

I.0 INTRODUCTION

I.0.1 This section addresses Landscape Character and Visual impacts. It explains how baseline conditions relating to Landscape Character and Visual matters are assessed and judged to be affected by development.

I.1 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology, general

I.1.1 The Landscape and Visual impact judgements presented in this report are based upon professional experience and the principles set out in *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA), 3rd Edition, 2013*, published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and with reference to the *Technical Guidance Note Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations (TGN 02-21)*

I.1.2 Landscape Character Impacts relate to the Effects of the proposals on the physical resources and other characteristics of the landscape, and the resulting character and quality. Landscape resources and character are considered to be of importance in their own right and valued for their intrinsic qualities, regardless of visibility. Landscape receptors are defined as aspects of the landscape resource that have the potential to be affected by a proposal.

I.1.3 There is no single standard methodology for quantifying the scale or magnitude of relative Effects on Landscape Character, although guidance exists in *GLVIA 3* and *TGN 02/21*. The following definitions are therefore proposed to support judgement of Landscape Character Effects. Landscape Character is assessed by considering the Effects of the development at a range of scales. The term “*Local*” is used to define the area within, or influenced by, the Site and is likely to approximate to the extent of the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) (referenced in the Visual section) as well as other perceptual changes such as noise and smell. *Local* is defined as the *Area of Local Landscape Character (ALLCA)*

I.1.4 The methodology sets out how to make Landscape Character impact judgements. Sensitivity is determined by cross-referencing Value with Susceptibility (see Table 1). The Magnitude of Impact is then judged at scales ranging from the LLCA to those defined in the cascading scales of published Landscape Assessments. The Significance of Landscape Effect is determined by cross-referencing the Sensitivity of the Landscape Receptor with the Magnitude of Impact (see Table 2).

2.0 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

2.1 Landscape Value

2.1.1 Landscape Value refers to the relative value or importance that society attaches to different landscapes on account of their landscape qualities. It is inherent and independent of the proposed development. Landscape qualities are characteristics or features of a landscape that are valued, sometimes referred to as “*special qualities*” in relation to nationally designated landscapes. Landscape characteristics are elements that make a particular contribution to landscape character. Landscap Value is assessed using the following range of factors (adapted from *GLVIA 3*, paragraph 5.28, Box 5.1, with minor revisions following the introduction of *TGN 02-21*):

- *Landscape condition* (revision from quality *TGN 2/21*).

“A measure of the physical state of the landscape. It may include the extent to which typical character is represented in individual areas, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements.”
- *Scenic quality*.

“The term is used to describe landscapes that appeal primarily to the senses (primarily but not wholly the visual senses).”
- *Distinctiveness* (combines *Rarity* and *Representativeness*).

“Rarity is the presence of rare elements or features in the landscape or the presence of a rare *Landscape Character Type*.”

“Representativeness is whether the landscape contains a particular character and/or features or elements which are considered particularly important examples.”
- *Conservation* (natural heritage factors (*TGN 2/21*) interests).

“The presence of features of wildlife, earth science or archaeological or historical and cultural interest can add to the value of the landscape as well as having value in their own right.”
- *Recreation value*.

“Evidence that the landscape is valued for recreational activity where experience of the landscape is important.”
- *Perceptual aspects*.

“A landscape may be valued for its perceptual qualities, notably wildness, remoteness and/or tranquillity.”
- *Associations*.

“Some landscapes are associated with particular people, such as artists or writers, or events in history that contribute to perceptions of the natural beauty of the area.”
- *Function* (*TGN 2/221*).

“The value attached to landscapes which perform a clearly identifiable and valuable function.”



2.1.2 Landscape Value judgements are made using the following (linked to the GLVIA 3 categorisations on page 39 and Appendix 6).

• **Very Low**

Typically characterised by a landscape significantly influenced by a dominant landscape detractor.

• **Low**

A landscape which may be considered of Local Community value, is not designated or protected, does not make a positive contribution, is in poor condition, and/or has been substantially altered by detrimental man-made activity, possibly at a small scale.

• **Medium**

A landscape which may be considered Regional or Local Authority (GLVIA 3), or an undesignated landscape judged to have a higher value than Low following assessment undertaken in accordance with TGN 02-21; or a landscape that may form part of a local designation or other recognised value, makes a moderately positive contribution, is in moderate condition, and/or may exhibit some detrimental activity resulting from man-made intrusion. These may include Local Plan landscape designations or other undesignated landscapes that have some degree of medium landscape value.

• **High**

A landscape which may be classed as regional, international, or national: it is covered by an international or national designation or, occasionally, is of regional interest or other important value, making an important and positive contribution to its wider context. These may include World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, Heritage Coasts, and Registered Parks and Gardens (including their settings).

• **Very High**

A landscape which is covered by an international or national designation and makes a highly important and significantly positive contribution to its wider context. These may include World Heritage Sites, National Parks, AONBs, or Heritage Coasts.

2.1.3 In respect of a test for judging a “valued landscape” (outside national designations), as referred to in NPPF Paragraph 187(a), the following definition is given on page 42 of LI TGN 02/21, Appendix 7, titled “The valued landscape policy test in England,” item A4.2.11:

“A ‘valued landscape’ is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes.”

The TGN (also page 42) notes that “everyday” landscapes may nevertheless have value to people. GLVIA 3, item 5.28, Box 5.1, TGN 02/21 is also relevant, as noted for Photographic Methodology below.

2.2 Landscape Susceptibility

2.2.1 Landscape Susceptibility judgements are based on the physical state of the landscape and influential elements (Landscape Receptors) within it. It is development-specific. It relates to the intactness of the landscape from visual, functional, and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the condition of individual features and elements that contribute to landscape character in any given location.

Judgements are made to assess the ability of Landscape Receptors to accommodate change resulting from the proposed development relative to the baseline. Landscape Receptors may include overall character, key characteristics, individual elements or features, and specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.

Landscape Susceptibility judgements are made using the following:

Low

A landscape where receptors are likely to make a minimal positive contribution and could therefore accommodate the type of development proposed without causing a detrimental change to the base line condition.

Medium

A landscape where receptors are likely to make a moderately positive contribution and could therefore accommodate partial development, or where there is potential for effective mitigation to offset detrimental change to the baseline condition.

High

A landscape where receptors are likely to make a highly positive contribution such that it is unlikely to accommodate the type of development proposed (even with mitigation), and development would cause a detrimental and residual change to the baseline condition.

2.3 Landscape Sensitivity (See Table 1)

2.3.1 Landscape Sensitivity is the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impact on its character. It is judged by cross-referencing landscape value with susceptibility.

Table 1 Determining Landscape Sensitivity

Susceptibility	Value	Value				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
Susceptibility	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High



2.3.2 Landscape Sensitivity is described as follows.

- **Very Low**

Defined as a landscape that has very low value (likely to be significantly influenced by a dominant landscape detractor) with low susceptibility, such that it would be tolerant of the type of change envisaged.

- **Low**

Defined as a landscape that is unlikely to include Local Plan landscape designations and is likely to have poor or damaged landscape characteristics. It is likely to be tolerant of the type of change envisaged.

- **Medium**

Defined as a landscape that is likely to include Local Plan landscape designations or other undesignated landscape characteristics and to be of local or district (borough) scale or capacity to accommodate a degree (potentially with mitigation) of the type of change envisaged.

- **High**

Defined as a landscape likely to be protected by a regional, national, or international designation and/or widely acknowledged for its medium to very high value and/or its medium to high susceptibility. It is a landscape with distinctive character that would be residually altered by the type of change envisaged, irrespective of mitigation.

- **Very High**

Defined as a landscape protected by a national or international designation and/or widely acknowledged for its very high value and high susceptibility. It is a landscape with significantly distinctive character that would be residually altered by the type of change envisaged, irrespective of mitigation.

2.4 Magnitude of Landscape Character Impact

2.4.1 Magnitude of Landscape Character Impact refers to the extent to which proposed development would alter the existing characteristics of a landscape and combines judgements on; size or scale of effect, geographical extent influenced; the duration; and the reversibility.

2.4.2 Magnitude of Landscape Impact is described using the following terms.

- **Low**

Defined as just-perceptible, long-term change in components of a landscape, or more noticeable temporary and reversible changes.

- **Medium**

Defined as clearly perceptible, long-term changes or loss of important features in a Character Area, but which result in only relatively subtle changes in character; or changes in a small part of a Character Area that will have a clear effect on the immediate locality. Also includes clearly perceptible change in the setting of a neighbouring Character Area that is sufficient to influence its own character.

- **High**

Defined as clearly perceptible changes, for example the loss of features that make an essential contribution to a Character Area, the introduction of new large-scale features into a Character Area where these are not typical, or change exerted by an overriding influence on a neighbouring Character Area.

2.5 Significance of Landscape Effect (see Table 2)

2.5.1 The Significance of Landscape Effect determines how important the changes might be for the landscape in terms of mitigation and the long term residual effects. It is judged using Table 2.

2.5.2 The Duration of Landscape Character Change

Duration judgements are made using the following criteria.

- **Short term or reversible**

Effects that have no lasting influence and where the existing baseline landscape would be restored.

- **Medium term or partially reversible**

Effects that would last until planting establishment becomes effective (approximately 10–25 years).

- **Long term or not reversible**

Permanent effects (perceived as over 25 years).



Table 2 Determining Significance of Landscape Effects				
Sensitivity of receptor	Magnitude of change			
	Sensitivity of receptor	Low	Medium	High
		Negligible Landscape Effect	Negligible Landscape Effect	Minor Landscape Effect
		Negligible Landscape Effect	Minor Landscape Effect	Minor Landscape Effect
		Minor Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect
		Minor Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect	Major Landscape Effect
	Very High	Minor Landscape Effect	Moderate Landscape Effect	Major Landscape Effect

Key to Table 2

Negligible Not significant

Minor Mitigation should be explored but the effect would be a consideration of only limited Significance in the judgement

Moderate Every effort should be made to mitigate the impact and if moderate residual effects remain these would be Significant

Major Every effort should be made to mitigate the impacts/effects and if residual major effects remain these would be Significant

3.0 VIEWS

3.1 Visual Impact and Effects Methodology

- 3.1.1 Visual impacts relate to the effects on existing visual amenity and on Visual Receptors. Visual Receptors are people with views that may be altered by new development. Effects on visual amenity, as perceived by Landscape Receptors, are therefore clearly distinguished from, although linked to, effects on Landscape Character.
- 3.1.2 Viewpoints 1 to xx and the associated visual impacts are described in Appendix I (HLA xxx Rxx). Near-distance views are defined as within 200 m of the site; medium-distance views as between 200m and 1 km; and long-distance views as beyond 1 km

3.2 Photographic Methodology (see Appendix xx)

- 3.2.1 In demonstrating photographic evidence to support viewpoint descriptions and impact judgements, it is important to adopt a photographic methodology that can be replicated by any other party. Accordingly, this LVIA follows the *Landscape Institute Advice Note 06/19 Visual Representation of Development Proposals (17-09-19)* (Appendix xx) as the basis for viewpoint photography.
- 3.2.2 Photographic viewpoints are selected to give typical or representative views from a variety of locations and from near, middle and long distance locations. All Viewpoints are publicly accessible locations in the landscape.
- 3.2.3 Each photograph is taken from a height approximately 1.5m (eye level) above ground level.
- 3.2.4 The photographs were taken using a Canon EOS R7 digital mirrorless camera with a 50 mm lens, in accordance with the photographic methodology described in Landscape Institute TGN 06/19.
- 3.2.5 All photographs were taken at a time when views were clear and during the day. These photographs can be used for photomontage presentations although this is not the case with this LVIA.

3.3 Visual Baseline

- 3.3.1 Views to the Site were selected through desktop review and on-Site assessment as the most likely public locations from which the proposed development might be visible. As such, they demonstrate highest-impact or worst-case-scenario views, as recorded on xx xxxxxxxx 202x.
- 3.3.2 Visual Impact Assessment structure
- 3.3.3 The methodology sets out how to make visual impact judgements. Sensitivity is determined by assessing, and then cross-referencing, Visual Value with Visual Susceptibility using Table 3. The Magnitude of Impact for each viewpoint is determined using Table 4. The Significance of Visual Effect arising from the development is determined using Table 5, which cross-references the judgements for Visual Sensitivity and Magnitude of Change. The judgements also consider seasonal variations (e.g. when trees are in or out of leaf) and night-time conditions.

3.4 Visual Value

3.4.1 Visual Value judgements relate to the value attached to the view (not the visual receptor).The value judgements are made using the following criteria.

- Very Low**

Views that are undocumented, not protected by any designation, and dominated by a significant landscape-detracting element or substantial detrimental man-made intrusion.
- Low**

Views that are not documented or protected by any designation and do not have notable cultural, historic, or ecological associations, or that exhibit some detrimental man-made intrusion.
- Medium**

Views that have a moderate level of visual interest and where the elements within the view are relatively intact, for example, local open spaces and local footpaths. These may also include views protected by County, District (or Borough), or Parish designations, or where there is a moderate level of cultural, historic, ecological, or other moderately important influences.
- High**

High-quality views where attention or interest is prolonged and focused on the visual surroundings, where there is a high level of scenic visual interest, or where the composition includes significant cultural, historic, ecological, or other important influences, and where man-made intervention is limited or positive (unless of cultural value).
- Very High:** Proprietary views where the attention or interest is prolonged and focused on the visual surroundings at an: international (World Heritage Sites); national (National Parks, AONBs and Heritage Coasts); county; regional or district scale, where there is a high level of scenic visual interest or the composition includes significant cultural, historic, ecological or other important influences and which is likely to have extremely limited or positive man-made intervention (unless of cultural value).

3.5 Visual Susceptibility

3.5.1 Visual Susceptibility is the ability of a view to accommodate the type of development being proposed without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation. Judgements are made using the following criteria.

- Low**

Views where the Visual Receptor’s attention is not focused on their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life. Receptors may include drivers, people engaged in work tasks, or people participating in sports where the view is not an integral part of the experience.

- Medium**

Views where Visual Receptors may have a moderate level of interest, for example, local open-space users, local people walking in community areas, or those engaged in activities where the view is not an integral part of the experience (e.g. cycling, walking, jogging), as well as passengers in vehicles.
- High**

Views where Visual Receptors have a high level of interest, or where views are recorded in management plans or guidebooks, or are associated with nationally designated landscapes. This may include notable views from a National Trail or promoted route, or designed views (vistas) recorded in citations for historic parks and gardens or scheduled monuments. It may also include local residents who experience high-quality views, particularly where they have limited access to the wider countryside.

3.6 Visual Sensitivity

3.6.1 Visual Sensitivity is the degree to which the landscape can accommodate change without adverse impact on its composition and the ability to enjoy the view. It is determined by cross-referencing Visual Value with Visual Susceptibility.

Table 3 Determining Visual Sensitivity						
		Value				
		Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Susceptibility	Low	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	High
	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	High	Medium	Medium	High	High	Very High

3.7 Magnitude of Visual Impact (see Table 4)

3.7.1 Magnitude of Visual Impact refers to the extent to which the proposed development would alter the existing characteristics of a visual composition and the ability to enjoy the view. Judgements combine the size or scale of change, the geographical extent, and the duration and reversibility.

Consideration is given to the loss, gain, deterioration, or enhancement of existing landscape and visual elements, as well as the scale, materiality, and design style of the development; the completeness of a view (e.g., open, enclosed, framed, partial, momentary, zoetropic, etc.); and the extent (see also the Zone of Theoretical Visibility), including the area affected and the number and types of Visual Receptors.

Table 4 Determining Magnitude of Visual Impact	
Visual impact magnitude	Description
Major visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a dominant or complete change to change to the landscape character and the visual composition
Moderate visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a clearly noticeable change to the landscape character and the visual composition
Slight visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a perceptible change to the landscape character and the visual composition
Negligible visual impact or benefit	The proposals would cause a barely perceptible change to the landscape character and the visual composition
No change	The proposals would cause no change to the view
Neutral	There would be a change to the view but it is not possible to judge whether this change is an adverse or beneficial impact

3.8 Visual Effect and Significance (see Table 5)

3.8.1 Views and the appreciation of the view are considered in terms of the requirements for mitigation and the long-term residual effects. These are judged using Table 5.

3.9 Duration of Visual Change

Duration judgements are made using the following criteria.

- Short term or reversible
Impacts have no influence and the visual baseline would be returned.
- Medium term or partially reversible
Effects that would last until planting establishment is becomes effective (10 to 25 years).
- Long term or not reversible:
Permanent effects (perceived as over 25 years).

Table 5 Determining Significance of Visual Effect

				Magnitude of Impact		
		Major impact or benefit	Moderate impact or benefit	Slight impact or benefit	Negligible impact or benefit	Neutral impact
	Very High	Major Visual Effect	Major Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect
	High	Major Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect
Sensitivity of receptor	Medium	Moderate Visual Effect	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect
	Low	Moderate Visual Effect	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect
	Very Low	Minor Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect	Negligible Visual Effect

Key to Table 5

Visual effect (VE)

- Negligible** The proposals would result in a change to the view that may be barely discernible and/or it would not be possible to make a beneficial or adverse judgement irrespective of the Sensitivity. The Effects are likely to be short-term or reversible and/or would be very small and lead to a Not Significant judgement.
- Minor** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be barely discernible to clearly noticeable and would be dependent on the scale of judgement for Sensitivity. The Effects may be short-term or reversible and/or would be minimal and lead to a Not Significant judgement.
- Moderate** The proposals would result in a change to the view that would be perceptible to clearly noticeable and would be dependent on the scale of judgement for Sensitivity. The Effects may be long-term and irreversible and/or would be Significant in all cases.
- Major** he proposals would result in a change to the view that would be dominant or amount to a complete change where the impact is major and the sensitivity is high. The Effects would be long-term, irreversible, and Significant in all cases.

Significance

- Not Significant** Mitigation should be explored but the judgement should be a consideration of only limited weight
- Significant** Every effort should be made to mitigate the Effect and if residual Effects remain these should feature in the balance of considerations.