

APPENDIX 6.2 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) METHODOLOGY

Assessment Criteria and Methodology

Scoping Opinion

A request for screening and scoping was submitted to the Local Planning Authority. A screening response from Purbeck District Council was received on 14th September 2018.

Use of previous reporting and Consultation

An LVIA for a previous scheme was produced by Landscape Visual Ltd in 2018 and supplemented with an Addendum in 2019. Much of the desk-based studies remain relevant in 2018. In particular GIS mapping, ZTV analysis and many descriptions of the local landscape typology remain current.

Landscape Visual Ltd agreed eight viewpoints in 2018 with the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Landscape Planning Officer Richard Brown CMLI. Use of the same agreed viewpoints in 2022 was agreed through email correspondence with Richard Brown in August 2022. It was noted that the 2018 photographs are winter views and should be included, along with current 2022 late-summer views, to illustrate the widest range of visual effects. These have also been supplemented in 2022 with additional viewpoints found at the site visit to increase visual representation from the surrounding area.

Best Practice Guidance

A full desk-top survey was carried out to review policies and guidance available from Dorset Council. The site lies within Dorset Council and Purbeck District Council's landscape typology.

Designated landscapes were identified and recorded to establish the sensitivity of the site to change.

The Visual Impact Assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidance set out in the Landscape Institute publication: Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment GLVIA3 (2013). The abbreviation GLVIA3 is used throughout this chapter.

The assessment seeks to fulfil the requirements of the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 1/20 "Reviewing Landscape Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)". The Landscape Institute published a Technical Guidance Note, 02/21 "Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations". The application site context is highly designated. However the technical guidance note provides a useful set of criteria against which important landscapes can be assessed. For this reason, reference to this guidance note is included in the assessment of landscape value.

A site visit was carried out in September 2022 to assess the likely impacts within the study area. The weather was clear with bright sun for most of the day. Trees were in full leaf, with less visibility to and from the site compared to mid-winter.

Photographs were taken from viewpoints agreed in 2018 and supplemented with additional viewpoints not included in the 2018 LVIA which supported a previous application. The 2018

viewpoint photographs were taken in winter and are included in this LVIA to show comparison between the winter and summer conditions. The views have not changed significantly since 2018 and remain current and relevant.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

LVIA is a well-established tool to identify the effects of change resulting from development and the significance of those effects. It distinguishes between:

- Effects on landscape as a resource in its own right; and
- Effects on specific views and general visual amenity experienced by people.

The LVIA should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed. For this proposal, the scale and nature of the development is described in the scoping process which describes what has been assessed and details those aspects which are considered most relevant to the proposal.

Landscape effects

The European Landscape Convention 2000 defines landscape as:

“An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”.

This covers not only landscapes that are recognised as being special or valuable, but also landscapes which can be considered ordinary or every day. These are landscapes where people live, work, and spend leisure time – a setting for their day-to-day lives, and for aesthetic enjoyment. Furthermore, landscapes are considered as environment – for biodiversity, flora, and fauna.

LVIA requires that the landscape is assessed by recording and recognising:

- Protected landscapes and townscapes;
- The contribution the landscape character has on sense of place and quality of life; and the way change may affect;
- Individual components of the landscape;
- Aesthetic and perceptual qualities;
- The character of the landscape in different areas; and
- Visual effects.

Assessment of the visual effects of the proposed development focuses on the following principles:

- How the surroundings of individuals/groups of people may be affected by changes to the landscape;
- How people will be affected by changes in views and/or visual amenity at different places;
- To identify impacts various visual effects are assessed;
- The areas from which the development may be visible;
- Different groups who may experience views of the development;
- The places where they will be affected;
- The nature of the views and visual amenity at those points; and

- Changes in specific views.

Assessment of significance

The significance of the proposal is assessed against two key criteria:

- i. The significance of the receptor. This involves making judgements about the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the proposal; and the value attached to the receptor.
- ii. The magnitude of change. Judgements are based upon the size and scale of the effect (for example, is there a complete loss of a particular element or a minor change); the geographical extent of the areas that will be affected; and the duration of the effect and its reversibility.

These assessments lead to judgements on the individual criteria and how these, in combination, provide a means of describing the significance of the proposal. This involves combining judgements of both the significance of the receptor and magnitude of change in order to demonstrate:

- How the value of the receptor and its susceptibility of change contribute to its sensitivity to the effects;
- How judgements about the scale of the proposal, its geographical extent and duration of the effect contribute to judgements about the magnitude of the effects;
- How the resulting judgements about sensitivity and magnitude are combined to inform judgements about the overall significance of the effects; and
- The assessments describe effects which can be significant and non-significant.

Methodologies used in the assessment process

Desk Study

- Receiving information from the applicant and consultant teams;
- Review of the previous LVIA, submitted for a different development proposal in 2018, to check relevance to the 2022 application;
- Identifying the site location and its surroundings using Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs, and development site plans;
- Familiarisation with the details of the proposals;
- Use of Local Planning Authority (LPA), District Council and Dorset AONB planning portals to acquire information on landscape designations, Rights of Way, landscape character assessments, areas for Conservation Action, local topography and patterns of vegetation and any other information which may be relevant.

Field Survey

- Visits to the site to confirm, or otherwise, the understanding of the site and proposals gained through the desk study;
- Production of a photographic record of site features, landscape elements and details not revealed by maps or aerial photographs;
- Checks to confirm visibility, key viewpoints, and visual receptors;

- Professional judgements which could be made about possible alterations to the design of the proposal and/or mitigation measures to address any possible negative judgements about the significance of the proposal.

Assessment

- Assessment of the significance of landscape and visual receptors, the susceptibility of the receptor to the type of change arising from the proposal; and the value attached to the receptors;
- Assessment of the magnitude of change based upon the size and scale of the effect; the geographical extent of the areas that will be affected; and the duration of the effect and its reversibility;
- Assessment of the sensitivity to the effects and the magnitude of the effects;
- Assessment of the overall significance of the effects;
- Summary statements describing both significant and non-significant effects;
- Assessment, where appropriate, of cumulative effects based upon available information.

Influences on design

- Assessment of changes to the proposal to minimise negative impacts and recommendations for mitigation measures;
- Assessment of cumulative effects of the development;
- Presentation of findings;
- Production of this written report, supporting plans, maps, photographs, and mitigation measures.

Production of Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)

Purpose and Limitations

A Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) is a computer-based modelling exercise, undertaken to assist the landscape professional in carrying out a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) of a development. The ZTV provides a guide as to the potential location of possible viewpoints, for further evaluation. As a ZTV is theoretical, it should not be used in isolation and, as part of the assessment process, requires on-site verification.

A ZTV is subject to a number of limitations, in particular:

- The terrain data may be of limited resolution and, therefore, may not fully represent all local variations in topography, including features such as banks, roadside cuttings etcetera.
- Other screening features, such as buildings, fences, trees, and hedges are not routinely incorporated into ZTVs, due to the complexity and detail of such objects.

Detailed ZTV mapping was produced in 2018 by Landscape Visual Ltd. These remain current for the application site and 2022 proposals and are appended to this Chapter. This includes both bare earth ZTV and ZTV with obstructions based upon more detailed terrain data and LiDAR data.

Photographic survey and photographs from representative viewpoints

Site photographs were taken using a Canon 6D full frame digital SLR camera. Representative viewpoints were taken with a fixed 50mm prime lens. Site photographs used to illustrate landscape elements and buildings not requiring a human-eye equivalent view were taken with a zoom lens at varying focal lengths to capture additional views for reporting purposes. Only 50mm fixed lens photographs from agreed representative viewpoints are assessed within the LVIA.

Photographs were printed and tested against the human eye equivalent from the viewpoint.

Many of the views are wide and panoramic. Panorama views were taken using a tripod mounted camera.

To help illustrate the wider contextual view, some photographs were stitched together, to form wider panorama views, using Microsoft Image Composite Editor software without loss of resolution.

Photomontage 'before and after' images have been produced by AWW Architects. These form an important part of assessing effects upon visual receptors and landscape character and are included in Appendix 6.5.

Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)

In order to assist those reviewing the LVIA, reference is made to the Landscape Institutes' Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (10 Jan 2020) "Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs)"

This section cross-references the assessment methodology and outcomes to the relevant sections in the report.

Step 1. Checking methodology, criteria, and process

"In this phase, the reviewer will check the methodology, scope and process used in the assessment and how these relate to GLVIA 3. This involves reviewing the following":

- a) *Does the scope of the assessment meet the requirements set out in the Scoping Opinion and/ or as defined in the LVIA or LVA and if substantively different, are the reasons clearly set out and explained?*

Response: A full scoping study was submitted by Black Box Planning prior to the application. This covers the scoping study completed prior to the proposals being finalised and submitted.

- b) *What consultations have been carried out and have responses been acted upon?*

Response: Refer (a) above.

- c) *Has the scope and methodology of the assessment been formally agreed with the determining authority? If not, why not?*

Response: This LVIA responds to feedback from Purbeck District Council within their 'screening and scoping opinion' (ref: EA1/2018/0005, EA2/2018/0002 September (2018). This is a detailed response and acts as an agreement on matters required in this assessment. Viewpoints have been agreed with the Dorset AONB Unit and their

locations follow industry guidance and the outcomes of ZTV modelling and site survey work.

- d) *As part of the methodology, has the terminology been clearly defined, have the criteria to form judgements including thresholds been clearly defined and have any deviations from good practice guidance (such as GLVIA3) been clearly explained?*

Response: Refer to references throughout the LVIA Chapter and this Appendix.

- e) *Does the assessment demonstrate a clear understanding and provide a separate consideration of landscape and visual effects?*

Response: Landscape and visual effects are separated throughout the report. Summary conclusions combine both landscape and visual effects.

- f) *Does the assessment demonstrate comprehensive identification of receptors and of all likely effects? and*

- g) *Does the assessment display clarity and transparency in its reasoning, the basis for its findings and conclusions?*

Response: The intention throughout is to display clarity and transparency.

Step 2. Check the baseline, content, and findings of the assessment

“As part of this stage in the review process the reviewer will consider the description of the baseline, both in narrative as well as in illustrations by plans, photographs and drawings etc. This may also include publicly available aerial photography, books, online resources, local plans, and management plans.

The reviewer may also consider that a site visit may be necessary either to complement or to verify baseline information. The site visit and potential visits to viewpoints are also useful to check actual findings of the assessment.

This stage of the review typically includes further tests”:

- a) *What is the reviewer’s opinion of the scope, content, and appropriateness (detail, geographic extent) of both the landscape and the visual baseline studies which form the basis for the assessment of effects (supported by appropriate graphic such as ZTVs etc as appropriate)?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions.

- b) *Has the value of landscape and visual resources been appropriately addressed (including but not necessarily limited to) considerations of: local, regional, and national designations; rarity, tranquillity, wild-land, and valued landscape?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions.

- c) *Have the criteria to inform levels of sensitivity (both landscape and visual) and magnitude of change have been clearly and objectively defined, avoiding scales which may distort reported results?*

Further work on landscape value, including discussion of recent LI Technical Guidance Note (February 2021), is described later in the LVIA Chapter.

d) *How well is the cross-over with other topics, such as heritage or ecology, addressed?*

Response: The LVIA is one of a suite of reports which support the planning submission. Heritage assessment has informed the layout and heritage impacts, through iterative site masterplanning. The Ecological assessments have informed site protection measures, recommendations for mitigation planting and establishment of a coherent biodiverse and manageable landscape.

e) *Is there evidence of an iterative assessment-design process?*

Response: The layout which is assessed is the result of a detailed iterative design process informed by officers' responses to the previous application, landscape, heritage, ecology, and operation of the site. Full details of design iteration are available in reports by others.

f) *Is it clear how the methodology was applied in the assessment, e.g.: consistent process, use of terms, clarity in reaching judgements and transparency of decision-making?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions.

g) *How appropriate are the viewpoints that have been used?*

Response: The viewpoints have been agreed with the AONB Unit including both winter and summer views. All viewpoints have been tested against the ZTVs and checked on site, including those viewpoints from where the application site cannot be seen due to obstructions.

h) *How appropriate is the proposed mitigation, both measures incorporated into the scheme design and those identified to mitigate further the effects of the scheme, and mechanisms for delivering the mitigation?*

Response: Written mitigation recommendations are included this chapter illustrated in the appendices. These have been further developed within the Ecological Chapter. Mitigation planting is not fully detailed at this stage and would need to be developed into a detailed landscape masterplan, specification, and management strategy.

i) *What is the reviewer's opinion of the consistency and objectivity in application of the criteria and thresholds set out in the methodology for assessing the sensitivity of receptors, the magnitude of changes arising from the project, the degree/nature of effects, and the approach to judging the significance of the effects identified, in the case of EIA projects?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions.

j) *What is the opinion on the volume, relevance and completeness of the information provided about the development or project including, where relevant, detail about various development stages such as construction, operation, decommissioning, restoration, etc.?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions.

- k) *Does the document clearly identify landscape and visual effects which need to be considered in the assessment? and*
- l) *Have levels of effect have been clearly defined and, in the case of LVIA, have thresholds for significance been clearly defined and have cumulative landscape and visual effects been addressed?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions.

Step 3. Critique of the presentation of the findings of the assessment

“This phase is perhaps the most straightforward. It involves examining the ‘presentation’ of the assessment including report text, figures/ illustrations, visualisations, and other graphic material forming the LVIA or LVA, and answering the following”:

- a) *Does the LVIA/ LVA display transparency, objectivity and clarity of thinking, appropriate and proportionate communication of all aspects of the assessment of landscape and visual effects, including cumulative effects.*
- b) *Have the findings of the assessment been clearly set out and are they readily understood?*
- c) *Has there been clear and comprehensive communication of the assessment, in text, tables and illustrations?*
- d) *Are the graphics and/or visualisations effective in communicating the characteristics of the receiving landscape and visual effects of the proposals at agreed representative viewpoints?*
- e) *Are the graphics and/or visualisations fit for purpose and compliant with other relevant guidance and standards? and*
- f) *Is there a clear and concise summation of the effects of the proposals?*

Response: The report seeks to respond in detail to these matters, adopting industry and professional conventions. The photographs which illustrate the representative viewpoints adopt the recommendations within the Landscape Institute’s technical Guidance Note 06/19 “Visual Representation of Development Proposals”. However, the images which support the assessment are intended to be illustrative and viewed at A3 size within a report. They would need to be enlarged and reviewed against the guidance note prior to any consultation exercises which require viewing to mimic actual human-eye views.

Potential Environmental Impacts and Effects

In assessing the effects upon landscape effects of the development, the LVIA has considered:

- Landscape effects - Generally
- Assessment of sensitivity of the landscape to change

The criteria used for assessing site sensitivity, magnitude of change and significance of effect to both landscape and visual receptors are summarised later in this Appendix.

The *sensitivity* of a site to accommodate changes to the landscape is assessed in the range:

Very High – High – Medium – Low - Negligible

The *magnitude* of change to the landscape is assessed in the range:

Major – Moderate – Minor – Negligible – No Change

Assessment of *sensitivity and magnitude combined* – Significance of effect

To report on the overall significance of the proposal on both landscape and visual receptors the sensitivity of the site and the magnitude of change are assessed in combination. The outcomes are reported using descriptive terms rather than numerical scores and the terms used are summarised later in this Appendix.

The significance of the effect of the proposal upon the landscape is assessed in the range:

Very Large – Large – Moderate – Slight - Neutral

Valency

The outcome can be both positive – i.e. where the proposal makes a *beneficial change* to the landscape; and negative – where the proposal will result in an *adverse change* to landscape character and visual character. Effects are generally defined as adverse, neutral, or beneficial. Where the effect is minimal, assessment may be described as ‘slightly adverse’ or ‘slightly beneficial’.

For some assessments the LVIA has adopted the term ‘not adverse’ in preference to neutral. Neutral implies no change where clearly there will be change. ‘Not adverse’ is a clear indication that, while the landscape will change – possibly significantly – this can be assessed as not having an adverse effect. This is not the same as ‘slightly adverse’ – an assessment used for some viewpoints – and seeks to describe the effects as closer to neutral but recognising that there will be change.

Descriptions of these are shown in the tables in this Appendix.

Extracts from The Landscape Institute published a Technical Guidance Note (TGN) in February 2021: Technical Guidance Note 02/21 “Assessing Landscape Value Outside National Designations”

There are a few points to note regarding use of terminology in this TGN.

Landscape quality/ landscape condition: In some guidance (and particularly guidance on landscape character assessment since 2002), the term 'landscape quality' has been used to mean 'landscape condition'. In this TGN the term 'landscape quality' is used to mean value based on character, condition, or aesthetic appeal and 'landscape condition' is used to describe the physical state of the landscape (including the intactness of the landscape and the condition of individual elements).

Landscape qualities/ special qualities: In this TGN 'landscape qualities' are defined as characteristics/ features of a landscape that have been identified as being valued (as opposed to 'landscape characteristics' which encompass all elements, or combinations of elements, which make a particular contribution to distinctive character). Landscape qualities (in the sense meant in this TGN) are often referred to as 'special qualities' or 'special landscape qualities' in relation to designated landscapes. For example, 'special qualities' is a statutory expression used in relation to National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Scenic Areas (NSAs).

Natural beauty: Although the history of how we value landscape is closely related to the concept of 'natural beauty', it is not the aim of this note to define natural beauty. The meaning of 'natural beauty' has been clarified and interpreted through a series of studies, guidance documents and public inquiries.

Table 6.2.1 Landscape value definitions

Term	Definition
Landscape quality	A term used to indicate value based on character, condition, or aesthetic appeal (definition from 1st Edition GLVIA).
Landscape qualities	Characteristics/features of a landscape that have been identified as being valued. Landscape qualities are sometimes referred to as 'special qualities' or 'special landscape qualities' in relation to designated landscapes or 'wildness qualities' in relation to Wild Land Areas.
Landscape value	The relative value that is attached to different landscapes by society, bearing in mind that a landscape may be valued by different stakeholders for a whole variety of reasons (GLVIA3).
LVA	Landscape and visual appraisal
LVIA	Landscape and visual impact assessment

Natural beauty	<p>The term 'natural beauty' is enshrined in the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (it was also subsequently included in the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order (NI) 1985), the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, and the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006). Natural beauty is not exhaustively defined in the legislation, but its meaning has been clarified and interpreted through a series of studies, guidance documents and public inquiries (see 'further reading').</p> <p>As set out in Natural England's guidance for assessing landscapes for designation 2011 'It is Natural England's view that fauna and flora (i.e. wildlife), geological and physiographical features and cultural heritage can contribute to the natural beauty of all landscapes and that any assessment of natural beauty must take these factors into consideration' (paragraph 6.3).</p>
Natural capital	<p>The elements of nature that directly and indirectly produce value or benefits to people, including ecosystems, species, fresh water, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions. (Natural Capital Committee, 2014).</p>
Scenic quality	<p>The extent to which the landscape appeals to the senses (primarily, but not only, the visual senses), (Landscape Character Assessment Guidance 2002).</p>
Special qualities	<p>A statutory expression used in (amongst other places) sections 5 and 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended), section 87 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 (although the term is not defined in legislation).</p> <p>Special qualities are defined by Nature Scot as 'the characteristics that, individually or combined, give rise to an area's outstanding scenery'</p>
Valued landscape	<p>An area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes³³.</p>

Indicators of landscape value and evidence base

Table 6.2.2 Factors affecting landscape value

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence
Landscape condition	The physical state of the landscape: intactness of the landscape, and the condition/health of individual elements	<p>Good physical condition/ intactness of individual landscape elements (e.g. walls, parkland, trees)</p> <p>Good condition/ intactness of the overall landscape (e.g. intact historic field patterns)</p> <p>Absence of detracting/ incongruous features (or features are present but have little influence)</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment/ LANDMAP condition and trend questions</p> <p>Hedgerow/ tree surveys</p> <p>Observations about intactness/ condition made in the field</p> <p>SSSI condition assessments</p> <p>Historic landscape character assessments/ map regression analysis</p>
Natural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of ecological, geological, geomorphological, or physiographic interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>Presence of wildlife and habitats of interest that contribute to sense of place</p> <p>Presence of distinctive geological or geomorphological features</p> <p>Landscape which makes an important contribution to natural capital/forms the basis for nature recovery networks</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment/ LANDMAP Geological Landscape and Landscape Habitats Aspects</p> <p>Ecological and geological designations</p> <p>Geological Conservation Review</p> <p>Habitat surveys Priority habitats</p> <p>Nature Recovery Networks Specialist ecological studies</p>
Cultural heritage	Landscape with clear evidence of archaeological, historical, or cultural interest which contribute positively to the landscape	<p>Historic landmark structures or designed landscape elements (e.g. follies, monuments, avenues, beech clumps)</p> <p>Landscape which contributes to the significance of heritage assets, for example forming the setting of heritage assets as defined in specialist studies.</p> <p>Landscape which offers a dimension of time depth and the passing of time e.g. relic</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment/ LANDMAP Historic Landscape and Cultural Landscape Services Aspect</p> <p>Historic environment and archaeological designations</p> <p>Conservation Area appraisals</p> <p>Historic maps</p>

		farmsteads, ruins, historic field patterns, historic rights of way (e.g. drove roads, salt ways, tracks associated with past industrial activity)	Historic landscape character assessments Place names Specialist heritage studies
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Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence
Associative	Landscape which is connected with people, events, and the arts	Associations with literature, art, film, and music that contribute to perceptions of the landscape Links to a notable historical event Associations with a famous person or people	The arts including literature, photography, painting, film, music) Historical accounts, cultural traditions, and folklore Guidebooks LANDMAP Cultural Landscape Services aspect
Distinctiveness	Landscape that has a strong sense of identity	Landscape character that has a clear sense of place Distinctive features or elements which are identified as being characteristic of a particular place Rare or unusual features or elements, especially those that help to confer a strong sense of place or identity	Landscape character assessment/ LANDMAP Visual & Sensory question 3 and 25, – Historic Landscape question 4 Guidebooks Observations about elements and combinations of elements made in the field

Recreational	Landscape recognised as offering opportunities for recreation activities where experience of landscape is important	<p>Presence of open access land, public rights of way and village greens, especially where experience of landscape is important</p> <p>Other physical evidence of recreational use where experience of landscape is important</p> <p>Landscape that forms part of a view that is important to the enjoyment of a recreational activity</p>	<p>Definitive public rights of way mapping/ OS map data</p> <p>Open access land (including registered common land)</p> <p>Database of registered town or village greens</p> <p>Observations about recreational use/ enjoyment made in the field</p>
Scenic	Landscape that appeals to the senses, primarily the visual sense	<p>Distinctive features, or attractive combinations of features such as distinctive, dramatic, or striking landform or patterns of land cover which collectively create attractive compositions</p> <p>Strong aesthetic qualities such as scale, form, colour, and texture</p>	<p>Landscape character assessment/ LANDMAP Visual and Sensory scenic quality question 46</p> <p>Protected views, views studies</p> <p>Observations about scenic qualities made in the field</p>

Factor	Definition	Examples of indicators of landscape value	Examples of evidence
		<p>Presence of natural lines in the landscape (e.g. natural ridgelines, woodland edges, river corridors)</p> <p>Visual diversity or contrasts which contributes to the appreciation of the landscape</p> <p>Memorable/ distinctive views and landmarks, or landscape which contributes to distinctive views and landmarks</p>	Conservation Area Appraisals

Perceptual	Landscape with a strong sensory and perceptual value notably wildness and/ or tranquillity	<p>High levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet³²</p> <p>Presence of wild land and perceptions of relative wildness</p> <p>Sense of particular remoteness, seclusion, or openness</p>	<p>Tranquillity mapping and factors which contribute to and detract from tranquillity</p> <p>Dark Skies mapping</p> <p>Wildness mapping, and Wild Land Areas in Scotland</p> <p>Field survey</p> <p>LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect</p>
Spatial function	Landscape which performs a clearly identifiable and valuable function	<p>Landscape which makes an important contribution to a national landscape designation and / or a designated heritage asset</p> <p>Landscape which makes an important contribution to the character or identity of a settlement</p> <p>Settlement gateways/approaches which provides a clear sense of arrival and contribute to the character of the settlement (may be ancient/historic)</p> <p>Forming an important part of a Green Infrastructure network</p>	<p>Landscape character assessments/ LANDMAP</p> <p>Development and management plans for nationally-designated landscapes</p> <p>Conservation Area appraisals</p> <p>Observations about landscape function made in the field</p> <p>Green infrastructure studies/strategies</p>

Assessment Methodology and Assessment Criteria Tables

Sensitivity Values

Measures of sensitivity are described more fully in this report, but follow the general principles outlined in the table below:

Table 6.2.3 Sensitivity value definitions

Value/Sensitivity	
Value (Sensitivity)	Typical Descriptors
Very High	Very high importance and rarity, international scale, and limited potential for substitution
High	High importance and rarity, national scale, and limited potential for substitution
Medium	High or medium importance and rarity, regional scale, limited potential for substitution
Low (or Lower)	Low or medium importance and rarity, local scale
Negligible	Very low importance and rarity, local scale

Assessment of magnitude effect on landscape character

The criteria used for assessing the magnitude of impact is summarised in the table below:

Table 6.2.4 Magnitude of effect upon landscape character definitions

Magnitude of effect upon Landscape Character	
Magnitude of impact	Typical Criteria Descriptors
Major	Loss of resource and/or quality and integrity: severe damage to key characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse) Large scale or major improvement of resource quality: extensive restoration or enhancement: major improvement of attribute quality (Beneficial)
Moderate	Loss of resource, but not adversely affecting integrity: Partial loss of/damage to key characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse) Benefit to, or addition of, key characteristics, features, or elements: improvement of attribute quality (Beneficial)
Minor	Some measurable change in attribute's quality or vulnerability: minor loss of, or alteration to, one (or maybe more) key characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse) Minor benefit to, or addition of, on (or maybe more) key characteristics, features, or elements: some beneficial impact on attribute or a reduced risk of negative impact occurring (Beneficial)
Negligible	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features, or elements (Adverse) Very minor benefit to or positive addition of one or more characteristics, features, or elements (Beneficial)
No change	No loss or alteration to characteristics, features, or elements: no observable impact in either direction

Sensitivity and magnitude combined – Significance of effect

In order to report on the overall significance of the proposal on both landscape and visual receptors the sensitivity of the site and the magnitude of change are assessed in combination. The outcome can be both positive – i.e. the proposal makes a positive change to the landscape; and negative – the proposal will result in a negative change to landscape character and visual character. The outcomes are reported using descriptive terms rather than numerical scores and the terms used are summarised below:

Table 6.2.5 Significance of effect upon landscape character definitions

Significance of Effect	
Significance of Category	Typical descriptors of Effect
Very Large	Only adverse effects are normally assigned this level of significance. They represent key factors in the decision-making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites or features of international, national, or regional importance that are likely to suffer a most damaging impact and loss of resource integrity. However, a major change in a site or feature of local importance may also enter this category
Large	These beneficial or adverse effects are considered to be very important considerations and are likely to be material in the decision-making process
Moderate	These beneficial or adverse effects may be important but are not likely to be key decision-making factors. The cumulative effects of such issues may become a decision-making issue if leading to an increase in the overall adverse effect on a particular resource or receptor
Slight	These beneficial or adverse effects may be raised as local factors. They are unlikely to be critical in the decision-making process, but are important in enhancing the subsequent design of the project
Neutral	No effects or those that are beneath levels of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error

Valency of effect – Landscape and Visual Assessment

Effects are defined as adverse, neutral, or beneficial.

Table 6.2.6 Valency of effect upon landscape character definitions

Valency of Effect	
Nature of Effect	Definition
Adverse	Effect that would result in damage to the condition, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual resource
Neutral/ Not adverse	Effect that would maintain, on balance, the existing level of condition, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual resource. Whilst the nature of the change may be significant, the proposal does not compromise the inherent qualities of the resource and can incorporate a combination of positive and negative effects.

Beneficial	Effect that would result in improvement to the condition, integrity or key characteristics of the landscape or visual resource
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Landscape character sensitivity

Table 6.2.7 Judgement matrix to assess landscape character sensitivity

Landform and scale				
A smooth, convex, or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features (including prominent headlands and cliffs) or pronounced undulations; and larger scale landforms are likely to be less sensitive than smaller scale landforms - because developments may appear out of scale, detract from visually important landforms, or appear confusing in the latter types of landscapes.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. an extensive lowland flat landscape or elevated plateau, often a larger scale landform	e.g. a simple gently rolling landscape, likely to be a medium-large scale landform	e.g. an undulating landscape, perhaps also incised by valleys, likely to be a medium scale landform	e.g. a landscape with distinct landform features, and/or irregular in topographic appearance (which may be large in scale), or a smaller scale landform	e.g. a landscape with a rugged landform or dramatic landform features (which may be large in scale), or a small scale landform

Landform cover pattern and presence of human scale features				
Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of consistent ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover patterns, smaller and/ or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features that are traditional of the landscape, such as stone farmsteads and small farm woodlands. This is because large features may dominate smaller scale traditional features within the landscape.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a very large-scale landscape with uniform groundcover and lacking in human scale features	e.g. a landscape with large-scale fields, little variety in land cover and occasional human scale features such as trees and domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with medium sized fields, some variations in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with irregular small-scale fields, variety in land cover and presence of human scale features such as trees, domestic buildings	e.g. a landscape with a strong variety in land cover and small scale/irregular in appearance containing numerous human scale features

Tracks/transport pattern				
Landscapes that are devoid of tracks will be particularly sensitive to development because it will be more difficult to absorb permanent new tracks into the landscape without change to character in these areas. In addition, if an LCA has a rural road network which contributes to landscape character (e.g. winding narrow lanes bounded by high hedge banks or sunken lanes), this aspect of character may be affected by access works to enable HGVs carrying development materials to a site. This characteristic therefore also influences sensitivity.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a landscape containing existing roads and vehicular tracks, and no restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	e.g. a landscape containing existing roads and vehicular tracks, and few restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	e.g. a landscape containing some existing roads and vehicular tracks, including some restrictions in terms of narrow hedged lanes	e.g. a landscape containing few lanes or vehicular tracks, and these are predominantly narrow lanes bounded by high hedge banks	e.g. a landscape devoid of roads or vehicular tracks

Skylines				
Prominent and distinctive and/or undeveloped skylines, or skylines with important landmark features, are likely to be more sensitive to development because development may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines. These include the skylines of elevated coastlines and coastal headlands. Important landmark features on the skyline might include historic features or monuments.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a large scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline	e.g. a large scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCAs are more prominent	e.g. a landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline.	e.g. a landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/or with important landmark features	e.g. a landscape comprising prominent or distinctive undeveloped skylines or skylines with particularly important landmark features

Perceptual qualities				
Landscapes that are relatively remote or tranquil (due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality with few modern human influences) tend to increase levels of sensitivity to development compared to landscapes that contain signs of modern development (as the development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from a sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness).				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. a landscape with much human activity and development such as industrial areas or a port	e.g. a rural landscape with much human activity and dispersed modern development	e.g. a rural landscape with some modern development and human activity	e.g. a more naturalistic landscape and / or one with little modern human influence and development	e.g. a remote or 'wild' landscape with little or no signs of current human activity and development

Historic Landscape Character				
Landscapes comprising prehistoric and medieval enclosures (including strip fields) are considered to have a higher sensitivity to development than landscapes comprising modern enclosures or industrial/military Historic Landscape Types (HLTs) due to the potential effects of development on the coherence of these landscapes (including effects of access tracks on field boundaries) and the ability to appreciate them. Historic landscape types such as rough ground, ancient woodland, other woodland, marsh, dunes, mud, sand, outcrop/ scree/ cliffs, water meadows, and orchards also have a higher sensitivity to energy development as a result of potential change to the coherence of these historic landscape types.				
Examples of sensitivity ratings				
Lower sensitivity		←————→	Higher sensitivity	
e.g. majority of the landscape covered by least sensitive HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by lower sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of higher sensitivity	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by medium sensitivity HLTs or a mixture of higher and lower sensitivity HLTs	e.g. majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs, but may include some small areas of lower sensitivity	e.g. the majority of the landscape covered by higher sensitivity HLTs

Scenic and Special Qualities

Landscapes that have a high natural beauty/ scenic quality (which may be recognised as a National Park, Heritage Coast or AONB) and whose scenic qualities, special qualities (as recorded in the LCA or by AGLV designation) or natural beauty are likely to be affected by development will be more sensitive than landscapes of low scenic quality or whose special scenic qualities or special qualities are not likely to be affected by wind energy development (some areas may include special qualities that might not be affected by development). Scenic and special qualities may relate to landscapes that are not designated as well as landscape designated for their natural beauty.

Examples of sensitivity ratings

Lower sensitivity		←————→			Higher sensitivity
e.g. landscape has low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land – special qualities will not be affected by energy development	e.g. landscape has low-medium scenic quality, or special qualities are unlikely to be affected by energy development	e.g. landscape has a medium scenic quality and some of the special qualities may be affected by energy development	e.g. landscape has a medium-high scenic quality – most of the special qualities are likely to be affected by energy development	e.g. area has a high scenic quality (likely to be recognised as National Park/AONB/ Heritage Coast) and the scenic qualities will be affected by energy development	

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

The sensitivity of visual receptors – general principles

- the location i.e. proximity and context of the viewpoint.
- the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor, including awareness of their surroundings and duration of viewing opportunity, whether prolonged or intermittent.
- the importance of the view, which may be determined with respect to its popularity or numbers of people affected, its appearance in guidebooks, on tourist maps, and in the facilities provided for its enjoyment and references to it in literature or art.

A wide variety of visual receptors can reasonably be anticipated to be affected by a proposed development. The range of visual receptors will include pedestrians, and recreational users of the surrounding landscape such as walkers, cyclists and those otherwise engaged in the pursuit of leisure activities within the visual envelope of the site, local residents, motorists, those working outdoors and other workers. All categories of receptors can potentially be affected to a greater or lesser degree by a development. The four main visual receptor groups are considered in more detail below under the headings of residents, workers, the travelling public, and visitors.

Residents

Local residents tend to have a higher level of sensitivity to changes in their landscape and visual environment than those passing through. For residents, the most important views are those from their homes, although they will also be sensitive to other views such as those experienced when travelling to work or other local destinations. However, it is these latter views, from public areas nearby houses that are of relevance to the main body of the visual impact assessment (assessment of effects from the representative viewpoints).

Workers

Workers are generally less sensitive to effects as they are focussed on the tasks they are carrying out. Indoor workers generally have a Low sensitivity, and outdoor workers, such as farmers and those offering outdoor pursuits are considered to have a Low to Medium sensitivity.

The Travelling Public

This category of visual receptor group overlaps to a degree with the other categories in that it embraces local residents, workers and those who come to visit the area. This group of visual receptors will include the following:

Motorists - For major trunk routes and motorways, the sensitivity of users will be Low, as they will be travelling at speed and will be primarily focussed on achieving their destination. Users of other A-roads will have a Low to Medium sensitivity, unless these are particularly scenic or slow routes, in which case the sensitivity may be assessed as Medium. The users of local roads will have a Medium sensitivity.

Cyclists and footpath users – These groups are addressed under the heading of visitors as they are generally less concerned with the object of reaching their destination than with the enjoyment of being outside and enjoying the landscape and available views.

Visitors

This category includes several visual receptor groups, each with different objectives and levels of sensitivity to any change in the fabric or character of the landscape and views arising from the proposed development. This group includes those who are mainly concerned with enjoyment of the outdoor environment but also those who may pursue indoor recreational pursuits and is anticipated to include the following (arranged in decreasing sensitivity):

- Those whose main preoccupation is the enjoyment of scenery (High sensitivity).
- Recreational walkers and equestrians (High sensitivity)
- Those visitors engaged in cultural pursuits (High-Medium sensitivity)
- Cyclists (High-Medium sensitivity)

Magnitude of Effect on Views from Representative Viewpoints

Magnitude of effect identifies the degree of change to the character and quality of views experienced by the visual receptor. This will be influenced by:

the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development and the scale of change in the view with respect to the loss or addition of features in the view and changes in its composition, including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development.

the degree of contrast or integration of any new features or changes in the landscape with the existing or remaining landscape elements and characteristics in terms of form, scale and mass, line, height, colour, and texture.

Table 6.2.8 Magnitude of effect upon visual receptors definitions

Magnitude of Effect on Views	
Major	Total or major alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be fundamentally changed.
Moderate	Partial alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be noticeably changed.
Minor	Minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be largely unchanged despite discernible differences.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to key elements, features, or characteristics of the view, such that post development the baseline situation will be fundamentally unchanged with barely perceptible differences.

Table 6.2.9 Table showing the significance of effect as a combination of magnitude and receptor sensitivity

		<u>MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE</u>				
		<u>Major</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Minor</u>	<u>Negligible</u>	<u>No Change</u>
<u>RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY</u>	<u>Very High</u>	<u>Very Large</u>	<u>Large or Very Large</u>	<u>Moderate or Large</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
	<u>High</u>	<u>Large or Very Large</u>	<u>Moderate or Large</u>	<u>Slight or Moderate</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
	<u>Medium</u>	<u>Moderate or Large</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Neutral or Slight</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
	<u>Low</u>	<u>Slight or Moderate</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Neutral or Slight</u>	<u>Neutral or Slight</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
	<u>Negligible</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Neutral or Slight</u>	<u>Neutral or Slight</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Neutral</u>

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