

APPENDIX 7.2

APPENDIX 7.2 GENERAL ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

- 7.1. The methodology used in this assessment has been based upon the recommendations in Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition published by The Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment in April 2013 (GLVIA3).

Landscape effects assessment

Establishing the landscape baseline

- 7.2. Baseline studies for assessing the landscape effects included a mix of desk study and field work to identify and record the character of the landscape and the elements, features and aesthetic and perceptual factors which contribute to it.
- 7.3. The elements that make up the landscape in the study area were recorded, including:
- physical influences - geology, soils, landform, drainage and water bodies;
 - land cover, including different types of vegetation and patterns and types of tree cover;
 - the influence of human activity, such as, land use and management, the character of settlements and buildings, the pattern and type of fields and enclosure; and
 - the aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape, e.g.: its scale, complexity, openness, tranquillity, wildness.
- 7.4. The overall character of the landscape in the study area was considered, including the particular combinations of elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects that make each distinctive, usually by identification as key characteristics of the landscape. Evidence about change in the landscape was considered, including the condition of the different landscape types and/or areas, and their constituent parts and evidence of current pressures causing change in the landscape.

Landscape value

- 7.5. The European Landscape Convention promotes taking account of all landscapes, including ordinary or undesignated landscapes. The relative value attached to the landscape was considered at the baseline stage to inform the judgments about the effects likely to occur, whether to areas of landscape as a whole or to individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions, at the community, local, national or international levels. Landscape designation is a starting point in understanding landscape value but value may also be attached to undesignated landscapes.
- 7.6. Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued. For “ordinary, everyday landscapes”, the judgement was based upon the degree to which they are representative of typical character, the intactness of the landscape and the condition of its elements, scenic quality, sense of place, aesthetic and perceptual qualities.
- 7.7. When determining the landscape value the following elements were considered:
- The importance of the landscape, or the perceived value of the landscape to users or consultees, as indicated by, for example, international, national or local designations;

- The importance of elements or components of the landscape in the landscape character of the area or in their contribution to the landscape setting of other areas;
- Intrinsic aesthetic characteristics, scenic quality or sense of place, including providing landscape setting to other places;
- Cultural associations in the arts or in guides to the area, or popular use of the area for recreation, where experience of the landscape is important;
- The presence and scale of detractors in the landscape and the degree to which they are susceptible to improvement or upgrading; and
- Conservation 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.

7.8. The following table indicates the criteria used to determine the Landscape value:

Table 7.3- 1 Criteria to determine landscape value

Value	Criteria
High Value	<p>Landscapes subject to international, national or local designations, or non-designated landscapes where the following considerations apply:</p> <p>Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition;</p> <p>Scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and/or natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape;</p> <p>There are important cultural and artistic associations;</p> <p>They are representative of typical character of the area or have a character or elements that are valued for their rarity;</p> <p>Particular components may be identified as important contributors to the landscape character.</p>
Low Value	<p>Areas of landscape whose character is in poor condition;</p> <p>Scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and/or natural or cultural heritage features are not key characteristics of the landscape;</p> <p>Cultural and artistic associations are absent;</p> <p>They are not representative of typical character of the area, but are also not valued for rarity;</p> <p>Particular components may be identified as important contributors to the landscape character.</p>

7.9. The landscape baseline report aims to:

- describe, map and illustrate the character of the landscape of both the wider study area and the site and its immediate surroundings;
- identify and describe the individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape, particularly those that are key characteristics contributing to its distinctive character;

- indicate the condition of the landscape, including the condition of landscape elements or features;
- project forward drivers and trends in change and how they may affect the landscape over time, in the absence of the proposal; and
- evaluate the landscape and, where appropriate, its components, aesthetic and perceptual aspects, particularly the key characteristics.

Assessing the Landscape Effects

- 7.10. The baseline information about the landscape was combined with understanding of the details of the proposal to identify and describe the landscape effects. The landscape receptors were identified, that is, the components or aspects of the landscape likely to be affected, such as, overall character or key characteristics, individual elements or features, or specific aesthetic or perceptual aspects.
- 7.11. Interactions between the landscape receptors and the components or characteristics of the development at its different stages were considered: construction and operation, and the different types of effect: direct and indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long- term, permanent and temporary, adverse and beneficial.
- 7.12. Landscape effects considered included:
- change in and/or partial or complete loss of elements, features or aesthetic or perceptual aspects that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the landscape;
 - addition of new elements or features that will influence the character and distinctiveness of the landscape; and
 - combined effects of these changes on overall character.
- 7.13. The landscape effects were categorised as adverse, beneficial, or negligible in their consequences for the landscape, judged from the degree to which the proposal fits with existing character and the contribution the development makes to the landscape in its own right, even if in contrast to existing character.
- 7.14. The assessment of the landscape effects was based on assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the change in the landscape arising from the proposal.
- 7.15. Sensitivity of the landscape receptors
- 7.16. The sensitivity of landscape receptors combines judgments of their susceptibility to the type of change arising from the development proposal and the value attached to the landscape.
- 7.17. Susceptibility to change means the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
- 7.18. The value attached to the landscape receptors was established in the baseline study.
- 7.19. The sensitivity of landscape receptors to change is categorised as high, moderate or lesser, in accordance with the criteria set out below to determine the susceptibility and value of the landscape receptor.
- 7.20. When determining the landscape susceptibility the following elements were considered:

- The ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the landscape character and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies;
- The degree to which the changes arising from the development would alter the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area;
- The degree to which the changes arising from the development would alter individual elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to the landscape character; and
- Existing landscape studies may identify the sensitivity of the landscape type or area or its characteristics to the general type of development that is proposed.

7.21. The following table indicates the criteria used to determine the landscape susceptibility:

Table 7.3- 2 Criteria for landscape susceptibility

Susceptibility	Criteria
Very Susceptible	<p>The changes arising from the development would alter the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area.</p> <p>The changes arising from the development would alter or remove individual elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to, or add new elements incongruous to, the landscape character.</p> <p>The proposed development would compromise the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies for the landscape.</p> <p>The changes arising from the development would alter or remove elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to the landscape character, or add new elements that would reinforce the key characteristics of the landscape character.</p>
Not Susceptible	<p>The changes arising from the development would not alter the overall character, quality/condition of a particular landscape type or area.</p> <p>The proposed development would not compromise the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies for the landscape.</p> <p>The changes arising from the development would not alter or remove individual elements or features or aesthetic and perceptual aspects important to, or add new elements incongruous to, the landscape character.</p>

Magnitude of Landscape Change

Effects on landscape receptors are assessed in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, and its duration and reversibility.

Table 7.3- 3 Considerations for assessing magnitude of landscape change

Consideration	Indicative criteria
Size or scale of change	<p>Categorised on a scale of Large, Medium, Small, Negligible or None, based upon:</p> <p>The extent of existing landscape elements that will be lost (or added), the proportion of the total extent that this represents and the contribution of that element to the character of the landscape;</p> <p>The degree to which aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered either by removal of existing components of the landscape or additions of new ones;</p> <p>Whether the effect changes the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.</p>
Geographical area over which the landscape would be changed	<p>Categorised on a scale of:</p> <p>Small: at site level, within the development site itself or at the level of the immediate setting of the site;</p> <p>Medium: at the scale of the landscape type or character area within which the proposal lies;</p> <p>Large: where the development influences several landscape types or character areas.</p>
The duration of the changes	<p>The durations of changes due to the development are categorised as:</p> <p>Short term: zero to five years;</p> <p>Medium term: five to ten years;</p> <p>Long term: ten to twenty-five years</p> <p>Permanent: more than twenty-five.</p>
Reversibility	<p>The prospect and the practicality of the effect being reversed within twenty-five years</p>

Significance of landscape effects

7.22. Final conclusions about the degree of effect relate the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes combined, based upon the following considerations:

- Major effect: irreversible adverse or beneficial effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes;
- Moderate effect: where effects are judged to be between the criteria for either Major or Minor effects;

- Minor effect: Reversible adverse or beneficial effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to, but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value;
- Negligible effects where there is little or no perceived change to the existing landscape character or the change is difficult to discern.

7.23. The criteria for significance of landscape effects are based upon the following considerations:

- Major loss or irreversible negative effects, over an extensive area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that are key to the character of nationally valued landscapes are likely to be of the greatest significance.
- Reversible negative effects of short duration, over a restricted area, on elements and/or aesthetic and perceptual aspects that contribute to, but are not key characteristics of the character of landscapes of community value, are likely to be of least significance and may be judged not significant.
- Where assessments of significance place landscape effects between these extremes, judgments are made about whether or not they are significant.
- Where landscape effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing or offsetting or compensating for them are set out (referred to as mitigation).

7.24. The significant landscape effects remaining after mitigation are summarised as the final step in the process.

Visual effects assessment

Establishing the visual baseline

7.25. Baseline studies for visual effects establish:

- the area in which the development may be visible
- the different groups of people who may experience views of the development
- the location where they will be affected
- the nature of the views at those points
- where possible, the approximate or relative number of the different groups of people who may be affected by the changes in views or visual amenity.

7.26. In identifying important viewpoints, heritage assets in the vicinity of the proposed development and their settings were taken into account.

7.27. The potential areas where the site and development proposal are likely to be visible were mapped. Landscape components affecting visibility, like buildings, walls, fences, trees, hedgerows, woodland and banks, were identified through field surveys and mapped.

7.28. The people within the area who may be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity – the visual receptors – were identified:

- people living in the area
- people passing through on roads and the local lanes
- people visiting promoted landscapes or attractions

- people engaged in recreation of different types, including users of public rights of way, bridleways and access land.

7.29. Views that form part of the experience and enjoyment of the landscape were noted, for example, from promoted paths, tourist or scenic routes and associated viewpoints.

7.30. The proposed viewpoints were discussed with the local authority, and informed by the visual appraisal, field surveys, and by desk research on access and recreation, heritage assets and other valued landscapes, tourist attractions and destinations, popular vantage points, and relative distribution of population. Viewpoints were selected to represent the experience of different types of visual receptors.

7.31. The details of viewpoint locations were mapped and catalogued, and the direction and area covered by the view recorded, sufficient to allow someone else to return to the location and record the same view. Photography was carried out in accordance with the Landscape Institute's guidance in Photography and Photomontage in landscape and visual impact assessment, Advice Note 01/11.

7.32. The baseline report aims to describe, map and illustrate:

- the type and relative numbers of people (visual receptors) likely to be affected, making clear the activities they are likely to be involved in when enjoying the view;
- details of the viewpoints and of the visual receptors likely to be affected at each;
- the nature, composition and characteristics of the existing view, noting any particular horizontal or vertical emphasis, and any key foci; existing views have been illustrated in annotated photographs identifying important components of the view.
- elements, such as landform, buildings or vegetation, which may interrupt, filter or otherwise influence the views;
- whether or how the view may be affected by seasonal or weather variation.

Assessing the Visual Effects

Predicting and describing visual effects

7.33. The baseline information about the visual receptors was combined with understanding of the details of the proposal to identify and describe the visual effects, considering:

- changes in views and visual amenity arising from elements of the development;
- the distance of the viewpoint from the development and whether the viewer would focus on the development due to its scale and proximity or whether the development would be only a small or minor element in a panoramic view;
- whether the view is stationary or transient or one of a sequence of views;
- the nature of the changes: changes in the skyline, creation of a new visual focus in the view, introduction of new elements, changes in visual simplicity or complexity, alteration of visual scale or the degree of visual enclosure; and
- seasonal differences in effects, arising from the varying degree of screening and/or filtering of views by vegetation in summer and winter.

7.34. Categorising the visual effects as adverse or beneficial (or neutral) in their consequences for views and visual amenity was based on judgments about whether the changes affect the quality of the visual experience, and the nature of the existing views and the nature of the changes to the views.

7.35. The visual effects were assessed, based on assessment of the nature of the visual receptors and their sensitivity, and the nature of the effect on views and visual amenity, that is, the magnitude of visual change.

Sensitivity of the visual receptors

7.36. The people or groups of people likely to be affected at a specific viewpoint – the visual receptors – are assessed in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and the value attached to particular views.

7.37. The susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is a function of the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations and the extent to which their attention or interest is focused on the views or the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

7.38. The visual receptors most susceptible to change include:

- residents at home;
- people engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape and on particular views;
- visitors to designated landscapes, heritage assets, or other attractions, where views of the surroundings are an important contributor to the experience;
- communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area.

7.39. Visual receptors less susceptible to change include:

- people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape;
- people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity not on their surroundings and where the setting is not important to the quality of working life.
- travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, except along recognised scenic routes, where awareness of views is likely to be high.

7.40. Judgments were made about the value attached to the views identified, taking account of recognition, for example, in relation to heritage assets, or through planning designations, appearance in guidebooks or on tourist maps, promotion of particular locations or provision of facilities provided for their enjoyment, such as parking places, sign boards and interpretive material, or references to them in literature or art.

7.41. The sensitivity of visual receptors to change is categorised as high, moderate or lesser, in accordance with the criteria set out below.

Table 7.3- 4 Indicative criteria for visual sensitivity

Category	Indicative criteria
High sensitivity	Viewers in residential or community properties.

Category	Indicative criteria
	<p>Views experienced by many viewers.</p> <p>Daily, prolonged or sustained views available over a long period, or where the view of the landscape is an important attractant.</p> <p>A view from a landscape, recreation facility or route valued nationally or internationally for its visual amenity.</p>
Moderate sensitivity	<p>Viewers in residential or community properties with partial or largely screened views of the site.</p> <p>Frequent open views available.</p> <p>Viewers are pursuing activities such as sports or outdoor work, where the landscape is not the principal reason for being there or the focus of attention is only partly on the view.</p> <p>A view from other valued landscapes, or a regionally important recreation facility or route.</p>
Lesser sensitivity	<p>A view of low importance or value, or where the viewer's attention is not focused their surroundings.</p> <p>A view from a landscape of moderate or less importance, or a locally important recreation facility.</p> <p>Occasional open views or glimpsed views available; passing views available to travellers in vehicles.</p> <p>A view available to few viewers.</p>

Magnitude of visual change

7.42. The visual effects identified are evaluated in terms of size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced, duration and reversibility.

Table 7.3- 5 Considerations for assessing magnitude of visual change

Consideration	Indicative criteria
Size or scale of change	<p>Categorised on a scale of major, moderate, minor or none, based upon:</p> <p>The degree of the loss or addition of features in the view;</p> <p>The extent of changes in the composition of the view, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development;</p> <p>The degree of contrast or integration of the changes with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics;</p> <p>The nature of the view of the proposed development, whether full, partial or glimpsed, or the relative amount of time over</p>

Consideration	Indicative criteria
	which it will be experienced.
Geographical area over which the changes would be experienced	The geographic extent reflects: The extent of the area over which the changes would be visible; The angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor; The distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.
The duration of the changes	Categorised as: Short term: zero to five years; Medium term: five to ten years; Long term: ten to twenty-five years Permanent: more than twenty-five.
Reversibility	The prospect and the practicality of the effect being reversed within twenty-five years, or within a generation

Judging the overall significance of visual effects

7.43. Final conclusions about the degree of visual effects relate the separate judgements about sensitivity of the receptors and magnitude of the changes, for example:

- Major effect: Large scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view, especially where affecting people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity or people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes.
- Minor effect: limited or localised change, or reversible short term changes, in views available to people for whom the view of the landscape is not the principle focus of interest.
- As for landscape effects, where effects are judged to be between these extremes, they may be assigned moderate levels of effect.
- Negligible effect: The change in the view is imperceptible or difficult to discern.

7.44. The following factors inform the judgment about the significance of visual effects:

- Major effects on people who are particularly sensitive to changes in views and visual amenity are more likely to be significant.
- Major effects on people at recognised and important viewpoints or from recognised scenic routes are more likely to be significant.
- Large scale changes which introduce new, non-characteristic or discordant or intrusive elements into the view are more likely to be significant than small changes or changes involving features already present within the view.
- As for landscape effects, where visual effects are judged to be significant and adverse, proposals for preventing/avoiding, reducing or offsetting or compensating for them are set out (referred to as mitigation).

7.45. The significant visual effects remaining after mitigation are summarised as the final step in the process.