

Appendix 10.1 LVIA Methodology

METHODOLOGY

This methodology is specific to developments determined by the Local Planning Authority as not requiring a full Environmental Impact Assessment. The Third Edition of the GLVIA3¹ provides clarification that the same principles and processes apply for EIA and non-EIA assessments however there is no requirement for establishing whether the effects are significant given this development falls out with the formal requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment.

The methodology sets out the approach for the core steps in describing the baseline conditions, identifying where potential impacts may occur and evaluating the subsequent effects. In accordance with GLVIA3, the appraisal reflects the clear distinction between the landscape as a resource and visual amenity. The steps of the methodology used in the LVA are set out below:

- Illustrative Tools
- Baseline Conditions:
 - Landscape Baseline
 - Visual Amenity Baseline
- Potential Effects - including magnitude of change and nature of change:
 - Assessment and Evaluation of Landscape Effects
 - Assessment and Evaluation of Effects on Visual Amenity

ILLUSTRATIVE TOOLS

In accordance with The Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 06/19, Visual Representation of Development Proposals, a proportionate approach has been applied to determine the visualisation type appropriate for this project. It is considered annotated viewpoint photographs are sufficient level of detail to support the appraisal.

The viewpoint assessment is illustrated by photographs taken to represent a maximum visibility scenario. Photographs have been annotated to show the extent of the site within the view, its context and highlight key features. The photographs used have been taken using a full frame sensor digital camera with a 50 mm lens equivalent mounted on a tripod, which conforms to the GLVIA² guidance since this lens size is considered to most closely represent the view obtained by the human eye. The photographs have been taken to most represent a maximum visibility scenario during the season in which the assessment is undertaken.

It should be noted that whilst photography is a valuable tool to assist in the visualisation process, it cannot be expected to replicate the actual view or predicted view which would be attained on the ground. The photographs provide the viewer with a fair representation of the proposed Development site within its setting.

¹ *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2013)*

² *Visual Representation of Development Proposals, Technical Guidance Note 06/19 (Landscape Institute, 2019)*

BASELINE CONDITIONS

Desktop Survey Work

The following desktop sources were consulted in order to compile the baseline information:

- Existing Landscape Character Assessments;
- Register of Parks and Gardens;
- Ordnance Survey Maps; and
- Aerial photography.

Landscape Baseline

Landscape receptors comprise the landscape fabric of the site, landscape character areas/ types and designated landscapes which may be affected either directly or indirectly by the proposed Development.

Existing Landscape Character Assessments have been reviewed and interpreted for use within the appraisal based on field work and further desktop survey work. A description is provided of the existing landscape elements, features, characteristics, designations and the value, condition and importance of the landscape and resources within the study area which are likely to have potential impacts as a result of the proposed Development.

An evaluation is required for each landscape character area/ type and landscape receptor which has the potential to interact with the development on:

Landscape value – It is often regarded in association with landscape designations however other more local factors have been considered such as local heritage or community interest. Key factors in regard to landscape value include landscape condition, scenic quality, rarity, recreational value, tourism, local heritage and community interest.

Susceptibility to change – Landscapes are constantly changing and evolving. The current pressures in the landscape have been clearly stated in the absence of the proposal for each landscape character area/ type.

Landscape sensitivity to changes has been defined as high, medium, low or negligible based on professional interpretation of a combination of parameters including:

- The value placed on the landscape as defined by designation/other identifiable form of recognition;
- The scale and pattern of the landscape and its elements/features;
- The simplicity or complexity of the landscape;
- The nature of skylines;
- Landscape quality or condition;
- Existing land-use;
- Visual enclosure/openness of views and distribution of visual receptors; and
- The scope for mitigation, which would be in character with the existing landscape.

Table A.2: Sensitivity of The Landscape Baseline

Visual Sensitivity	Land Use
Very High	<i>Value:</i> Nationally/internationally designated/valued countryside and landscape features; strong/distinctive landscape characteristics; absence of landscape detractors. <i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Strong/distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; absence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in excellent condition. Landscapes with clear and widely recognised cultural value. Landscapes with a high level of tranquillity.
High	<i>Value:</i> Locally designated/valued countryside (e.g. Areas of High Landscape Value, Regional Scenic Areas) and landscape features; many distinctive landscape characteristics; very few landscape detractors. <i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Many distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; very few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in good condition. The landscape has a low capacity for change as a result of potential changes to defining character.
Medium	<i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; some distinctive landscape characteristics; few landscape detractors. <i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Some distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; few landscape detractors; landscape receptors in fair condition. Landscape is able to accommodate some change as a result.
Low	<i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; few distinctive landscape characteristics; presence of landscape detractors. <i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Few distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of landscape detractors; landscape receptors in poor condition. Landscape is able to accommodate large amounts of change without changing these characteristics fundamentally.
Negligible	<i>Value:</i> Undesignated countryside and landscape features; absence of distinctive landscape characteristics; despoiled/degraded by the presence of many landscape detractors. <i>Susceptibility to Change:</i> Absence of distinctive landscape elements/aesthetic/perceptual aspects; presence of many landscape detractors; landscape receptors in very poor condition. As such landscape is able to accommodate considerable change

Visual Amenity Baseline

Visibility Analysis concentrated on publicly accessible areas and key receptors including residential and outdoor recreational areas, as well as road and public footpath networks. The aim is to identify the interactions between the proposal and the visual receptors.

The study area is based upon analysis of the natural landform, using contours from the 1:25k Ordnance Survey map and a desktop review of intervening structures which are predicted to screen views of the Development such as buildings on mass and block woodland from the aerial.

Fieldwork is undertaken to establish the extent of available views towards the site and to establish the extent of views from the site.

Visual receptors comprise those individuals or groups of people who may have views of the proposed Development. The main groups of visual receptors are usually defined as follows:

- Residents;
- Tourists or visitors, which includes users of outdoor recreational facilities including strategic recreational footpaths, cycle routes or public rights of way whose attention would be focused on the landscape; important landscape features with physical, cultural or historic attributes; principal views from residential buildings; beauty spots or picnic areas;
- Hill walkers, which includes those walking on unmarked footpaths; and
- Road users.

Viewpoint Assessment - A selection of viewpoints was identified and considered to be representative of the main sensitive receptors in the study area for the purposes of assessing the proposed Development. The viewpoints have been numbered in a clockwise direction starting in the north and were chosen to be representative such as a promoted visitor attraction or illustrative to demonstrate a particular effect or theme from the appraisal.

Viewpoint Description - The extent and nature of the existing views are described by reference to the following and illustrated through annotated photographs:

- Composition of the view, landscape character, features, visual amenity and quality of the landscape;
- nature of the view;
- elevation;
- direct or indirect/ angled;
- full or partial;
- open or filtered;
- seasonal variation; and
- extent.

The extent of view and proportion of the development which is visible is categorised as follows:

Full views - Where greater than 75% of the proposed Development is visible

Partial views - Where less than 75% of the proposed Development is visible

Restricted views - Where less than 50% of the proposed Development is visible and/ or very limited views of the proposed Development

Distance: The distance of the views towards the application and development is categorised below:

Short distance - less than 0.25km

Medium distance - between 0.25 and 0.5km

Long distance - Greater than 0.5km

Viewpoint Sensitivity is defined as high, medium or low based on an interpretation of a combination of parameters, as follows and defined in Table A.1:

- Location and context of the viewpoint;
- Land use or main activity at the viewpoint;
- Frequency and duration of use;
- Landscape character and quality of the intervening landscape; and
- Value attached to view.

Table A.2: Visual Sensitivity in relation to Main Activity at Viewpoint

Visual Sensitivity	Land Use
Very High	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is: designed/has intentional association with surroundings; recorded in published material; from a publicly accessible heritage asset/designated/promoted viewpoint; nationally/internationally designated right of way; protected/recognised in planning policy designation.
High	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clear value but may not be formally recognised e.g. framed view of scenic value or destination/summit views; inferred that it may have value for local residents; locally promoted route or PRoW.
Medium	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View is not widely promoted or recorded in published sources; may be typical of those experienced by an identified receptor; minor road routes through rural/scenic areas.
Low	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View of clearly lesser value than similar views from nearby visual receptors that may be more accessible.
Negligible	<i>Value/Susceptibility to Change:</i> View may be affected by many landscape detractors and unlikely to be valued.

POTENTIAL EFFECTS

The text below provides an analysis of the potential direct/ indirect impacts based on site reconnaissance to make a professional judgement on the magnitude and evaluation of effects of the main landscape and visual receptors identified in the study area as outlined in the Baseline Conditions.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

Magnitude of Landscape Effects - The effect on landscape character as a result of the proposed Development is largely dependent on; the characteristics of the receiving landscape, the consistency of the proposed development in relation to the receiving landscape and the perceptions of the proposed development influenced by distance, weather and appearance.

Landscape effects are classified as substantial, moderate, slight, negligible and none based on a professional judgement which combines landscape sensitivity, value, susceptibility to change and the level of interaction with the proposed Development.

The criteria utilised in ascribing magnitude of change of landscape effects throughout this assessment are as follows:

- **Very High:** Total loss or considerable alteration to key elements/ features/characteristics of the view that is directly visible resulting in a substantial change to the baseline condition;
- **High:** Notable loss/alteration/addition to one or more key receptors/-characteristics of the baseline; or addition of prominent conflicting elements
- **Medium:** Partial loss or alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view. Change perceived as a partial or localised change within a broader, unaltered context which may be noticed directly or obliquely;
- **Low:** Limited loss or small alteration to one or more key elements/features/characteristics of the view. Change is discernible but underlying composition of the view would be similar to baseline;
- **Negligible:** Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape
- **Indiscernible:** In some circumstances, changes to key landscape components will be lower than negligible and changes will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to an imperceptible effect i.e., less than negligible.

Landscape effects also consider whether the Development:

- Reinforces the landscape elements, structure and key landscape characteristics (positive). Or would it include low or negligible changes that maybe considered part of the baseline condition (neutral). Or an adverse effect which may include the loss of landscape elements such as mature trees and hedgerows as part of construction leading to a reduction in the landscape quality and character of an area.
- Would have a physical change to landscape fabric (direct) or consequential change (indirect).
- Results in short term (up to 5 years), medium term (up to 25 years) or long-term changes (25+ years).
- Would have reversible or irreversible effects on the landscape.

Assessment of Effects on Visual Amenity

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

- Distance of the viewpoint from the development;
- Duration of the predicted impact;
- Extent of the development in the view, e.g. the horizontal angle subtended by the development;
- Angle of view in relation to main receptor activity;
- Degree of contrast;
- Visual permeability of proposed Development, i.e. extent to which views would be blocked or would be restricted;
- Background to the Development; and
- Extent and nature of other built development visible.

In the case of magnitude of change occurring within designated areas or along roads or recreational routes, the proportion of the designated area or length of the route affected by the proposals is also a consideration.

The criteria utilised in ascribing visual magnitude of change throughout this assessment are as follows:

- **Very High:** Substantial change to the baseline, forming a new, defining focus and having a defining influence on the view
- **High:** Additions are clearly noticeable and part of the view would be fundamentally altered.
- **Medium:** Moderate alteration to one or more key characteristics of the baseline view.
- **Low :** Proposed development will form a minor constituent of the view being partially visible or at sufficient distance to be a small component.
- **Negligible:** Barely discernible loss or alteration to key components; addition of elements not uncharacteristic within the existing landscape.
- **Indiscernible:** In some circumstances, changes at representative viewpoints will be lower than negligible and changes to the existing baseline of the view will be described as 'Imperceptible'. This will lead to an imperceptible effect i.e., less than negligible.

Visual effects also consider whether the Development:

- Results in short term (up to 5 years), medium term (up to 25 years) or long-term changes (25+ years).
- Would have reversible or irreversible effects on the visual amenity.

EVALUATING LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

Landscape or visual effects have been assessed as major, major/moderate, moderate, moderate/minor, minor or minor/negligible. These categories have been based on combining viewpoint sensitivity and predicted magnitude of change (Table A.2).

Table A.2: Evaluation of Landscape and Visual Effects

	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE				
Receptor Sensitivity	Very High	High	Medium	Low	Negligible
Very High	Substantial	Major	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor
High	Major	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor
Medium	Major/-moderate	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible
Low	Moderate	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible	Negligible
Negligible	Moderate/-minor	Minor	Minor/-negligible	Negligible	Negligible/-none
Indiscernible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible	Imperceptible

The matrix is not used as a prescriptive tool, and the methodology and analysis of potential effects at any particular location must allow for the exercise of professional judgement. Thus in some instances a particular parameter may be considered as having a determining effect on the analysis.