome hidden by existing hedgerow vegetation, stacks likely to be visible above, landfill not visible;

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- Coyton (see Viewpoint I);
  - Oakhill Farm (see Viewpoint J);
  - Winsor (see Viewpoint J);
  - Worston Mill – Top of EfW dome would be visible above existing woodland and vegetation at New England Quarry. Final landfill phases would be seen raising above the existing vegetation in front of the dome;
  - Old Treby Farm – The very top of the EfW dome and stacks would be visible above the existing hedgerow vegetation on the crest of the hill to the east of Southwood Barn. Planting along that boundary would screen the dome from view when the planting reached approximately 10m in height. The landfill landform would be visible in its latter phases to the east, and would eventually recreate the type of landform likely to exist prior to quarrying. The proposed intervening boundary planting is also likely to screen a good proportion of the landfill from view;
    - Treby Farm (see Viewpoint L);
    - East Pitten (see Viewpoint M);
    - West Pitten (see Viewpoint M);
    - Choakford (see Viewpoint M);
    - Southwood Barn – The EfW dome and condensers would be visible rising above intervening vegetation. The landfill operations would be screened from view by the boundary vegetation directly west of the landfill area.
    - Challonsleigh (see Viewpoint R); and
    - Holmleigh; (see Viewpoint R).
- 11.346 More distant views to the west may occur but the intervening landform and landscape components would restrict the level of change visible to slight at most.
- 11.347 Views to the south and the South Devon AONB would be restricted to a narrow zone around Dunstone. Most dwellings within this area are close to the valley floor and would not have views of the proposed building. Changes to views are likely to be slight at worst.
- 11.348 Views to the north extend out more due to the opening out of the Yealm Valley at Lee Mill. The embankment of the A38 and screening vegetation restricts views from the Lee Mill area. However where views over or from south of the A38 occur, the potential exists for high magnitudes of change. Some distant views would occur from the national park but levels of change would be restricted by distance.

### *Potential Significance of Landscape and Visual Impacts*

#### *Assessment of the Significance of Impacts*

- 11.349 The potential significance of landscape and visual impacts is determined by a combination of the magnitude of the potential impact and the sensitivity of the

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landscape setting to change. These two variables can be correlated as illustrated in Table 11.9, below. Thus, a landscape impact of low magnitude may nevertheless be assessed to have a moderate impact in a highly sensitive landscape.

**Table 11.9  
PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSING  
LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS**

Magnitude	Sensitivity			
	Negligible	Low	Medium	High
Negligible	Negligible	Negligible/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Moderate Impact
Slight	Negligible/ Minor	Minor	Minor/ Moderate	Moderate
Moderate	Minor	Minor/ Moderate	Moderate	<b>Major/ Moderate</b>
Substantial	Minor/ Moderate	Moderate	<b>Major/ Moderate</b>	<b>Major</b>

- 11.350 The above consideration of the sensitivity of the receptors with the magnitude of the potential impacts provides an overall assessment of the potential significance of impacts. However, this process is not a quantitative process; there is not an absolute scoring system. Instead, the correlation of the two factors, although reflecting recognised features and methods of working outlined in this report, is in the end a matter of professional judgement.
- 11.351 Impacts of **Moderate/Substantial and Substantial** are considered significant for the purposes of this assessment.
- 11.352 Table 11.10, below, provides a brief definition of the full range of significance criteria. It must be emphasised that both landscape and visual impacts can be either adverse or beneficial in nature.

**Table 11.10  
SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA FOR LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT**

Significance	Definition
<b>Negligible</b>	The proposed scheme is appropriate in its context. It may be difficult to differentiate from its surroundings and would affect very few or no receptors
<b>Slight</b>	The proposed scheme would cause a barely perceptible impact, and would affect few receptors.
<b>Moderate</b>	The proposed scheme would cause a noticeable difference

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	to the landscape, and would affect several receptors.
<b>Major</b>	The proposed scheme would substantially change the character and/or appearance of the landscape for a long period of time or permanently. It would affect many receptors

### *Potential Significance of Landscape Impacts*

- 11.353 Having identified the significant impacts likely to be caused by the proposed development, consideration has to be given to the nature of these impacts. For example a screen bank preventing views of a development can have just as high a magnitude of change and thus impact as a view of a development itself. However, the nature of the impact would be very different; one would involve views of a bank of grass and/or trees, the other maybe an open view of a scrap yard.
- 11.354 The landscape sensitivity to the proposed development and the magnitude of change to the landscape likely to be caused has been assessed previously for both the local landscape and the site itself. Cross referencing these results with Table 11.9 provides the resultant effects shown below in Tables 11.11, 11.12 and 11.13.

**Table 11.11  
POTENTIAL SENSITIVITY OF LOCAL LANDSCAPE  
CHARACTER TO PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

<b>Character Area</b>	<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Magnitude of Change</b>	<b>Overall Landscape Effect</b>
Open Coastal Plateaux	Medium	Negligible/none	Minor to None
River Valley Slopes and Combes	High	Negligible/none	Minor/moderate to None
Moorland Edge Slopes	High	Slight	Moderate
Upper Farmed Wooded Slopes	Medium	Slight/negligible	Minor/moderate to Minor
Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes	High	Substantial	<b>Major</b>
Estuaries	High	Negligible/None	Minor/moderate to None
Lowland Plains	Medium	Moderate	Moderate
Unsettled Farmed Valley Floors	Medium	None	None

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- 11.355 Significant effects would occur to the 'Lower Rolling Farmed and Settled Slopes' landscape type due to the prominent position of the EfW building, when viewed from the area of this landscape type south of the A38. The current character of this area is affected by the existing land filling operations, electricity pylons and, to a lesser extent, the disturbed quarrying areas. Thus the significant change identified is not intrinsically negative and has a positive aspect for the long term management and appearance of the area.
- 11.356 The other character type to experience notable change is the 'Lowland Plains'. This area would experience a moderate landscape effect overall due to views of the proposed dome and stack from its rolling landscape of hills. Close to the site the effects would be greater and are reflected by the assessment of effects on the site and adjacent landscape. However, in general the development would either not be seen from this landscape type or would be seen at distance as a minor feature in the landscape.

**Table 11.12  
SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS CAUSED BY THE PROPOSED  
DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE SITE AND ADJACENT LANDSCAPE**

Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Impact	Description
Medium to High	Moderate to Substantial	<b>Moderate</b> To <b>Major</b>	A variable landscape effect across the site and adjacent landscape

- 11.357 The landscape effect of the development would vary significantly across the site and within the adjacent landscape. The reason for this is the degree of existing woodland cover, valley landform and nature of the proposals. The main effects would occur around the EfW location, with other sections of the site such as the old weighbridge area being affected to a lower degree. The identified effect on the site and local landscape may thus vary between being significant and not significant, dependent upon location. The proposed development would cause a degree of change to the landscape or view. This change would be absorbed by the local character and visual baseline, and would affect few receptors.

### *Potential Significance of Visual Impacts*

- 11.358 The significance of the visual impacts in respect of each viewpoint and at is summarized in Table 11.13 below.

**Table 11.13  
POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VISUAL IMPACT ON VIEWPOINTS**

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View-point	Sensitivity	Magnitude of Change	Significance of Impact
A	High	Negligible	<b>Moderate/minor</b>
B	Medium	Substantial	<b>Major/moderate</b>
C	Medium	Moderate	<b>Moderate</b>
D	High	Slight	<b>Moderate</b>
E	Low	Slight	<b>Minor</b>
F	High	Slight	<b>Moderate</b>
G	High	Slight	<b>Moderate</b>
H	High	Negligible	<b>Moderate/minor</b>
I	Medium	Substantial	<b>Major/moderate</b>
J	Medium	Substantial	<b>Major/moderate</b>
K	High	Slight	<b>Moderate</b>
L	Medium	Moderate	<b>Moderate</b>
M	Medium	Substantial	<b>Major/moderate</b>
N	High	Negligible	<b>Moderate/minor</b>
O	Low	Slight	<b>Minor</b>
P	Medium	Slight	<b>Moderate/minor</b>
Q	Medium	Slight	<b>Moderate/minor</b>
R	High	Substantial	<b>Major</b>

11.359 A total of eighteen viewpoints have been assessed as identified in Table 11.15 above, out of these a total of five viewpoints would experience significant visual effects from the proposed development. These five viewpoints (B, I, J, M and R) reflect the enclosed nature of the development within the Yealm valley landscape. The distribution of visual effects is shown on drawing 11/36 Viewpoints, Visual Effects Summary.

11.360 Photomontages have been produced for all of the significant viewpoints to illustrate the nature of the visual effects likely to occur as part of the proposed development.

### *Nature of Effects*

11.361 Having identified the level of landscape and visual effect caused by the proposed development. The nature of the significant landscape and visual effects is examined below.

### *Type of Effect*

11.362 The proposed development would involve the removal of some woodland and scrub from the development site, large amounts of habitat creation, the infilling of a quarry void and location of a building within a disturbed rural environment. Overall the landscape changes in the quality of the site landscape are considered to be positive and beneficial.

11.363 The nature of the visual effects would be far more subjective and would relate to individual viewers tastes and perception. However, the proposed building would be landmark within the local environment and for passing traffic on the A38.

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11.364 The Design and Access Statement contains full details of the form and materials proposed for the development. The photomontages included in this chapter illustrate the effect of that form within the surrounding landscape.

## *Direct and Indirect Effects*

11.365 Indirect impacts are likely to be caused by the proposed development through the increased level of habitat creation. These are considered beneficial.

11.366 Additional indirect effects are likely to be caused by the increased level of traffic using the A38, and these are considered adverse.

## *Cumulative Effects*

11.367 The proposed development would be seen within the context of existing development of industry and retail units east of Lee Mill and north of the A38, the Langage power station and proposed Sherford settlement.

11.368 The industry and retail units east of Lee Mill provide a context of large scale buildings within the adjacent landscape, although divided from the site by the A38. When viewed from the area of Viewpoint C, the juxtaposition of the proposed development and retail park provides a degree of consistency and extension of urban elements. The proposed dome would provide a visual focus to the area, and from this perspective is considered positive. However, the EfW is a very different standard of building allowing it to also be successful within its own context south of the A38 as a landmark building. Some cumulative effects would thus occur particularly from the area of Viewpoint C. However, these cumulative effects are not considered to be any greater than the landscape and visual effects already identified.

11.369 The proposed stacks would be seen from a number of viewpoints in conjunction with the Langage power station and its much shorter but wider enclosed stacks. The viewpoints concerned include Viewpoint A, D, F, H, I, J, O and Q. This selection of viewpoints illustrates the visibility of the power station and the two approaches to mitigation. The power station stacks (155m AOD height) have been engineered to be short to reduce visual impact on the surrounding landscape. However, their width (circa 20m x 10m) makes them visible over longer distances than a thin stack. The proposed EfW stacks are tall and thin (2m diameter each) with a top height of 150m AOD, and are therefore lower than the Langage stacks in terms of elevation, but are taller overall due to the lower base position. The cumulative effects are most likely to occur when the two sets of stacks are particularly visible due to sun light illumination at sunrise/sunset or when both stacks are producing a plume.

11.370 The new proposed settlement of Sherford would have limited visibility of the proposed EfW (see Viewpoint N) and the intervening rural landscape would distance the two developments from each other. It is not considered that the proposed development would have more than minor/moderate effect at the most, and no cumulative effects would occur.

## *Timescales of Effect*

- 11.371 The proposed development would be permanent and thus produce long term effects.

## *Scale and Level of Impact*

- 11.372 The significant landscape and visual effects of the proposals are regarded as local in terms of scale due to the assessed visual impacts and concentration of landscape impacts within the local area.

## *Effects on Landscape Receptors*

- 11.373 Having identified the significance of the landscape and visual impacts, a judgement can be made on the likely impacts on other landscape receptors as identified in Table 11.1.

## *Dartmoor National Park*

- 11.374 This designated area is located to the north and northeast of the study area. At its nearest point it lies 2.2km to the northeast of the proposed access road to the EfW development, and 3.4km from the EfW building itself.
- 11.375 A number of developed and disturbed landscape elements are present between the national park and the proposed development. These include the urban development of Ivybridge, Lee Mill and the Lee Mill Industrial Estate (including superstore). In addition, forming the southern limit of these urban areas is the A38 dual carriageway, a busy major link road. To the south of the A38 lies the partly restored Strashleigh Hams tip, an active tip to the west of the Yealm, and a line of pylons passing east to west.
- 11.376 Potential views from the national park are illustrated by the ZTVs. Views from roads and dwellings on the edges of the national park (Viewpoints D and G) would be limited by the undulating landform along the park boundary. Such views would be further restricted by buildings, hedges, hedgebanks and woodland. Although where clear views occurred the effect of the proposed development on these views is assessed as **MODERATE** as illustrated by Viewpoints D and G. However the identified effects are not considered significant by this assessment.
- 11.377 At higher altitudes and on south facing slopes, more open views occur. In these locations views tend to be across the tops of intervening ridges with some areas of urban development visible above and between ridges. Viewpoints A, F and H illustrate the type of views that occur in this area. The visual effect of the development at viewpoints A and H has been assessed as **MODERATE/MINOR**, due to the greater distance and lower perception of the development. However, closer views such as viewpoint F may be subject to

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increased effects up to a **MODERATE** level, where the national park is closest to the application area. No views within this range are considered significant, with the magnitude of visual change ranging between slight and negligible.

- 11.378 In theory views from more distant viewpoints in the national park may be possible from areas such as Penn Beacon and Stall Moor. However, given the effects assessed for the nearer viewpoints within the national park, it has been concluded that the development would be difficult to perceive from such distance and thus such views are assessed as **NEGLIGIBLE/NONE**.
- 11.379 Overall it is concluded that the landscape effect on the national park would be **MINOR/NEGLIGIBLE**. Visual effects would peak around the area of Viewpoints D, F and G, and would be at worst **MODERATE** in nature and thus not significant. The photomontages G and H (drawings 6/27 and 6/28) illustrate the visual change that is likely to occur in views from the national park.

### *South Devon AONB*

- 11.380 The AONB is located 2.2km to the south of the application boundary and 2.7km from the EfW building.
- 11.381 The landscape between the AONB and proposed development is rural in nature with limited disturbance and distant views north towards Dartmoor.
- 11.382 The majority of the AONB does not have any potential for views of the proposed development. Views to the south of the development site are restricted to a narrow belt by the valley landform of the River Yealm, as indicated by the ZTVs. This narrow area of potential visibility widens across the area of the AONB and becomes broken by the influence of the undulating landform. Tall hedgerows and trees within the area of potential visibility further restrict views, although views north looking along the Yealm Valley do exist as illustrated by Viewpoint K. The assessed effects for this viewpoint are **MODERATE** which would represent the worst case scenario and would not be significant. Drawing 11/30 illustrates the visual changes likely to be experienced from Viewpoint K.
- 11.383 Overall it is concluded that the landscape effect on the AONB would be **MINOR/NEGLIGIBLE** due to the limited extent of visibility and partly screened nature of the proposals.

### *Areas of Great Landscape Value*

- 11.384 The majority of the AGLVs do not have any potential for views of the proposed development as illustrated by the ZTVs
- 11.385 Potential visibility for the AGLV to the northwest (circa 6.5km distant) is restricted to small areas along its south eastern boundary in the area of Cann Wood and would be almost entirely restricted to views of the proposed stacks alone. Potential views of the top section of the EfW building would be

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possible from the area of the Woodside Animal Centre. A high proportion of woodland is present in these areas and this factor in conjunction with distance of view and intervening built elements around Plympton, would limit any visual effects. The visual effect of the proposed development on this AGLV is thus assessed as **MINOR/NEGLIGIBLE** and the resultant landscape effect as **NEGLIGIBLE/NONE**.

- 11.386 The AGLV to the north and east would have no visibility for the whole of the area to the east and south of Ivybridge. To the north of the proposed development potential visibility is restricted by the undulating landform, woodland and hedgerows. The visual effect of the proposed development on this AGLV is assessed as **MODERATE** in the worst case and the resultant landscape effect on the AGLV is considered to be **MINOR**.

### *Saltram House*

- 11.387 The ZTV identifies the potential for lower range views from parts of the grounds of this receptor, but not the house itself. Reference to aerial photography identifies mature woodland around the boundary of the property and this would screen views within the grounds. Views would thus be restricted to the edges of the property and looking outwards.

- 11.388 This Historic Park and Garden and its setting would therefore not be visually effected by the proposed development. The visual effect at the edge of the boundary looking outwards towards the development is assessed as **MINOR/NEGLIGIBLE** at worst.

### *Flete*

- 11.389 The ZTV identifies that no views of the proposed development would be possible from this receptor and therefore the assessed effect is **NONE**.

### *Plympton House*

- 11.390 The urban location and subsequent screening by adjacent buildings and are likely to prevent any views towards the proposed development. Even if such views exist the distance of the view (4.7km) and intervening urban landscape would minimise any effects caused by the proposed development. The interpolated visual effect at this location is **NEGLIGIBLE/NONE**.

### *Two Moors Way*

- 11.391 This important long distance walking route heads north from Ivybridge and across Dartmoor, via Butterdon Hill, Piles Hill and Ugborough Moor before leaving the study area. Walkers heading south would be orientated towards the development site sections of the route south of Piles Hill.

- 11.392 The ZTVs illustrate the potential visibility of the proposed development over a large section of the route within the study area. The distance of the development would vary from circa 5km in the south to around 10km in the north.

- 11.393 Viewpoint H illustrates the type of distant view possible from the Two Moors Way at a distance of 5.9km. The visual effect caused by the development has been assessed as **MODERATE/MINOR** for the viewpoint. This effect would decrease to the north as the distance from the development site increases. The overall effect on the visual amenity for the route within the study area is assessed as **MINOR**.

### *Erme Plym Trail*

- 11.394 This long distance route is seen as a continuation of the Two Moors Way from Ivybridge to the Devon coast at Wembury. The route travels through the undulating landscape of South Devon winding in and out of the South Devon AONB.

- 11.395 The ZTVs illustrate the very limited extent of potential views from this route, and the main visual effect would occur for the limited section of the route around Viewpoint K to south of the development site. The visual effect assessed for this viewpoint is MODERATE. However, given the extent of the Erme Plym Trail and limited visibility from the route within the study area, the overall effect of the proposals on users of this route is assessed as **NEGLIGIBLE/NONE**.

### *West Devon Way / Devon Coast to Coast Cycle Route*

- 11.396 No views would occur from either of these two routes, due to their position within the wooded confines of the Plym Valley.

### *Historic features*

- 11.397 Potential effects on historic features such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) and listed buildings are assessed in Chapter 13 Cultural Heritage. Although some of these sites may have views of the proposed development, it has been concluded in conjunction with the author of the heritage section that, such views are unlikely to affect the setting of any of the identified historic sites considered by in the Cultural Heritage Chapter. Please refer to the Heritage Chapter for further details.

## SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

- 11.398 A landscape and visual assessment of the proposed development has been completed in accordance with accepted guidance. A study of the landscape and visual components of the site and the local area was undertaken through desktop study and fieldwork. This study identified the main landscape and visual receptors and resulted in a baseline appraisal, against which

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landscape and visual impacts could be assessed. The main landscape and visual implications of the development and their potential impacts were identified, and mitigation was developed to minimise these impacts. Comparing the sensitivity of the receptors to the magnitude of predicted change, then allowed the significance of these resultant impacts to be assessed.

### *Landscape Impact*

- 11.399 The proposed development is mostly located within a disturbed landscape of old quarrying and landfill operations, including the quarry void, stocking area and old weighbridge area of New England Quarry, as well as the periphery of the Strashleigh Hams landfill site. However, parts of the proposals would affect Ancient Woodland, grassland/, a County Wildlife site and areas of scrub and open poorly vegetated ground.
- 11.400 These landscape effects would be mitigated by the large amount of seeding and planting proposed as part of the EfW proposals and at a later stage the landfill restoration.
- 11.401 The proposed EfW buildings would have an effect on the landscape character of the study area. This effect would be principally limited to the impact of the EfW dome and condensers, which would form prominent features within the landscape directly north around the Lee Mill area. Please see photomontages on drawings 11/25, 11/26 and 11/35.
- 11.402 The EfW dome alone would also be prominent within the adjacent landscape to the east and west as indicated by the photomontages on drawings 11/29, 11/30 and 11/33.
- 11.403 However, the extent of the effects shown by these photomontages is limited as indicated by the other montages, viewpoints and ZTVs contained within this chapter.
- 11.404 It was known from an early stage of assessment that any proposed EfW would be very visible from certain areas of the adjacent landscape. Thus the proposed building has been designed to reflect the local character and become a landmark building with a positive aesthetic appeal.

### *Visual Impact*

- 11.405 The visual effect of the proposed development is revealed by the ZTV drawings (11/5 and 11/6). In reality visibility is much more restricted across the study area than shown by the ZTVs due to hedgerow/hedgebanks, woodland and sunken lanes which all reduce the number of clear and open views across the study area.

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11.406 The significant visual effects would all occur from views on the edges of the Yealm valley, where views down into the existing quarry area occur. These views tend to comprise of woodland with little of the existing quarrying operations and landform visible, due to vegetation screening. Thus most of the components of the proposed development would be hidden within this woodland setting. However, the larger scale structures such as the EfW dome and stacks would be visible above and within this woodland setting as illustrated by the photomontages included within this chapter.

### *Conclusion*

11.407 The aim of the building design was to produce a high quality 'landmark' building that is capable of having a positive effect on views and the landscape of the local area. It is concluded that the architect has been successful in achieving this, although this is a subjective judgement by the author of this section.

11.408 Given the scale and size of the proposed buildings the design is successful in reducing the perceived mass of the building sufficiently to minimise landscape and visual effects.

11.409 It is therefore considered that the proposed building would meet its aim of becoming a landmark building and would be acceptable in terms of its landscape and visual effect on the landscape of the study area within this context.