
Rossendale Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

Landscape and Visual Appraisal

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) is to accompany a full planning application for an 85MW Battery and Energy Storage System (BESS) (the 'Proposed Development') on land near to the A680 east of Ramsbottom (the 'Site'). The Site, its boundary and location are shown on Figure 1.
- 1.2 This report includes a review of published landscape documentation relevant to the Site; a description of the baseline conditions on the Site and the surrounding area; a description of existing visual amenity and views towards the Site and a description of the Proposed Development including embedded mitigation measures. The LVA assesses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and landscape features, effects on visual amenity and considers the anticipated effects of the development on the visual aspect of 'openness' of the Green Belt.
- 1.3 The assessment is based on the Parameters Plan (Drawing Ref:CUB001-PP-01) and the Indicative Site Layout (Drawing Ref:CUB001-PL-01) and accompanying sections and details prepared by CADmando on behalf of Cubico Sustainable Investments and the Landscape Plan (Drawing Ref D10602.004) prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP).
- 1.4 This report includes the following Sections:
- Section 2.0 - Method, Scope, and Context;
 - Section 3.0 - Legislation and Policy Context;
 - Section 4.0 - Landscape Baseline;
 - Section 5.0 - Visual Baseline;
 - Section 6.0 - The Proposed Development;
 - Section 7.0 - Assessment of Landscape Effects;
 - Section 8.0 - Assessment of Visual Effects;
 - Section 9.0 - Green Belt Considerations; and
 - Section 10.0 - Conclusions.
- 1.5 This LVA is supported by a series of Figures (Figures 1 to 8) presented at the end of this report. Figures show relevant landscape and environmental designations, topography, and published landscape character assessment data; identify visual receptors; and show viewpoint locations. Photographs from selected viewpoints are presented at Figures 8.1 to 8.11.
- 1.6 Appendix A provides the LVA method, discussed in Section 2.0 below.

2.0 Method, Scope, and Context

Method

- 2.1 The method for this LVA (Appendix A), is based on guidance contained in the 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition', (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013) (GLVIA3).
- 2.2 The LVA involved the following key stages:
- Desk-based assessment involving a review of relevant information, guidance and planning policy relating to the type of development proposed and to landscape and visual amenity;
 - Site survey and assessment to augment the baseline assessment, assess the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development and undertake photography at selected viewpoint locations; and
 - Assessment and reporting of effects using criteria for sensitivity of receptor, magnitude of effect and overall effect.
- 2.3 Duration and reversibility of landscape effects has been assessed with the following considerations:
- Short term: 0-5 years during the construction period and completion; and
 - Long term: 15 years onwards for the life of the Proposed Development.

Scope and Context

- 2.4 The initial phase in the assessment involves defining the 'area of influence' of the Proposed Development or the study area boundaries. Landform and screening by vegetation and built form at the Site and in the surrounding landscape has been considered. The study area for this LVA includes the Site and the surrounding landscape likely to be affected by the Proposed Development. It includes the area from where the Site is potentially visible and is also defined by characteristics of the development type and landscape type in which the development is located.
- 2.5 A study area of up to a maximum of 4km from the Site has been defined for this LVA to include areas of higher ground to the west of Ramsbottom. This study area provides sufficient context within which an assessment of the landscape and visual effects can be framed.
- 2.6 The aims and objectives of this appraisal are:

- To identify, describe and evaluate the current landscape character of the Site and its surroundings, along with any notable individual landscape elements, to determine the sensitivity of the landscape to the type of development proposed;
 - To identify potential visual receptors (i.e. people who would be able to see the development) and evaluate their sensitivity to the type of changes proposed; and
 - To identify and describe any impacts of the development in so far as they affect the existing landscape and/or views and to evaluate the magnitude of effect and the overall effect.
- 2.7 The assessment of landscape assists in understanding what key elements define landscape character and contribute to visual amenity so that:
- Elements which make an essential contribution to landscape character are maintained, enhanced and managed;
 - Changes can be accommodated within the existing landscape and visual context; and
 - Improvements and enhancements can be made where uncharacteristic features detract from the character and visual amenity of the area.

Assumptions and Limitations

- 2.8 Viewpoint photography was undertaken in August 2024; this represents a 'best case' scenario in terms of the extent of screening provided by existing vegetation. Seasonal differences have been taken into consideration in the description and assessment of visual effects.
- 2.9 This LVA is based on the Proposed Site Plan which sets out the key principles of the scheme including the location of access and development and areas of proposed planting.
- 2.10 In assessing both landscape and visual effects the influence of time, particularly the growth of new vegetation can be substantial. The post-completion effects have therefore been assessed at two stages (Year 1 and Year 15).
- 2.11 The time that new planting takes to establish is dependent on species, stock size, the nature of the growing conditions and other factors such as maintenance and vandalism.

3.0 Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 This Section provides a summary of relevant national and local planning policy including Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and evidence base documents relevant to the Site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England, how these are expected to be applied at a local level in development plans and how developers should address them. The Framework places great emphasis on plans and developments contributing to sustainable development.
- 3.3 The sub-topics beneath the goal of Delivering Sustainable Development that are most relevant to townscape, landscape and views within the assessment study area are:
- Section 13: Protecting Green Belt Land;
 - Section 14: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
 - Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment.
 - Section 14: Meeting the

NPPF Section 13: Protecting Green Belt Land

- 3.4 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF states:

"The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence".

- 3.5 Green Belt land serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

3.6 Paragraph 160 states:

'When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources'.

NPPF Section 14: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

3.7 Paragraph 168 states:

When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should: a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future.

NPPF Section 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

3.8 Paragraph 187 states:

that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan.

3.9 Paragraph 198 of Section 15 states that planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity.

National Planning Practice Guidance

3.10 The NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) available online. Those elements of PPG addressing matters in the scope of this landscape and visual appraisal and relevant to the Proposed Development are detailed below, and the guidance has been considered when designing and assessing the Proposed Development.

Design

3.11 PPG emphasises the importance of good quality design as an integral part of sustainable development. PPG on design advises on the key points to consider on design, which include:

- Ensuring development can deliver a wide range of planning objectives;

- Enhance the quality of buildings and spaces, by considering, amongst other things, form, and function; efficiency and effectiveness and their impact on well-being; and
- Address the need for different uses sympathetically.

Natural Environment

- 3.12 PPG reinforces the NPPF's commitment to recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding local distinctiveness and the use of Natural England's guidance on landscape character assessment.

Green Belt

- 3.13 PPG notes that where it is relevant to assess the impact of a proposal on the openness of the Green Belt, it requires a judgment based on the circumstances of the case. Matters which may need to be taken into account include:
- *'openness is capable of having both spatial and visual aspects – in other words, the visual impact of the proposal may be relevant, as could its volume;*
 - *the duration of the development, and its remediability – taking into account any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent (or improved) state of openness; and*
 - *the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation.'*

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Rossendale Local Plan 2019 to 2036

- 3.14 The Rossendale Local Plan was adopted in December 2021 and it sets out the vision and spatial strategy for development across the Borough up until 2036. It focuses on promoting sustainable growth in housing and employment, while preserving the environment and the Borough's scenic beauty.

- 3.15 Policies of relevance to landscape and views are outlined below.

Strategic Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 3.16 Strategic Policy SD1 states that a positive approach to evaluating development proposals will be taken by the Council, particularly in favour of sustainable developments that enhance the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area.

Strategic Policy SD2: Urban Boundary and Green Belt

- 3.17 Strategic Policy SD2 notes that new development outside the Borough's urban boundaries will be supported only when it has to be located in the countryside and enhances the rural character of the area. Additionally, it is expected that new development will contribute to compensatory improvements to other land in the Green Belt, enhancing its quality and public access.

Policy SD4: Green Belt Compensatory Measures

- 3.18 Policy SD4 specifies that in exceptional circumstances where Green Belt land is released for development, compensatory improvements are required, related to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining land. These measures may include enhancements to green infrastructure, additional biodiversity gains (beyond those required under Policy ENV1), and landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal).

Strategic Policy ENV1: High Quality Development in the Borough

- 3.19 Strategic Policy ENV1 underscores the value of good design for sustainable development and establishes various criteria to ensure that new developments are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the landscape. Relevant criteria include:
- The siting, layout, massing, scale, design, materials, lighting, building to plot ratio and landscaping;
 - Providing landscaping as an integral part of the development, protecting existing landscape features and natural assets, habitat creation, providing open space, appropriate boundary treatments and enhancing the public realm;
 - Ensuring that there is no adverse impact to the natural environment;
 - Designs that will be adaptable to climate change.
- 3.20 Further, the policy highlights the impact of the Borough's topography on the visual effect of developments, especially when viewed from higher elevations.

Policy ENV3: Landscape Character and Quality

- 3.21 Policy ENV3 states that development proposals should conserve the distinctive landscape character of Rossendale. To protect and enhance the landscape's character and quality, developments should adhere to the following criteria and incorporate high-quality landscape design.
- *'Respond positively to the visual inter-relationship between the settlements and the surrounding hillsides and follow the contours of the site;*

- *Not have an unacceptable impact on skylines and roofscapes;*
- *Be built to a density which respects the character of the surrounding area with only low density development likely to be acceptable in areas abutting the Enclosed Upland or Moorland Fringe Landscape Character Areas;*
- *Retain existing watercourses, trees and green infrastructure features that make a positive contribution to the character of the area;*
- *Incorporate native screen planting as a buffer to soften the edge of the building line in valley side locations;*
- *Take into account views into and from the site and surrounding area, retaining and, where possible, enhancing key views; and*
- *Retain and restore dry stone walls, vaccary stone flag walls and other boundary treatments which are particularly characteristic of Rossendale'.*

Policy ENV6: Environmental Protection

- 3.22 Policy ENV6 mandates that new developments be sensitively designed to prevent soil, air, water, and noise pollution, as well as land instability, thereby protecting public health and the natural environment.

Policy ENV8: Other Forms of Energy Generation

- 3.23 Policy ENV8 indicates that decentralised energy generation and distribution will be favourably considered, considering their broader environmental impacts.

Policy ENV10: Trees and Hedgerows

- 3.24 Policy ENV10 asserts that development must avoid causing the loss or damage to trees, woodland, or hedgerows of visual or conservation significance. When these features are present on a development site, every effort should be made to integrate them effectively into the landscape design of the scheme.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Climate Change SPD

- 3.25 The Climate Change SPD was adopted in November 2022 and acknowledges the urgency of addressing the climate change emergency, in line with the Local Plan. It underscores the importance of Green Infrastructure (GI) in building resilience to climate change and sets out various measures to enhance GI. These measures aim to increase connectivity across the landscape through the enhancement of public footpaths and promote multi-functionality in regard to biodiversity, landscape, heritage, carbon-storage, flood resilience and recreation.

Compensation Measures for Green Belt Release

- 3.26 The Compensation Measure for Green Belt Release was adopted in January 2023 and sets out the spatial allocations for Green Belt release, along with compensatory measures. None of these allocations for Green Belt release are relevant to the application Site.

Rossendale Green Belt Review

- 3.27 The Green Belt Review was undertaken in November 2016 and provides a comprehensive review of the Green Belt performance within the Borough, with a specific focus on minor changes.
- 3.28 The Site is in Land Parcel Reference 52, which covers the broad area spanning Harden Moor, extending up to the M56 in the west, the A680 in the east, Birtle in the South, and Scout Moor in the North. This parcel comprises predominantly rural areas with minimal urban development, maintaining a distinct and robust rural identity. The open landscape significantly enhances the historical importance and ambiance of Birtle and Ramsbottom.
- 3.29 Land Parcel Reference 52 was judged that Purpose 1 (to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas) is not applicable as the area is not adjacent to the urban edge and is separated by intervening parcels. It was decided that the Land Parcel Reference 52 had no contribution to Purpose 2 (to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another).
- 3.30 Land Parcel Reference 52 was judged to have a strong contribution to Purpose 3 (to assist in the safeguarding of the countryside from encroachment). This is because the Land Parcel is an area of countryside that contains relatively little development, with only a slight sense of encroachment in the west from Fletcher Bank Quarry and the M66. It is acknowledged that the neighbouring settlements of Edenfield, Stubbins, Ramsbottom and Bury are visible but their visual influence on the character of the area is limited.
- 3.31 Land Parcel Reference 52 was also judged as having a strong contribution to Purpose 4, to preserve the distinctive setting and special character of historic towns. It is stated that based on bare earth height data, digital analysis states that this Land Parcel is theoretically visible from the historical settlements of Bury Town Centre and Ramsbottom. The review states with reference to Ramsbottom that *'the area forms a key part of its setting and the openness of the land contributes positively [to] the historic significance and special character of this settlement'*.
- 3.32 The assessment acknowledges that whilst purpose 5 is important, it is not possible to assess its performance in a parcel-by-parcel assessment so this has not been included.

- 3.33 Consideration of Green Belt in relation to the Proposed Development and landscape and views is set out in Section 9.

Lives and Landscapes Assessment for Rossendale Borough Council

- 3.34 Rossendale Borough Council commissioned Penny Bennett Landscape Architects to carry out landscape appraisals of particular sites that have potential landscape sensitivity within the Borough. None of these sites are of relevance to the application Site.

4.0 Landscape Baseline

- 4.1 This section considers any relevant designations present in the study area, summarises characteristics of the landscape described in published landscape character assessments and provides a description of the Site within this context. The relevant information is presented on Figure 2 - Environmental Designations, Figure 3 - Landscape Character, Figure 4 Topography and Figure 5 Site Context.
- 4.2 A 4.5km study area has been used to set the Site in a context where a range of designations relating to environmental quality can be identified, given the higher ground to the west of Ramsbottom however the nature of the Proposed Development and the Site means that effects on landscape and views are contained within a slightly smaller area to the north, east and south due to topography as shown at Figure 6 - Zone of Theoretical Visibility Mapping and described below.

Landscape and Environmental Designations

- 4.3 The Site is not within any international, national or local landscape designations.
- 4.4 In accordance with GLVIA3, other environmental designations are considered as part of determining the value of the landscape potentially affected by the Proposed Development. The LVA does not consider effects on each asset's conservation interest or its appreciation and understanding which are covered in other relevant assessments. Environmental Designation are described below and shown on Figure 2 - Environmental Designations.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

- 4.5 Lower Red Lees Pasture SSSI, Hodge Clough SSSI and the West Pennine Moors SSSI are approximately 3.5-4km west of the Site. These designations provide ecological context to the character of the wider landscape although do not relate to the Site due to distance.

Listed Buildings

- 4.6 There are several Listed Buildings in the study area. primarily comprising sandstone farmhouses and public houses, scattered across the landscape. There is limited intervisibility between the Site and nearby Listed Buildings because of intervening landform. There is some intervisibility with Fecit Farmhouse, stables and shippoon approximately 750m to the north.

Green Belt

- 4.7 The Site is in the Rossendale Green Belt, which is a component of the broader Liverpool, Manchester, and West Yorkshire Green Belt. The Rossendale Green Belt surrounds Ramsbottom and Edenfield and encompasses rural land including the moorland within which the Site is situated.

Community Forests

- 4.8 The Site is in the Pennine Edge Forest, encompassing the eastern areas of the Greater Manchester conurbation, specifically Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, and Tameside. The Greater Manchester Forest Plan 2020 - 2029 details the management objectives for this wooded area.

Review of Published Landscape Character Assessments

- 4.9 This Section summarises key characteristics of the landscape described in published landscape character assessments followed by an analysis of the local landscape based on fieldwork undertaken in August 2024 by a Chartered Landscape Architect. The location of the Site in relation to published landscape character areas is shown on Figure 3 - Landscape Character.

National Landscape Character

- 4.10 National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been prepared by Natural England for the 159 NCAs defined across England. The NCA profiles include a description of the natural and cultural features that shape the landscape, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics.
- 4.11 The Site and study area lies within NCA 36: Southern Pennines. This area forms part of the Pennine ridge of hills that stretch between the Peak District National Park and the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The landscape features large-scale sweeping moorlands, pastures enclosed by drystone walls, and gritstone settlements nestled within narrow valleys. The Southern Pennines are important for recreation, offering extensive open access areas and footpaths. Future challenges for the area include managing rising recreational demand and restoring blanket bog.
- 4.12 Key characteristics of NCA 36 include:
- *'Large-scale, open, sweeping landscape with high flat-topped hills providing extensive views, cut into by narrow valleys with wooded sides;*
 - *Mosaics of moorland vegetation on the plateaux, including blanket bog and heathland, supporting internationally important habitats and assemblages of upland birds, invertebrates and breeding waders;*

- *Enclosed upland pastures and hay meadows enclosed by drystone walls on the hillsides, and narrow valleys with dense gritstone settlements in the valleys, with steep slopes often densely wooded, providing strong contrast with open moorlands;*
 - *Many reservoirs on the moors, supplying drinking water to adjacent towns, wintering and breeding habitats for birds and high quality recreation experiences;*
 - *Medieval villages and smallholdings on the higher shelves of land above the valleys, with small fields and a dense network of lanes and paths;*
 - *Local stone buildings, with stone flags on roofs, bring a high degree of homogeneity to towns, villages, hamlets and farmsteads;*
 - *Rich time depth, from prehistoric features such as carved rocks, to medieval boundary stones, old mineral extraction sites and more recently, mills, factories, and non-conformist chapels;*
 - *Historic packhorse routes traversing the moorlands, with more recent road, rail and canal routes located along valleys;*
 - *Prominent features, including Stoodley Pike, Darwen Jubilee Tower, Rivington Pike, wind farms and communications masts, visible from afar'.*
- 4.13 Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEO) include:
- *'SEO1: Safeguard, manage and enhance the large areas of open, expansive moorland, and the internationally important habitats and species they support, as well as protecting soils and water resources;*
 - *SEO2: Manage and enhance the pastoral character of the moorland fringes, lower hills and valleys, with their mosaics of pastures and meadows, and their strong field patterns defined by drystone walls, to improve ecological networks and strengthen landscape character;*
 - *SEO4: Increase the enjoyment and understanding of the landscape and to experience a sense of escapism and inspiration, while also conserving the qualities of the landscape and its valuable historic and wildlife features'.*
- 4.14 The surroundings of the Site exhibit key characteristics of NCA 36 including expansive open landscapes, pastures enclosed by drystone walls, and distant vistas that include wind farms atop flat-topped hills.
- 4.15 NCA 54: Manchester Pennine Fringe is to the south of the Southern Pennines, occupying the transitional zone between the open moorlands of the Dark Peak and Southern Pennines. It is distinguished by sweeping views from urban settlements towards these regions, and the area's character is heavily influenced by its

proximity to the Pennine moors, demonstrating similar features like gritstone walls and expansive moorland landscapes.

- 4.16 Natural England's NCA descriptions provide a very broad assessment, covering a large area. They do not provide details directly relevant to the Site or its immediate surroundings, other than to establish the underlying characteristics of the wider landscape. A more detailed and Site relevant landscape character assessment is provided below.

A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Character Assessment

- 4.17 The Lancashire Landscape Character Assessment was published in December 2000 which provides a description and classification of the Lancashire landscape. It forms the basis for the evaluation and guidance provided in the landscape strategy. This landscape character assessment considers the landscapes of Lancashire as a mosaic of different Landscape Character Types (LCT) and Landscape Character Areas (LCA). The Site is in the Moorland Fringe LCT and the Rossendale Moorland Fringe LCA.
- 4.18 The Moorland Fringe LCT represents a transitional enclosed landscape, situated between moorland fells and agricultural lowlands. It is defined by gently rolling terrain featuring marginal pastures divided by stone walls, and sparse tree coverage. Winding roads connect isolated farmsteads scattered throughout the area.
- 4.19 The Rossendale Moorland Fringe LCA comprises fragmented blocks of moorland and features large, regular shaped fields enclosed by stone walls. Agriculture is the primary land use, with sheep and cattle grazing on improved grasslands, while the remaining unimproved or acidic grasslands provide valuable wildlife habitats. Quarrying has been historically significant, with both active and disused quarries visible at the interface with the moorland.

A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Strategy

- 4.20 The Lancashire County Council Landscape Strategy, which follows on from the landscape assessment, reiterates key environmental features of the Moorland Fringe LCT including its elevated and often long distance views, undulating landform, drystone walls, and isolated farmsteads. The landscape strategy for this LCT includes:
- *'Conserve the remote, multi-textured character and nature conservation interests of the Moorland Fringe;*
 - *Conserve the distinctive built character of the Moorland Fringe;*

- *Enhance the characteristic diverse landcover pattern;*
 - *Restore local field patterns in areas where they are degraded;*
 - *Restore broadleaved woodland and scrub in appropriate locations at the head of valleys and near some farmsteads'.*
- 4.21 To the northeast of the Site lie the Moorland Plateaux LCT and South Pennine Moors LCA. The Moorland Plateaux LCT features a remote and exposed landscape characterised by steep, high level escarpments and expansive views across the countryside. This open expanse creates a feeling of wilderness, accentuated by the vastness of the sky in these expansive landscapes. Within the plateaux, the South Pennine Moors LCA contrasts dramatically with surrounding urban areas and industrial valleys. Electricity pylons, wind turbines, reservoirs, and quarries are evident in this landscape.

Lives and Landscapes Assessment for Rossendale Borough Council

- 4.22 This assessment mainly details the landscape sensitivity of specific sites within the Borough, however it provides an overview of landscape sensitivity in relation to the character types and areas outlined in the Lancashire County Council Landscape Character Assessment.
- 4.23 The Moorland Fringe LCT is characterised as an expansive open landscape situated above 350m. Woodland at these elevations is sparse, as conditions are often unsuitable, and long distance views across the uplands are a defining characteristic. The Moorland Fringe LCT is considered sensitive to development due to its elevated position and its prominence makes it highly visible from valleys and adjacent hillsides, which are intersected by footpaths and long-distance routes such as the Rossendale Way. Mitigating impacts is challenging due to the terrain's natural characteristics and the impracticality of using trees for screening.
- 4.24 To protect the special landscape of Rossendale, this assessment recommends that:
- *'Development should not generally take place within Enclosed Upland or Moorland Fringe Landscape Character Types. These character areas are determined by altitude and landform, and development in these areas would be highly visible and intrusive;*
 - *Development in hillside locations should generally follow the contours horizontally around the hillsides;*
 - *Good quality drystone walls as boundaries fronting the highway may be more successful than planting at higher elevations;*
 - *Key views to important landmarks should be recognised, and site layouts designed so that these can be retained where appropriate'.*

Site and Environs Landscape Character

- 4.25 A site survey was undertaken to assess the landscape character of the Site and its immediate surroundings and to consider the extent to which this is consistent with the findings of the desktop assessment. The site survey was undertaken on 28th August 2024 on a day with good visibility.

Context

- 4.26 The site comprises a triangular shaped field of semi-improved/modified grassland which is in pastoral use as a grazing field for sheep in the moorland fringe on the edge of open moorland. The landscape context in the vicinity of the Site is shown on Figure 5 - Site Context
- 4.27 The Site is bounded by the A680 Rochdale Road to the east, Bamford Road (also a bridleway and access to Rossendale School) to the south, Black Lane (also a PRoW to the west) and a PRoW to the northwest boundary. This PRoW is signposted and connects to the wider PRoW network, although at the time of visit it was overgrown with nettles which suggested limited recent use. Rochdale Road provides a link between the M66 and Ramsbottom and Rochdale and is a well-used route.
- 4.28 The site is bounded by a low drystone wall constructed from local stone and strongly characteristic of the boundary type found in the local area. The wall is largely intact along Rochdale Road and Black Lane although is in varying conditions along Bamford Road. There is a single small ash tree in the south-east of the site on the Site boundary.
- 4.29 The wider area is predominately rural moorland interspersed with agricultural grazing fields. The town of Ramsbottom is approximately 2.5km west.

Topography and Landform

- 4.30 The Site is fairly flat compared to the varied surrounding rolling moorland topography. There is a level change across the Site with the higher northwestern part of the Site near the PRoW at 300m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) falling to the lower lying part of the Site east of the Black Lane/Bamford Road junction (at approximately 290mAOD).
- 4.31 The wider landscape comprises undulating agricultural land and moorland, rising to over 450m AOD to the northeast and East of the Site at Scout Moor, 370m AOD to the west at Holcombe Moor and 300mAOD Harden Moor to the south. The topography of the area is presented on Figure 4 - Topography.

Rivers and Drainage

- 4.32 There are no watercourses or waterbodies on Site.
- 4.33 Cheeseden Brook is approximately 200m to the southeast with the Ashworth Moor Reservoir approximately 650m beyond this.

Land Use, Land Cover and Vegetation

- 4.34 The Site comprises a triangular shaped field of semi-improved or modified grassland which is in pastoral use and is bounded by low drystone walls within the wider moorland fringe.
- 4.35 The wider landscape comprises moorland to the east and the south, with the settlements of Ramsbottom to the west and Edenfield to the northwest.

Landscape Value

- 4.36 The method of assessment described in Appendix B explains the factors used to inform judgements about landscape value which are derived from GLVIA3 and the Landscape Institute's Technical Guidance Note 02/21 (LI-TGN 02/21). The assessment below considers the value of the Site and the role of the Site within the wider landscape. Assessments of value in relation to other identified landscape receptors are described in Section 7.0.

Natural Heritage

- 4.37 The Site comprises a pastoral field of improved grassland that is bounded by low dry-stone walls.
- 4.38 Whilst there are some ecological designations within the study area, these designations do not relate to the Site and do not look different to areas of the same character that do not have the designation. Their value is because of nature conservation interests that do not manifest particularly in the landscape.

Cultural Heritage

- 4.39 The Site does not have historic landmark features, designed elements, is not part of a historic park or garden and does not demonstrate a particular example of time depth.
- 4.40 There are no archaeological or cultural heritage interests at the Site and there are no Listed Buildings or scheduled monuments in the wider area that contribute to the landscape character of the Site. There is limited intervisibility with Fecit Farmhouse and its stables and shippin (Grade II Listed) to the north of the Site.

Landscape Condition

- 4.41 The Site is not in any international, national or local landscape designations. The Site is within the Rossendale Green Belt.
- 4.42 The Site is a managed pasture enclosed by drystone walls within a wider moorland fringe landscape. The drystone walls are a characteristic feature in the landscape and they are generally well maintained with some disrepair along one boundary.

Associations

- 4.43 The landscape of the Site has no known associations with renowned artists or writers.

Distinctiveness

- 4.44 The Site does not show rare, unusual, or distinctive features that differentiate it from other areas of grassland within the moorland fringe landscape.

Recreational Value

- 4.45 PRoW FP1403187 runs along the northern boundary of the Site although nettles prevented access along this footpath at the time of the site visit.
- 4.46 The Site is surrounded by several PRoWs, PRoW BW1403183 which runs along the southern boundary (Bamford Road) and PRoW FP1403187 which runs along its western boundary (Black Lane). There are also Long Distance Footpaths in the area from where there are views of the Site, including Rossendale Way on the higher moorland to the north and Rochdale Way to the east.

Perceptual (Scenic) Quality

- 4.47 In terms of scenic quality, the Site is likely to be appreciated at the community and local level as part of the open countryside.
- 4.48 The Site is enclosed by a drystone wall in an otherwise visually open landscape with the topography allowing panoramic views across the surrounding moorland. In wider views existing wind turbines are visible on the higher ground

Perceptual (Wildness and tranquillity) Value

- 4.49 The Site comprises improved pasture enclosed by a drystone wall and is notably managed in the wider moorland habitat.

- 4.50 The area exhibits a sense of tranquillity however this tranquillity is reduced by the movement and noise from the busy A680 Rochdale Road to the immediate east of the Site.

Function

- 4.51 The Site is currently used as a pastoral field comprising improved grassland.

Conclusions

- 4.52 With consideration of the factors described above, the Site is of community value.

5.0 Visual Baseline

- 5.1 The visual influence of the Site has been determined through a combination of topographic analysis and field evaluation of features affecting visibility, such as built form and trees, hedgerows and woodland that filter and screen views of the development. This analysis work determined the potential visibility of the Site and identified visual receptors.
- 5.2 The study area for views is shown on Figure 7 and extends approximately 4.5km to include the higher ground to the west of Ramsbottom although is more restricted to the north, east and south by landform.
- 5.3 The field survey considered receptors from where views of the Site are likely and what the existing views comprise. The selection of viewpoints is not intended to cover every possible view of the Site, but rather they are representative of a range of receptor types at varying distances and orientations. No access has been sought to private properties or land and where assessments are reported they have been made from the nearest publicly accessible viewpoint.
- 5.4 Viewpoint photographs were taken in August 2024 when deciduous vegetation was in full leaf. This represents a best-case scenario in terms of the extent of screening provided by existing vegetation.

Visual Receptors

- 5.5 Visual receptors are those individuals who would see the Site and may experience a change in their view as a result of the Proposed Development and have been identified as follows:
- 5.6 Users of Public Rights of Way:
- PRow FP1403187 (northern site boundary)
 - PRow BW1403183 (southern site boundary, along Bamford Road)
 - PRow FP1403186 (western site boundary, along Black Lane)
 - PRow across Harden Moor (including FP1403209 and FP1403192)
 - PRow network to the east of the Site
 - Rossendale Way long distance footpath (along Coal Road)
 - Cheesden Valley Circular Walk
 - Rochdale Way long distance footpath

5.7 Motorists, walkers, and cyclists along the following roads:

- A860 Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road
- Bamford Road
- Black Lane
- Moor Side Lane
- Fecit Lane
- Coal Road

5.8 Residents living in properties along the following roads:

- Residents of Gate House on Bamford Road
- Residents of Close Nooks Farm
- Residents of Scattered Farmsteads to the north of the Site (including Kay Close Farm and Fecit Farm)
- Residents of Properties along Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road (A860)

5.9 Other receptors:

- Users of Rossendale School
- Users of Owd Betts Public House
- Users of Ashworth Moor Reservoir
- Users of Holcombe Moor west of Ramsbottom open access land and surrounding PRowWs, roads and residential properties (likely to be long distance and glimpsed views)

LVA Viewpoints

5.10 Viewpoint photography assists understanding of the baseline landscape and visual environment at the Site and in its context and is used to inform the assessment of effects on the visual receptors listed above.

5.11 LVA viewpoints are listed in Table 1 below, and viewpoint locations are shown on Figure 7. Figures 8.1 to 8.11 provide viewpoint photography showing the existing view in the direction of the Site from viewpoints 1 to 9 below.

Table 1: LVA Viewpoints

Viewpoint Reference and Location		Approximate Latitude/Longitude	Direction of View and Approximate Distance to Site
1	A680 Rochdale Road	53°38'55.38"N, 2°16'21.31"W	Looking southwest from eastern site boundary
2	Bamford Road/ PRoW BW1403183	53°38'51.76"N, 2°16'27.73"W	Looking northeast from southern site boundary
3	PRoW FP1403187	53°38'59.86"N, 2°16'27.27"W	Looking southeast from northwestern site boundary
4	Rossendale Way/ Coal Road	53°39'19.96"N, 2°16'13.46"W	Looking southwest, 600m
5	PRoW Hey FP 134, east of Cheesden Brook	53°39'5.28"N, 2°15'45.38"W	Looking southwest, 730m
6	Rochdale Way	53°38'29.41"N, 2°15'19.39"W	Looking northwest, 1.3km
7	Access track / permissive path near reservoir	53°38'27.54"N, 2°15'47.70"W	Looking northwest, 920m
8	PRoW FP1403209 on Harden Moor	53°38'36.60"N, 2°16'38.50"W	Looking northeast, 530m
9	Peel Tower, Holcombe Moor	53°38'35.71"N, 2°20'15.91"W	Looking east, 4.1km

Baseline Views

- 5.12 The Site is open with limited vegetation on the Site or in the wider area to provide any screening. Despite being in an open moorland fringe landscape the extent of visibility is limited to a relatively contained area due to local landform which limits views to within 1km to the north, east and south. Longer distance views are possible from higher ground to the west of Ramsbottom although these are more distant and viewed over the built form of Ramsbottom. There is no intervisibility with the nearest settlements of Ramsbottom and Edenfield.
- 5.13 The following paragraphs describe existing views towards the Site, experienced by the visual receptors listed above, and with reference to relevant viewpoint photography shown at Figures 8.1 to 8.11.

Views from PRow BW1403183 (Viewpoint 2)

- 5.14 PRow BW1403183 runs along Bamford Road, along the southern boundary of the Site. There are direct and open views over the boundary drystone wall across the Site. Beyond the Site fast moving traffic is visible on A680 and the rising landform where Scout Moor Wind Farm can be seen on higher ground. Visibility of the Site decreases further west along the bridleway due to intervening farmsteads and the sloping landform.

Views from PRow FP1403186 (Similar to Viewpoint 2)

- 5.15 PRow FP1403186 runs along Black Lane, forming the western boundary of the Site. There are direct and open views across the Site. As with BW1403183 fast moving traffic on the A680 is visible with the rising landform and Scout Moor Wind Farm visible beyond which contains views further north. Visibility of the Site decreases further north along the footpath as landform screens the site from view.

Views from PRow FP1403187 (Viewpoint 3)

- 5.16 PRow FP1403187 runs along the northern boundary of the Site between the A680 and Bamford Lane. From the Section of footpath following the northern Site boundary there are direct and open views across the full extent of the pastoral field which is bounded by low drystone walls. Views are backgrounded by further pastoral land.

Views from Rossendale Way Long Distance Footpath (Viewpoint 4)

- 5.17 The Rossendale Way Long Distance Footpath is a 72km high level circular route of the moors surrounding the Rossendale Valley. It runs along Coal Road on higher ground to the north and northeast of the Site. There are long distance open views down towards the Site from this Section of the path with other views obscured by landform and orientation. The Site is visible as a small part of expansive and panoramic views across the wider undulating agricultural landscape.

Views from PRow network to the east of the Site (Viewpoint 5)

- 5.18 To the east and north-east of the Site there is a network of PRows to the north of Rochdale Road. PRow Footpath 1403172 is the closest to the Site and there are direct views of the Site, with limited screening by intervening landform and the drystone walls on either side of Rochdale Road. Views continue further east and north along the PRow network, especially with elevation, however views become more distant.

Views from Cheesden Valley Circular Walk

- 5.19 The Cheesden Valley Walk is an 11km circular walk north of Bury starting at Cheesden. There are no views where the route passes Lumb Bridge due to localised variations in landform however there are views in the vicinity of Ashworth Moor Reservoir near Rochdale Road where the Site is visible in views northwest although the ground plane of the site is obscured by the stone wall to the boundary.

Views from Rochdale Way Long Distance Footpath (Viewpoint 6)

- 5.20 The Rochdale Way Long Distance Footpath runs approximately 1km at its closest point to the east at Ashworth Moor. From Ashworth Moor, the Site is visible as it lies on a slightly elevated landform and is visible with other pastoral land in the foreground. The stone wall along the eastern boundary is largely screened by the gentle rise in foreground landform, with only glimpsed views of boundary wall to the north. As the Rochdale Way tracks northeast toward Knowl Hill, views west towards the Site are obscured by landform.

Views from PRoW on Harden Moor (including FP1403209 and FP 1403192) (Viewpoint 8)

- 5.21 Harden Moor lies to the southwest of the Site south of Bamford Road and is crossed by FP1403209 to the north and FP1403192 to the south. The Site is largely obscured by intervening landform north of Harden Brook, which obscures views towards the eastern part of the Site. To the west, however, the landform gradually slopes away from the Bamford Road, revealing the ground plane of the western part of the Site, which blends in with the surrounding pastoral landscape visible in the foreground and background.

Views from A860 Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road (Viewpoint 1)

- 5.22 The A860 Rochdale Road forms the eastern boundary of the Site. From the road there are direct and open views over the stone boundary wall into the site. Motorists travelling along the road would have fleeting views as the road is at single carriageway national speed limit (60 mph). The surrounding landform limits visibility from this road to the short Section closest to the Site with views prevented by landform to the northwest and southeast.

Views from Bamford Road (Viewpoint 2)

- 5.23 Bamford Road runs along the southern boundary of the Site and beyond. Views towards the Site from Bamford Road are the same as those described for PRoW BW1403183 in Paragraph 5.14 where the road follows the PRoW route.

Views from Black Lane

- 5.24 Black Lane runs along the western boundary of the Site and beyond. Views towards the Site from Black Lane are the same as those described for PRoW FP1403186 in Paragraph 5.15 where the road follows the PRoW route.

Views from Fecit Lane

- 5.25 Fecit Lane is to the north and northeast of the Site just east off Rochdale Road (A860). Fecit Lane is part of a private access road leading to Fecit Farm and Four Acres Mill although it also forms part of the PRoW network. Views towards the Site are mostly obscured by the landform, with visibility limited to the northwestern boundary wall, where the Site's ground plane slopes away. Further along the lane, as the access track levels out, the Site becomes visible within the wider pastoral landscape.

Views from Coal Road (Viewpoint 4)

- 5.26 Coal Road is to the north and northeast of the Site. Views towards the Site from Coal Road are the same as those described for the Rossendale Way long distance footpath.

Views from Gate House on Bamford Road

- 5.27 Gate House is on Bamford Road to the west of the Site. Due to its lower topography compared to the Site, residents of the property are unlikely to have views of the Site. There may be some glimpsed views from upper storey rear windows towards the drystone wall western Site boundary on higher ground.

Views from Close Nooks Farm

- 5.28 Close Nooks Farm is to the northwest of the Site. Although close to the Site, residents of the farm are unlikely to have a view of the Site due to intervening landform comprising a small hill at around 302m AOD.

Views from Scattered Farmsteads to the north of the Site (including Kay Close Farm and Fecit Farm)

- 5.29 Views from scattered farmsteads to the north and east of the Site are dependent on their location and orientation. Residents of Kay Close Farm to the north of the Site will likely have no views due to intervening landform. Residents of Fecit Farm will likely have oblique views from upper storey windows towards the northwestern boundary wall.

Views from properties along Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road (A860)

- 5.30 Rochdale Road (A860) forms the eastern boundary of the Site beyond a dry stone wall. Further south the road becomes Edenfield Road (A860). The closest properties to the Site along Rochdale Road are to the north near Coal Road and to the south along Edenfield Road between Croston Close Road/Cheesden Brook. Views towards the Site from properties along the A860 are largely restricted by intervening landform and the orientation.

Views from Rossendale School

- 5.31 Rossendale School is to the northwest of the Site at the end of Moor Side Lane however despite its proximity views towards the Site are obscured by intervening landform.

Views from Owd Betts Public House

- 5.32 Owd Betts Public House is on Edenfield Road (A860) to the south-east of the site however views towards the Site are limited by orientation and intervening landform which rises towards the Site to the north.

Views from Ashworth Moor Reservoir (Viewpoint 7)

- 5.33 Ashworth Moor Reservoir is to the south-east of the Site adjacent to Owd Betts Public House. Due to intervening landform, users of the path around the eastern and southern sections of the reservoir are unlikely to have views towards the Site. There are some views towards the Site from the northwestern and western edge of the reservoir along the access track near the A860 (Viewpoint 7).

Views from Holcombe Moor west of Ramsbottom open access land and surrounding PRowS, roads and residential properties (Viewpoint 9)

- 5.34 Holcombe Moor forms an area of high open access land to the west of Ramsbottom. There are several PRowS in addition to open access and Peel tower is a well visited local landmark with panoramic views. From the high ground there are long distance views towards the Site beyond Ramsbottom, however, the Site is barely discernible in the expansive and panoramic view which includes Ramsbottom and Fletcher Bank Quarry closer in the view and Scout Moor Wind Farm on the higher ground.

6.0 The Proposed Development and Embedded Mitigation

- 6.1 The Proposed Development is the '*Construction, management and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) with associated infrastructure, including access, drainage, security measures and landscaping and provision of a connecting cable to Croston Close Road substation*'. Full planning permission is sought for the proposed development for a temporary period of 40 years.
- 6.2 The proposed development is presented on the Parameters Plan (Drawing Ref:CUB001-PP-01) and the Indicative Site Layout (Drawing Ref:CUB001-PL-01) and accompanying sections and details prepared by CADmando on behalf of Cubico Sustainable Investments. The Landscape Plan (Drawing Ref D10602.004) prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP) presents the proposed landscape scheme and photomontage illustrations of the indicative site layout are presented on the Photomontage Visualisations sheets (Ref IN10602.01).
- 6.3 The Proposed Development will have an installed capacity of up to 85MW and will supply electricity to the National Grid during times of peak energy demand, supporting other low-carbon and renewable projects to help ensure the UK meets its Net Zero targets.
- 6.4 The Proposed Development comprises a series of battery containers and associated equipment including inverters, transformers, water tank, a control room and storage container. The site will not be lit in normal use but will be equipped with low-level emergency lighting. There will be CCTV and signage but neither will have lighting.
- 6.5 The battery containers will be no more than 3 metres in height. They are metal clad and will be recessive in colour to suit the natural landscape.
- 6.6 The Site will have its own on-site substation which will facilitate the connection to the grid at the existing Croston Close Road substation 0.5km to the south.
- 6.7 All equipment will be enclosed by a secure boundary fence of 2.4m high steel weldmesh fence which will be recessive in colour with occasional CCTV cameras at 4m height.
- 6.8 The Site will be accessed off the A680 Rochdale Road. The existing drystone wall around the perimeter of the Site will be retained except where some removal is needed for access. Removal will be minimised and any rebuilding to suit the required visibility splays will match the existing wall. Any areas of wall disrepair will be restored. Access within the site will be via a well compacted aggregate road.

- 6.9 The proposed BESS will be on the lower ground in the southeastern part of the Site and a cut and fill exercise is proposed to create a level platform to balance material on Site to avoid the need for any removal of material. An attenuation pond is proposed at the lowest point close to the junction of the A680 and Bamford Road.
- 6.10 A landscape scheme is proposed which is in keeping with the local landscape character. Hedgerows and woodlands are not characteristic of this moorland fringe landscape, so a scheme of groups of feathered hardy tree species are proposed which will be able to withstand the conditions to provide some filtering or views and assist in assimilating the Proposed Development.
- 6.11 Areas between the internal access roads will be seeded with a low growing diverse grass seed mix to improve biodiversity whilst not resulting in fire risk. The remainder of the Site will be retained as pasture with wildflower seeding to improve its biodiversity value.

Embedded Mitigation

- 6.12 The Proposed Development incorporates the following measures to minimise its effect on the landscape and in views:
- The proposed development is sited on the lowest part of the site to minimise its visibility in the wider landscape. Cut and fill will be used to create a level platform which will be smoothly graded into the surrounding land to minimise any artificially graded slopes.
 - Use recessive natural colour on battery units to help them to 'blend in' to the surrounding landscape which will assist in reducing their visibility in distant views including from long distance footpaths on the higher ground
 - Retain existing site features including drystone walls
 - Avoid uncharacteristic hedgerow or woodland planting which will be difficult to establish, using scattered groups of hardy tree and shrub species which are able to thrive in upland areas to assist in assimilating the development and provide some screening.
 - Use weldmesh security fencing which is less visually obtrusive than steel palisade fencing.
 - Minimise the use of signage, lighting and other associated structures.

7.0 Assessment of Landscape Effects

- 7.1 The assessment of landscape effects considers the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of the potential effect to come to an overall judgement as set out below.
- 7.2 The assessment of landscape effects during construction and after implementation (year 1 and year 15) for each of the identified landscape receptors is summarised below.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 7.3 Landscape sensitivity combines judgements of the landscape's susceptibility to change of the type of development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as defined in the landscape baseline.

Landscape Value

- 7.4 As reported in Paragraphs 4.38 to 4.54 the Site and its immediate surroundings is of community value.
- 7.5 The landscape character areas and types identified through reviewing the assessments at the national and county level are of community value.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

- 7.6 The susceptibility of a landscape to change is dependent on the characteristics of the receiving landscape and the nature of the proposed development.
- 7.7 Overall, the Site and surrounding landscape is considered to have medium susceptibility to change as a result of the Proposed Development because:
- There is some built energy related development already present in the landscape;
 - Some screening is provided by landform; and
 - There are some opportunities for mitigation.

Landscape Sensitivity

- 7.8 Landscape sensitivity sequentially combines judgements of the landscape's susceptibility to change to the type of development proposed, and the value attached to the landscape.

- 7.9 The Site and surrounding landscape are of community value with medium susceptibility to change and the overall sensitivity of the Site and its immediate surroundings to the proposed development is low.
- 7.10 The landscape character areas identified at the national, county and district level are of community value with medium susceptibility. The overall sensitivity to change is low.

Assessment of Landscape Effects during Construction

- 7.11 During construction direct adverse effects to landscape components will result from changes in land cover, vegetation, and alterations to the existing topography, for example through excavation for foundations, roads and services. This will occur alongside the provision of temporary infrastructure such as access, site compounds and parking; the storage of materials; erection of temporary fencing; the use of operational plant; and general construction works. All are uncharacteristic features of the landscape but generally will be temporary and short-term. All construction works will be carried out in accordance with good practice to avoid, reduce or limit the extent of effects as far as possible.
- 7.12 The following activities during construction will give rise to effects on landscape:
- Establishing a construction compound, site offices and laydown areas for materials and components;
 - Soil-stripping and earthworks;
 - Movement of construction vehicles and plant;
 - Construction of properties and internal access roads;
 - Implementation of landscaping proposals; and
 - Temporary security lighting and security fencing.
- 7.13 The Proposed Development will result in a change in land use. In the short term the existing grassland will be replaced with a temporary construction site resulting in a localised change to land use within the Site boundary with some influence on the wider landscape.
- 7.14 The construction of the Proposed Development would be undertaken during daylight hours, however there may be periods, particularly during the winter months, where lighting would be required due to the shorter daytime periods. Lighting will be kept to the minimum necessary for safety and security, and where possible, artificial lighting would be designed and located to minimise light spill on the surrounding landscape and to minimise night glow.

- 7.15 Construction effects would be temporary and of short duration and would be visible from the surrounding landscape, having the potential to affect aesthetic and perceptual aspects of landscape character beyond the Site boundary. There would be a greater scale of change at the Site level resulting in a moderate magnitude of effect and an overall moderate adverse effect. Whilst effects would be noticeable, they would be temporary and occur for a short duration resulting in the enduring development which is covered below in the operational effects.
- 7.16 Beyond the immediate Site, construction activity would have an effect on a small part of the landscape within the Rossendale Moorland Fringe LCA (within the Moorland Fringe LCT). There would be increased activity within a small part of the LCA resulting in low negative magnitude of effect during construction with a minor overall adverse effect.
- 7.17 The construction activity would result in a very localised change to the character of NCA 36. The key characteristics and features of this NCA would not be affected by the Proposed Development. The magnitude of effect would be low adverse within a very localised area resulting in an overall negligible impact on NCA 36.

Assessment of Landscape Effects during Operation

- 7.18 The operational effects of the development occur when all construction activities have ceased, and the development is in use. The assessment takes account of embedded mitigation i.e. mitigation designed into the Proposed Development.
- 7.19 There will be a long-term change in land use on the Site resulting in the loss of an area of grassland and the introduction of a BESS and associated features including access and fencing. The Proposed Development will be sited on the lowest part of the Site and with use of recessive natural colours to minimise influence on the wider landscape. Drystone walls are a characteristic feature in the local landscape and the existing perimeter wall will be retained. Any removal to facilitate the new access will be minimised with any reinstatement to suit visibility splays using traditional drystone walling techniques. The proposed planting incorporates locally appropriate native species which are suitable for upland habitats to assist in integrating the built form. This will additionally screen views from the roads and PRowWs along the Proposed Development's boundaries and from the wider landscape.
- 7.20 At a site level the proposed development would result in a moderate negative magnitude of effect with an overall moderate adverse effect at Year 1. As the planting matures it will provide some filtering of views resulting in low negative effect with an overall minor adverse effect at Year 15.

- 7.21 The Site is in the Rossendale Moorland Fringe LCA (in the Moorland Fringe LCT) which comprises an agricultural landscape with marginal pastures divided by stone walls. The Proposed Development would have a direct adverse effect on a small area of pasture within this LCA replacing the grassland with energy related infrastructure. The existing Scout Moor Windfarm is already present in the wider landscape. Drystone walls are characteristic feature of this LCA, and the perimeter wall would be retained and rebuilt where required to accommodate the new site entrance. The proposed planting of vegetation would incorporate locally appropriate native species to assist in integrating the built form as set out in the Lancashire County Council Landscape Strategy. At an LCA level, the magnitude of effect will be low negative with a minor adverse overall effect with some reduction of effect as vegetation matures.
- 7.22 The Proposed Development would result in the loss of a small area of grassland in the moorland fridge landscape which is characteristic of NCA 36 Southern Pennines. This would be a small scale of change in the wider context of the NCA and the Proposed Development would influence a very small part of NCA 36. Given these factors the magnitude of effect on NCA 36 would be low in a limited geographical area adjacent to the Proposed Development and negligible for the NCA as a whole. Overall effects are judged to be minor adverse in a limited geographical area and negligible on landscape character of NCA 36 at both Year 1 and Year 15.
- 7.23 **Table 2** below summarises the anticipated overall effect on landscape character.

Assessment of Landscape Effects during Decommissioning

- 7.24 The operational lifespan of the BESS is approximately 40 years. The Proposed Development is reversible, at the end of its operational life it will be dismantled and removed, and the Site reinstated to previous conditions.
- 7.25 Effects during the de-commissioning period will be similar to the construction period, and will include:
- Dismantling and removal of all infrastructure;
 - Any concrete foundations and underground cabling will be broken up or left in situ and covered to reinstate ground cover;
 - All disturbed ground will be re-seeded with a suitable grassland mix where necessary; and
 - The Site will be reinstated to previous use as grassland pasture with a drystone boundary wall.

Table 2: Landscape Receptor Overall Effect

Receptor	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
The Site and its immediate surroundings	Low	Construction	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
		Year 1	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
		Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Rossendale Moorland Fringe LCA	Low	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
		Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
		Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
NCA 36: Southern Pennines	Low	Construction	Localised low negative; Negligible overall	Localised minor adverse; Negligible overall
		Year 1	Localised low negative; Negligible overall	Localised minor adverse; Negligible overall
		Year 15	Localised low negative; Negligible overall	Localised minor adverse; Negligible overall

8.0 Assessment of Visual Effects

- 8.1 The following paragraphs assess the sensitivity of the views potentially affected, the magnitude of the predicted effect, and the overall effect on each view assessed, which would result from the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.
- 8.2 The assessment of visual effects during construction and after implementation (Year 1 and Year 15) for each of the identified visual receptors is summarised in Table 4.

Sensitivity of Visual receptors

- 8.3 The sensitivity of visual receptors depends on the susceptibility of the visual receptor to changes in views as a result of the development and the value of the view (as set out in the method in Appendix B).

Susceptibility to Change

- 8.4 Walkers and cyclists using the local PRowS and other recreational routes are judged to be of high susceptibility to change as their attention is likely to be focussed on views of the landscape. Residents also have a high susceptibility to change as they are static receptors.
- 8.5 Road users within the study area have limited views over wider landscape and the routes are not promoted in any way for their scenic value. Road users are considered to have a low susceptibility to change.
- 8.6 Users of Ashworth Moor Reservoir have a high susceptibility as the surroundings are important to the experience of visiting the reservoir.
- 8.7 Users of Rossendale School and of Owd Betts Public House are likely to be focused on the activity at hand, rather than the wider landscape, and their susceptibility to change is low.

Value of View

- 8.8 Rossendale Way and Rochdale Way are long distance footpaths which are promoted at the county level and also displayed on OS mapping and are considered to be of regional value. Cheesden Valley Circular Walk is promoted at a borough level and is considered to be of local value. Other PRow are valued at a local level.
- 8.9 Ashton Moor Reservoir is a recreational asset attracting visitors from the local area and views are considered to be of local value.

- 8.10 Views from all other local roads, residential properties, and local facilities including Rossendale School and Owd Betts Public House, will be valued by residents and workers at a community level.

Receptor Sensitivity

- 8.11 In accordance with Method Table 8 at Appendix B, the sensitivity of each identified visual receptor is set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Visual Receptor Sensitivity

Receptor	Viewpoint(s)	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Users of PRow BW1403183	2	Community	High	Medium
Users of PRow FP1403186	-	Community	High	Medium
Users of PRow FP1403187	3	Community	High	Medium
Users of Rossendale Way long distance footpath	4	Regional	High	High
Users of PRow network to the east of the Site	5	Community	High	Medium
Users of Rochdale Way long distance footpath	6	Regional	High	High
Users of Cheesden Valley Circular Walk	-	Local	High	Medium
Users of PRow across Harden Moor (including FP1403209 and FP 1403192)	8	Community	High	Medium
Users of A860 Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road	1	Community	Low	Low
Users of Bamford Road	2	Community	Low	Low
Users of Black Lane	-	Community	Low	Low
Users of Fecit Lane	-	Community	Low	Low

Receptor	Viewpoint(s)	Value	Susceptibility	Sensitivity
Users of Coal Road	4	Community	Low	Low
Residents of the Gate House on Bamford Road	-	Community	High	Medium
Residents of Close Nooks Farm	-	Community	High	Medium
Residents Farmsteads to the north of the Site (including Kay Close Farm and Fecit Farm)	-	Community	High	Medium
Residents of properties along Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road	-	Community	High	Medium
Users of Rossendale School	-	Community	Low	Low
Users of Owd Betts Public House	-	Community	Low	Low
Users of Ashworth Moor Reservoir	7	Local	High	Medium
Users of Holcombe Moor west of Ramsbottom open access land and surrounding PRowS, roads and residential properties	9	Community	Open access land/PRowS: High Roads: Low Residents: High	Open access land/PRowS: Medium Roads: Low Residents: Medium

Visual Effects during Construction

- 8.12 During construction visual impacts will arise from activities including site access and parking; the storage of materials; the movement of operational plant; and the construction of structures. The effects of construction works generally will be short term and temporary resulting in the enduring development which is considered in the next Section on operation effects. All construction works will be carried out in accordance with good practice to avoid, reduce or limit the extent of negative visual effects as far as possible.
- 8.13 The greatest levels of change during construction will be experienced by those receptors immediately adjoining the Proposed Development, including users of the A860 Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road, Bamford Road/ PRow BW1403183, Black Lane PRow FP1403186 and of PRow FP1403187. This is due to the proximity to the Site and the extent of construction works that will be visible to receptors. During construction pedestrian receptors would experience a moderate negative magnitude of effect and a moderate adverse overall effect, with motorists experiencing a low adverse effect due to the nature of their activity and the fleeting nature of the view.
- 8.14 Where the activities are visible, they would be temporary and of short duration and would be seen in the context of other energy infrastructure including the wind turbines in Scout Moor Wind Farm.
- 8.15 The following visual receptors would experience minor adverse effects due to greater intervening distance and partially screened views of the construction activity:
- Users of PRow across Harden Moor (including FP1403209 and FP 1403192)
 - Users of PRow network to the east of the Site
 - Users of Rossendale Way long distance footpath
 - Users of Rochdale Way long distance footpath
 - Users of Cheesden Valley Circular Walk
 - Motorists on A860 Rochdale Road
 - Motorists on Bamford Road
 - Motorists on Black Lane
 - Users of Fecit Lane
 - Users of Coal Road
 - Residents of the Gate House on Bamford Road

- Residents of Close Nooks Farm
 - Residents of Scattered Farmsteads to the north of the Site (including Kay Close Farm and Fecit Farm)
 - Users of Ashworth Moor Reservoir
- 8.16 During construction views from the following receptors would be barely perceptible due to distance, orientation or intervening landform resulting in negligible effects:
- Residents of properties along Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road (A860)
 - Users of Rossendale School
 - Users of Owd Betts Public House
 - Users of Holcombe Moor west of Ramsbottom open access land and surrounding PRowS, roads and residential properties
- 8.17 The temporary effects experienced during construction would result in the enduring development which is described and assessed below.

Visual Effects during Operation

- 8.18 The operational effects of the development occur when all construction activities have ceased, and the development is in use. The assessment takes account of embedded mitigation i.e. mitigation designed into the Proposed Development.
- 8.19 Following the completion of the Proposed Development the greatest levels of effects will still be experienced by those receptors closest to the Site including users of A860 Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road, Bamford Road/ PRow BW1403183, Black Lane PRow FP1403186 and of PRow FP1403187.

Users of Public Rights of Way

- 8.20 PRow BW1403183 (Viewpoint 2) runs along the southern boundary of the Site along Bamford Road. There would be close and direct views of the Proposed Development over the low drystone wall boundary, with the development closest at the eastern end of the PRow. Views become more distant the further west along the footpath the receptor travels, with visibility decreasing. There would be up to a moderate negative magnitude of effect and moderate adverse overall effect at Year 1. This would decrease to an overall minor adverse effect at Year 15 once the proposed tree and scrub planting matures which would assist in filtering views towards the development and help integrate it into its surroundings.
- 8.21 PRow FP1403186 runs along Black Lane to the immediate west of the Site. Users of the footpath will have open and direct views towards the Proposed Development over the low drystone wall boundary but it would be set back into the southwestern

corner of the Site. The Proposed Development would be backgrounded by landform and seen in conjunction with the Scout Moor Wind Farm on the higher ground beyond the development. Views towards the Proposed Development become more limited further north along the footpath due to intervening landform. There would be up a moderate negative magnitude of effect and moderate adverse overall effect at Year 1, reducing to a minor adverse overall effect at Year 15 once the proposed tree and scrub planting surrounding the BESS matures and provides some filtering.

- 8.22 PRow FP1403187 runs along the northern boundary of the Site (Viewpoint 3) and from along this footpath there would be direct views towards the Proposed Development in the southwestern corner of the field. A moderate proportion of the open view across the landscape would be affected, resulting in a moderate negative magnitude of effect and moderate adverse overall effect at Year 1. The overall effect would reduce to minor adverse at Year 15 once the proposed tree and scrub planting surrounding the BESS establishes and filters views towards the Proposed Development.
- 8.23 Rossendale Way long distance footpath (Viewpoint 4) runs along Coal Road on higher ground and users would have open views down towards the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development would form a small proportion of an open panoramic view across the landscape, resulting in a low magnitude and minor adverse overall effect at Year 1. The overall effect would reduce to some extent at Year 15 once the proposed tree and scrub planting establishes.
- 8.24 From the PRow network to the east of the Site there would be varying views towards the Proposed Development dependant on the location of the receptor on the footpaths. PRow Footpath 1403172 is the closest to the Site beyond Rochdale Road and from here there would be direct views of the Proposed Development beyond the intervening drystone wall field boundaries, although it would be a small part of a wider view. Further east from PRow Hey FP 134 (Viewpoint 5) there would still be open views towards the Proposed Development but these would be more distant and the proposed development would form a smaller proportion of the view. Views would continue further east and north along the PRow network, especially with elevation however views towards the Proposed Development would become more distant and glimpsed and eventually will be screened by intervening landform. There would be a up to a low negative magnitude of effect and minor adverse overall effect at Year 1, decreasing at Year 15 due to the proposed planting.
- 8.25 From the Cheesden Valley Walk there would be no views of the Proposed Development for the majority of the route including Lumb Bridge due to localised variations in landform. However in the vicinity of Ashworth Moor Reservoir near Rochdale Road the Proposed Development may be partially visible over the stone wall to the boundary which would be low negative magnitude of effect giving rise to

an overall minor adverse effect at year 1 reducing to negligible at year 15 with the establishment of tree planting associated with the attenuation pond.

- 8.26 Users of the Rochdale Way long distance footpath (Viewpoint 6) would have open but more distant views towards the Proposed Development from a short section of this route, where the Proposed Development would be seen in conjunction with other energy infrastructure including Scout Moor Wind Farm. The Proposed Development would be backgrounded in the view by the higher landform beyond, partially screened by the stone wall around the site and it would form a very small proportion of a panoramic view across the landscape. The magnitude of effect and overall effect at Year 1 and Year 15 would be negligible.
- 8.27 Users of PRoWs across Harden Moor including FP1403209 and FP 1403192 (Viewpoint 8) would have limited views towards the Proposed Development due to intervening landform. The magnitude of effect would be low negative at most with a minor adverse overall effect at Year 1, reducing to a negligible overall effect at Year 15 however the majority of views would be screened by intervening landform.

Road Users

- 8.28 Users of the A860 Rochdale Road (Viewpoint 1) would have fleeting but close and direct views towards the Proposed Development over the drystone wall forming the site boundary. The new entrance would be visible from the road. Further north along Rochdale Road and further south along Edenfield Road, views towards the Proposed Development are screened by intervening landform. There would be a low negative magnitude of effect and minor adverse overall effect at Year 1. This would decrease at Year 15 as the proposed tree and scrub planting matures which would assist in filtering views and integrate it into its surroundings.
- 8.29 Views from Bamford Road (Viewpoint 2) towards the Proposed Development are similar to those described above in Paragraph 8.20 for users of PRoW BW1403183 however road users have a lower sensitivity. At Year 1 the magnitude of effect would be low negative with a minor adverse overall effect, decreasing at Year 15 as the proposed tree planting matures.
- 8.30 Views from Black Lane towards the Proposed Development are similar to those described above in Paragraph 8.21 for users of PRoW FP1403186 however road users have a lower sensitivity. At Year 1 the magnitude of effect would be low negative with a minor adverse overall effect, decreasing at Year 15 once the proposed tree and scrub planting surrounding the BESS development matures.
- 8.31 Fecit Lane is a private access road leading to Fecit Farm and beyond. On the approach to Fecit Farm users of the road would have limited views towards the Proposed Development as these would be obscured by landform. Beyond Fecit

Farm users of the road would have some views towards the Proposed Development, resulting in a low negative magnitude of effect and minor adverse overall effect at Year 1. This would decrease as proposed tree planting matures.

- 8.32 Views from Coal Road (Viewpoint 4) towards the Proposed Development are similar to those described above in Paragraph 8.23 for users of the Rossendale Way long distance footpath however road users have a lower sensitivity. At Year 1 the magnitude of effect would be low negative with a minor adverse overall effect, decreasing at Year 15 once the proposed tree planting matures and integrates the development into the wider landscape.

Residential Properties

- 8.33 Residents of the Gate House on Bamford Road are unlikely to have any views of the Proposed Development beyond the drystone wall boundaries due to intervening landform and the properties being on lower lying ground. Any effects would be negligible at most.
- 8.34 Residents of Close Nooks Farm to the north of the Proposed Development are unlikely to have views of the Proposed Development due to intervening landform and any effects would be negligible at most.
- 8.35 From scattered farmsteads to the north of the Site including Kay Close Farm and Fecit Farm, residents are likely to have some oblique views towards the Proposed Development which would form a small proportion of an open and expansive panoramic view. The magnitude of effect would be low negative with a minor adverse overall effect at Year 1 which would decrease as the tree planting matures.
- 8.36 The closest properties to the Site along Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road (A860) are those in Cheesden close to Owd Betts Public House. Residents of these properties are unlikely to have direct views towards the Proposed Development due to the orientation of the properties and intervening landform. The overall effect at Year 1 and Year 15 would be low at most reducing to negligible as tree planting matures.

Other Receptors

- 8.37 No views are considered possible from Rossendale School due to intervening topography.
- 8.38 Owd Betts Public House is on the A860 Edenfield Road and users are unlikely to have views towards the Proposed Development due to the orientation of the building and intervening landform. The magnitude of effect and overall effect at Year 1 and Year 15 would be negligible.

- 8.39 From the southern and eastern Sections of Ashworth Moor Reservoir, views towards the Proposed Development are obscured by intervening landform. There would be some glimpsed views towards the Proposed Development from the northwestern and western edge of the reservoir (Viewpoint 7) resulting in a low negative magnitude of effect and minor adverse overall effect at Year 1 reducing as the proposed tree planting matures.
- 8.40 From across the Holcombe Moor open access land, surrounding PRowS, roads and residential properties (Viewpoint 9) there are likely to be long distance and glimpsed views towards the Proposed Development. Built form within Ramsbottom and Fletcher Bank Quarry would be seen in the foreground of the view. The Proposed Development would be barely discernible in the expansive and panoramic view resulting in a negligible overall effect at Year 1 and Year 15.

Visual Effects during Decommissioning

- 8.41 The proposed development is reversible; at the end of its operational life it will be dismantled and removed, and the site reinstated to previous conditions.
- 8.42 Effects during the de-commissioning period will be similar to the construction period, and will include:
- Dismantling and removal of all infrastructure;
 - Any concrete foundations and underground cabling will be broken up or left in situ and covered to reinstate ground cover;
 - All disturbed ground will be re-seeded with a suitable grassland mix where necessary; and
 - The Site will be reinstated to previous use as grassland pasture with a drystone boundary wall.

Table 4: Visual Receptor Overall Effect

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Users of PRow BW1403183	2	Medium	Construction	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
			Year 1	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of PRow FP1403186	-	Medium	Construction	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
			Year 1	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of PRow FP1403187	3	Medium	Construction	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
			Year 1	Moderate negative	Moderate adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of Rossendale Way long distance footpath	4	High	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of PRow network to the east of the Site	5	Medium	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Users of Cheesden Valley Circular Walk	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Users of Rochdale Way long distance footpath	6	High	Construction	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 1	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Users of PRow across Harden Moor (including FP1403209 and FP 1403192)	8	Medium	Construction	Up to Low negative	Up to Minor adverse
			Year 1	Up to Low negative	Up to Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Users of A860 Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road	1	Low	Construction	Minor negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Minor negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of Bamford Road	2	Low	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of Black Lane	-	Low	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Low negative	Minor adverse
Users of Fecit Lane	-	Low	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
Users of Coal Road	4	Low	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Residents of the Gate House on Bamford Road	-	Medium	Construction	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 1	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Residents of Close Nooks Farm	-	Medium	Construction	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 1	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Residents of Farmsteads to the north of the Site (including Kay Close Farm and Fecit Farm)	-	Medium	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Residents of properties along Rochdale Road/Edenfield Road	-	Medium	Construction	Low / Negligible	Minor / Negligible
			Year 1	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Rossendale School	-	Low	Construction	No View	No view
			Year 1	No View	No View

Receptor	Viewpoint	Sensitivity	Development Phase	Magnitude of Effect	Overall Effect
			Year 15	No View	No view
Users of Owd Betts Public House	-	Low	Construction	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 1	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Users of Ashworth Moor Reservoir	7	Medium	Construction	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 1	Low negative	Minor adverse
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible
Users of Holcombe Moor west of Ramsbottom open access land and surrounding PRoWs, roads and residential properties	9	Open access land/PRoWs: Medium Roads: Low Residents: Medium	Construction	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 1	Negligible	Negligible
			Year 15	Negligible	Negligible

9.0 Green Belt Considerations

- 9.1 National planning policy set out in Section 3.0 refers to the need to consider 'the potential harm to the Green Belt' which may arise from the Proposed Development.
- 9.2 The site lies within an area of the Rossendale Green Belt which is a component of the broader Liverpool, Manchester, and West Yorkshire Green Belt.
- 9.3 This section considers the effects on the character and openness of the Green Belt; the effects on the purposes of the Green Belt related to landscape and views; and the effects on the visual aspects of openness of the Green Belt.

Consideration of the Contribution of the Site to Perception of Green Belt Openness

- 9.4 Paragraph 142 of the NPPF (December 2024) states that '*the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence*'. PPG sets out the visual aspects that can relate to the perception of openness.
- 9.5 The key quality of the Green Belt is its 'openness'. PPG notes that the visual aspect of openness may be relevant to considering the overall effect on openness.
- 9.6 Visual openness is the Green Belt factor of greatest relevance to LVA. The Site is in an open moorland fringe landscape. A low drystone boundary wall affords some screening, however the site is predominantly open and in a wider open landscape. The Proposed Development would introduce battery storage development onto the Site which would adversely affect the visual aspect of openness. However these structures are low and their effects on the visual aspect of openness of the Green Belt have been minimised through their siting (on the lowest ground), appropriate use of colour to appear recessive in the landscape and through an appropriate landscape treatment in keeping with the character of the moorland fringe.

Assessment of Site's Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

- 9.7 The Rossendale Green Belt Review (2016) reviewed the Rossendale Green Belt including the Site in relation to its purposes. In the review, the site is in Land Parcel Reference 52 which comprises predominantly rural areas with minimum urban development.
- 9.8 Land Parcel Reference 52 was identified as not being applicable to Purpose 1 and 5, having no contribution to Purpose 2 and having a strong contribution to Purpose 3 and 4.
- 9.9 The relevant landscape and visual aspects of each of the purposes of Green Belt in relation to the Site are considered below.

Purpose 1: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas

- 9.10 The Proposed Development is not immediately adjacent a built-up area and given its distance from urban edges, it would not appear as sprawl from any large built-up areas. There would be no change to the Site's contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 2: to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another

- 9.11 The Proposed Development does not comprise residential development and does not relate to any settlement, so there would be no perception of neighbouring towns merging into one another. The Proposed Development would not change this perception and would not alter the Site's contribution to this purpose.

Purpose 3: to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment

- 9.12 The Site is in the moorland fringe landscape in the Green Belt. It is an area of open countryside and is a largely undeveloped landscape (in terms of urban development) however there is already other energy related development present in the landscape including Scout Moor Wind Farm and Croston Close Road substation. The Proposed Development is required in this location (due to its relationship with energy production and a grid connection) and due to its small size is not considered to be a significant encroachment of the Green Belt.

Purpose 4: to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

- 9.13 The Site makes no contribution to the setting and special character of any historic towns. There is a Listed Building to the north of the site however there would be no direct effect on this heritage asset and effects on its setting would be negligible.

Purpose 5: to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land

- 9.14 The Proposed Development would not involve the recycling of derelict and other urban land, so assisting urban regeneration is not a matter relevant to landscape and visual matters. The Proposed Development would be neutral in respect of this Green Belt purpose.

10.0 Conclusions

- 10.1 This report presents the assessment of the anticipated effects on landscape character and views of the Proposed Development. The effects of the Proposed Development on the landscape and visual amenity have been assessed in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual and Impact Assessment Third Edition (GLVIA3).
- 10.2 The nature and magnitude of landscape and visual effects will change during the various stages of the Proposed Development and have been assessed during construction and operation. To take into account the establishment of the Proposed Development (in particular proposed vegetation), the operational phase has been assessed in the short to medium term (from Year 1 to Year 15) and long-term (Year 15 and beyond).

Landscape Baseline and Landscape Effects

- 10.3 The assessment of landscape effects has been carried out using the established hierarchy of published Landscape Character Assessments from national to district level. In conjunction with field work sensitive landscape receptors within the study area have been identified.
- 10.4 The Site is not in any international, national or local landscape designations. The Site is in NCA 36 Southern Pennines and at a county level the Site is in the Rossendale Moorland Fringe LCA (within the Moorland Fringe LCT). It is an undulating landscape on the edge of the higher moorland and is characterised by improved grasslands in pastoral use within the moorland fringe. There is limited settlement or urban development, however energy development (wind farms) and mineral extraction and reservoirs are evident.
- 10.5 The effects on landscape character at a site level would be up to moderate adverse in the short and medium-term reducing to minor adverse as the landscape scheme matures during the operational lifetime of the project after which the Site would be reinstated to its previous condition. The landscape character of the Site would change from improved pasture to battery storage as a result of the Proposed Development, although it would relate to existing energy infrastructure in the wider landscape, including the wind farm and substation on Croston Close Road. The proposed development has been sited on lower ground and designed to use recessive colours and incorporate native tree planting to aid its assimilation in the landscape and effects at a wider scale would be low to negligible.

Visual Baseline and Visual Effects

- 10.6 A series of representative views surrounding the Site have been identified through desktop and field studies. Nine representative viewpoints have presented from publicly accessible locations including PRow and roads.
- 10.7 The Site's location on the moorland fringe means that the visual envelope is affected by topography. It extends to include distant views from approximately 4.5km to the west beyond Ramsbottom (around Peel Tower) however visibility to the north, east and south is more limited by local moorland topography. Close and near distance views are possible from PRow's adjacent to the Site including two long distance footpaths and roads immediately surrounding the site, however other visual receptors are relatively few due to there being sparse settlement in the area.
- 10.8 The greatest level of visual effects will be experienced by the closest receptors: primarily users of the PRow BW1403183 (Bamford Road), PRow FP1403186 (Black Lane) and PRow FP1403187 where the overall effect on these receptors will be up to moderate adverse. Such effects will be partially mitigated by the proposed native tree and scrub planting surrounding the BESS. Views from other PRow in the wider area including Rossendale Way and Rochdale Way are minor adverse at most as the site will form as small part of a wider view, and other views, including from PRow and properties, are obscured by landform.

Effects on Visual Aspect of Green Belt Purposes and Green Belt Openness

- 10.9 The Proposed Development would introduce battery storage development into the Green Belt, however these structures are low in height and their effects on the visual aspect of openness of the Green Belt have been minimised through their siting on the lowest ground, through the appropriate use of colour to appear recessive in the landscape and through the implementation of an appropriate landscape treatment in keeping with the character of the moorland fringe. The Proposed Development would not result in sprawl or potential coalescence of settlements and encroachment into countryside would be minimal and would have some relationship to other energy infrastructure already present in the landscape.

Conclusion

- 10.10 This LVA has found that the effects of the Proposed Development will be restricted to a localised geographical area and would not result in substantial harm to landscape character beyond the Site boundary, nor would there be substantial detrimental effects to visual amenity.

References

Data Sources

- Ordnance Survey maps (1:25,000 Explorer Series);
- Historic Ordnance Survey maps;
- Aerial images; and
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC Map) (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>).

Legislation and Policy

- The National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023;
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Rossendale Local Plan 2018 to 2036, Rossendale Borough Council, December 2021.

Landscape Character Documents

- National Character Area 36: Southern Pennines, Natural England, 2024;
- A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Character Assessment, Lancashire County Council, December 2000; and
- A Landscape Strategy for Lancashire: Landscape Strategy Lancashire County Council, December 2000.

Best Practice and Guidance

- Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, Third Edition 2013);
- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment, Natural England 2014;
- Visual Representation of Development Proposals. Technical Guidance Note 06/19. Landscape Institute, September 2019;
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations. Technical Guidance Note 02/21. Landscape Institute, May 2021; and
- BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations (BSi, April 2012).

Other Relevant Documents

- Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document, Rossendale Borough Council, November 2022;
- Compensation Measures for Green Belt Release, Rossendale Borough Council, January 2023;

- Rossendale Green Belt Review, LUC on behalf of Rossendale Borough Council, November 2016; and
- Lives and Landscapes Assessment for Rossendale Borough Council, Penny Bennett Landscape Architects, December 2015.

Appendix A: Figures



KEY

★ Site location



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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

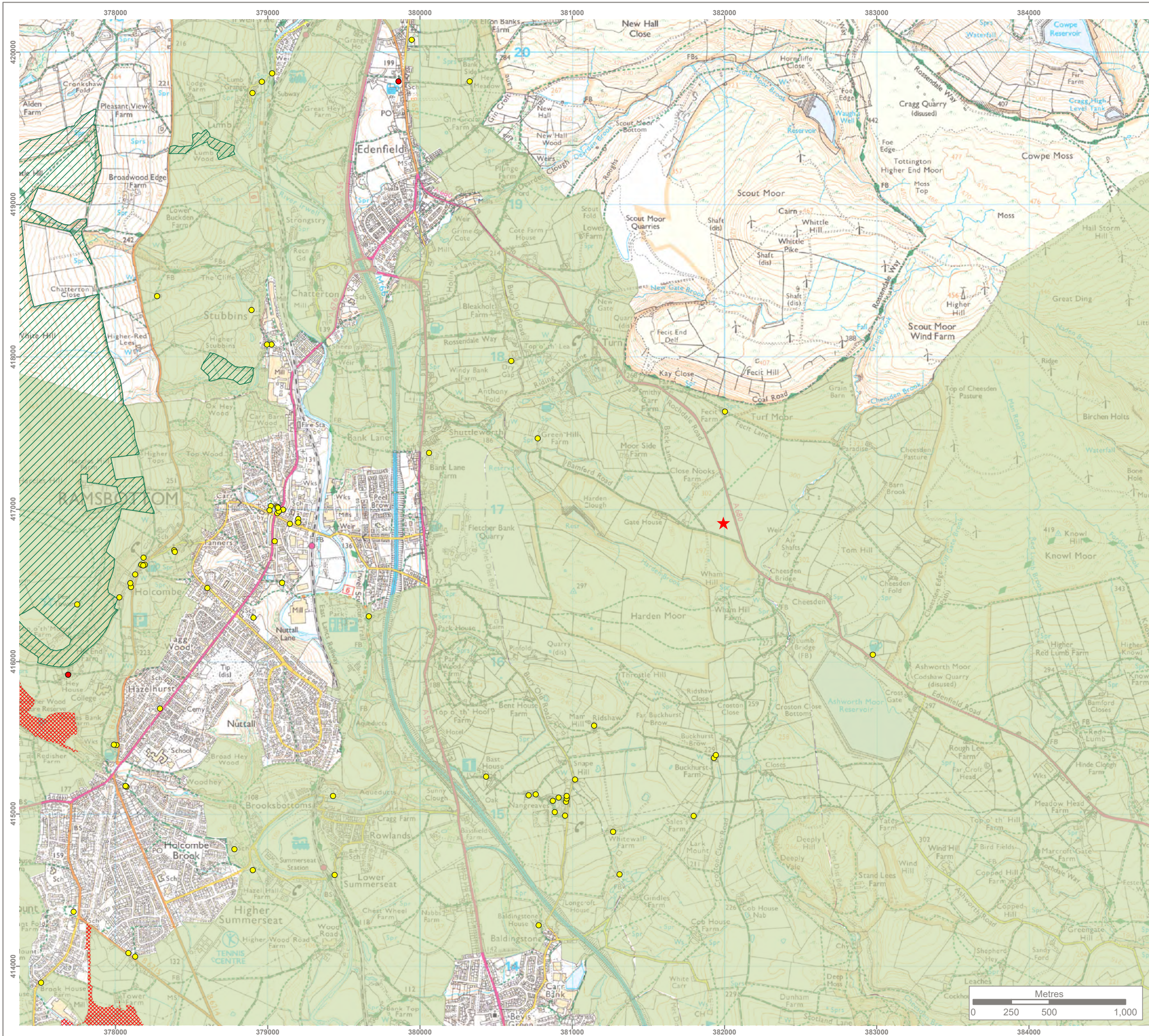
401 Faraday Street, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6GA
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project
Rossendale BESS

Title
Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Drawing Number
G10602.001

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CW	JB	1:25,000 @ A3	19/12/2024



KEY

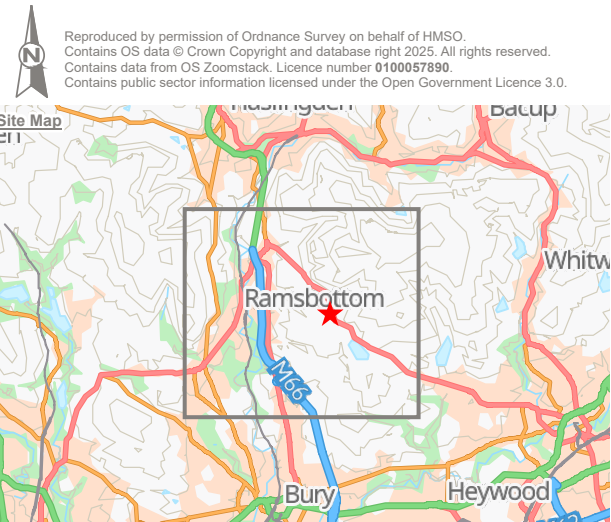
- ★ Site location
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building

Environmental Designations

- Local Nature Reserve
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Green belt

Note

This map contains data from the following sources:
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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



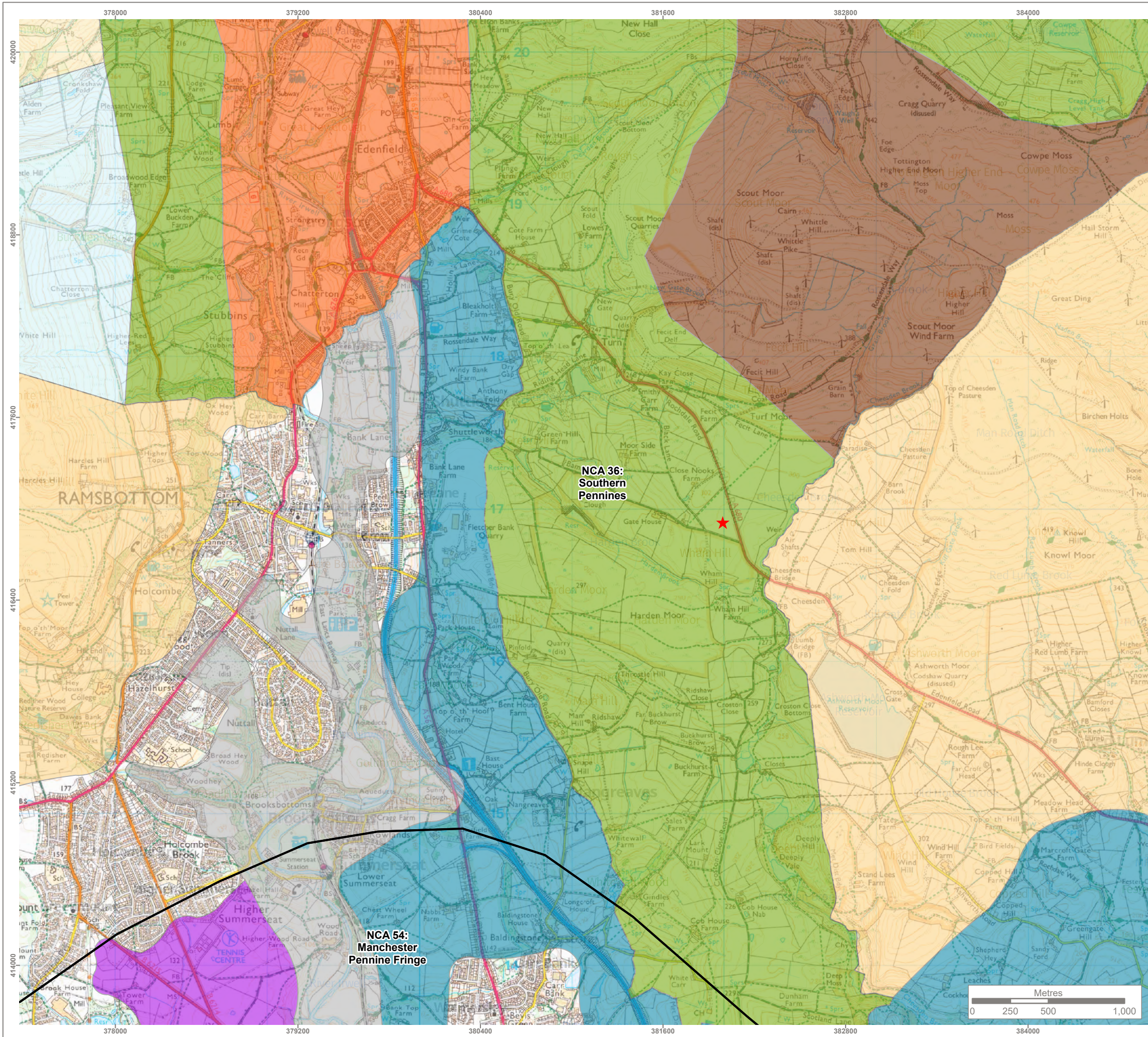
401 Faraday Street, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6GA
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project
Rossendale BESS

Title
Figure 2 - Environmental Designations

Drawing Number
G10602.002

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CW	JB	1:25,000 @ A3	19/12/2024



KEY

★ Site location

□ National Character Area

Lancashire Landscape Character Types

■ Moorland Fringe

■ Moorland Hills

■ Moorland Plateaux

■ Reservoir Valleys

■ Settled Valleys

Greater Manchester Landscape Character Types

■ Urban Fringe Farmland

■ Incised Urban Fringe Valleys

■ Pennine Foothills

■ Open Moorlands and Enclosed Upland Fringes

Note:

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- Landscape Strategy for Lancashire © Lancashire

County Council [2009]

- Landscape Character and Sensitivity Study © Greater Manchester Council [2016]



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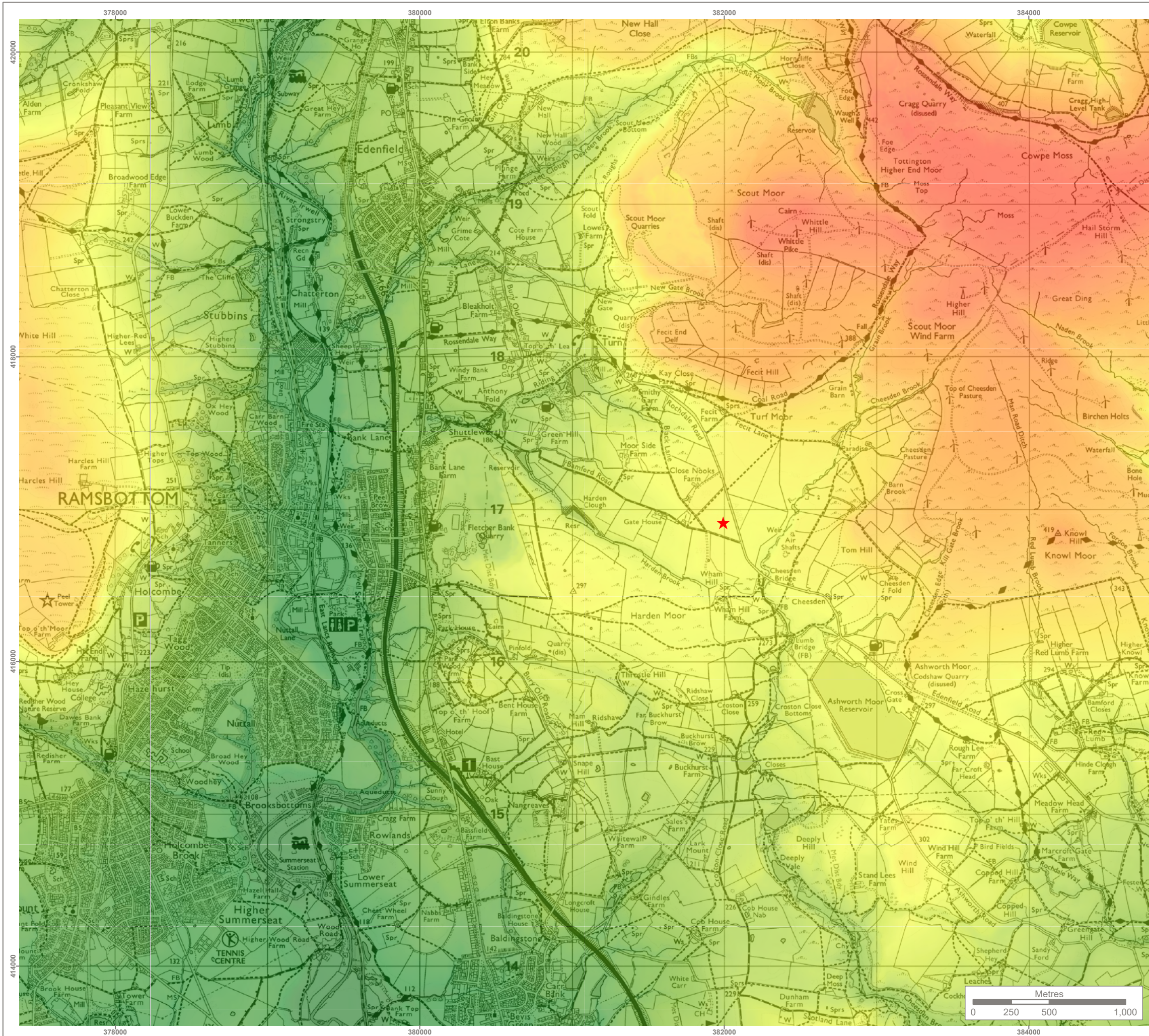
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Project
Rossendale BESS

Title
Figure 3 - Landscape Character Area

Drawing Number
G10602.003

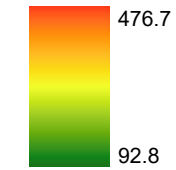
Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CW	JB	1:25,000 @ A3	19/12/2024



KEY

★ Site location

Elevation (in metres above OS Datum)



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Project
Rossendale BESS

Title
Figure 4 - Topography

Drawing Number
G10602.004

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CW	JB	1:25,000 @ A3	27/01/2025



KEY

-  Site boundary
-  BESS development area
-  Public Right of Way (PRoW)



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Project
Rossendale BESS

Title
Figure 5 - Site Context

Drawing Number
G10602.005

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CB	JB	1:8,250 @ A3	10/03/2025