

Cornus Landscape Planning and Design

CLPD 273 R01: Land at Ratby Road, Markfield, Leicestershire – LVIA Review

12th February 2026

Land at Ratby Road, Markfield, Leicestershire – LVIA Review

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Cornus Landscape Planning and Design have been instructed by Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council to review the LVIA submitted as part of the planning application for the development of land at Ratby Lane, Markfield, Leicestershire (planning application reference 25/00676/OUT) for the following:
- 1.2. The application has been submitted on behalf of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd.
- 1.3. The submitted LVIA (report reference R002f_2220) has been prepared by Leyton Place Ltd, and the author is Mrs Clare Brockhurst FLI, BSc (Hons), Dip LA.
- 1.4. This review provides a technical assessment of the LVIA, and considers the scope, methodology, baseline assessment, proposed mitigation and assessment of landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed residential development.

Author competency and experience

- 1.5. This review has been completed by Cornus Limited, and the author is Rose Perkins BA Hons MA, CMLI.
- 1.6. The author of this review has 16 years experience as a practicing Landscape Architect and has extensive experience in the preparation of LVIA, LVA and Landscape Design Work, and the preparation of LVIA Reviews.
- 1.7. As a Chartered Member of the Landscape Institute, the author adheres to the professional requirements set out by the Landscape Institute within their competency framework and requirements set out to practice as a CMLI, maintaining these standards throughout her professional work.
- 1.8. This review has been completed independently and in accordance with good practice guidance published by the Landscape Institute (Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs). Technical Guidance Note 1/20 (10 Jan 2020)).
- 1.9. For reference, a copy of this guidance is included within **Appendix 1**

2. Structure of the Review

- 2.1. The review of the LVIA is structured as follows:
 - Checking methodology, criteria, and process;
 - Checking the baseline, content, and findings of the assessment; and
 - Checking the presentation of the assessment findings.

3. Review of the LVIA

Structure of the LVIA

3.1. The LVIA is structured as follows:

- Section 1: Introduction
- Section 2: Baseline situation
- Section 3: Evaluation of the sensitivity of resources and receptors
- Section 4: Design evolution and mitigation measures
- Section 5: Magnitude of change
- Section 6: Consequences of development
- Section 7: Methodology

3.2. The LVIA also includes a series of Figures, Tables and supporting published reference documents (eg Landscape Character Assessment extracts) which are included both within the main body of the report and contained within Appendices.

3.3. The overall structure of the report is clear and the approach acceptable in GLVIA3 terms.

Checking methodology, criteria, and process

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?

3.4. The LVIA does not form part of an EIA, and its scope and purpose are set out within Section 1. The LVIA identifies that the proposed development does not trigger the preparation of an ES Chapter.

3.5. Details are provided on the approach taken with reference made to GLVIA3 within the methodology and throughout the LVIA and this is an accepted approach.

What consultations have been carried out and have responses been acted upon?

3.6. The LVIA refers to officers comments received as part of the previous refused application on the site (application 15/00889/OUT). The LVIA briefly mentions this within Section 1, but there is little reference elsewhere within the LVIA to these comments or their relevance to the application site.

- 3.7. There is no evidence to suggest that any other specific consultation, pre-app advice, or engagement with stakeholders has been sought for the submitted scheme or any evidence that specific landscape matters have been consulted on through the application process.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification on how the scheme responds to/or has addressed the comments received as part of the previous refused planning application.

Clarification on any further pre-application inputs or additional consultations which may have taken place or confirmation on why consultation has not been completed.

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

- 3.8. The LVIA does not provide any evidence to suggest that formal agreement was sought from Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council to agree the scope/methodology of the LVIA. There does not appear to be any information or agreement on the viewpoints chosen for inclusion within the LVIA.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification required on why the scope of the LVIA/methodology/viewpoint selection/study etc has not been agreed with the LPA.

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?

- 3.9. The LVIA includes a glossary of terms found within Appendix 2 which defines the terminology used throughout the assessment. The terminology used is consistent with language and definitions found within GLVIA3.
- 3.10. The methodology found within Section 1 explains the justifications and criteria used within the assessment. A 'threshold free' approach has been used within the LVIA and instead a spectrum of change provided.
- 3.11. The justification for the use of this approach is set out and defined by the author. This approach is not the 'standard' or 'usual' approach expected for LVIA, however the author has provided clear reasoning and justification for the methodology used.
- 3.12. Reference has been made to GLVIA3 where it states that *"It is not essential to establish a series of thresholds for different levels of significance of landscape and visual effects, provided it is made clear whether or not they are significant"*.

- 3.13. The methodology identifies that judgements and narratives are provided to identify whether the effects are significant or not significant, and the approach has been clearly explained. The approach complies with the guidance set out within GLVIA3.

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

- 3.14. The LVIA provides a clear distinction and separate consideration of landscape and visual effects throughout the report.
- 3.15. This separation occurs within the baseline assessment, within the evaluation of sensitivity of resources, and within the assessment of the magnitude of change and consequence of development.
- 3.16. This is confirmed at paragraph 2.5 *"This LVIA recognises that landscape and visual effects need to be considered separately."*

Does the assessment demonstrate comprehensive identification of receptors and of all likely effects?

- 3.17. The baseline analysis provides a review of the landscape resources and visual receptors which are likely to experience a change as a result of the proposals.

Landscape Resources:

- 3.18. The baseline assessment within the LVIA provides a review of the landscape resources at a National, Regional, local and site specific level.
- 3.19. These are identified as follows NCA 73 Charnwood, Area 5: Groby Estate Woodland, LCA A: Charnwood Forest and site specific landscape components which include Landform, Hydrology, Land cover, appreciations, enclosure, access, relative tranquillity, and townscape character.
- 3.20. It would assist the reader to summarise the relevant landscape resources taken forward into the assessment in a listed format similar to the summary found within the visual baseline section of the report.
- 3.21. It is noted that the published LCAs/NCA's have been assessed as being too large to be relevant to the development of the site. Within the Landscape Sensitivity Evaluation, the assessment of the Magnitude of Change, and the assessment of Significance of Effect tables the published national and regional character areas have been combined to one landscape receptor – the names of these published landscape resources have not been included.
- 3.22. It is assumed that these have been combined because they are considered that their geographical extents are too large to be relevant to the site, but clarification is sought

on this matter. For completeness, the names of the LCA/NCA should also be identified as referenced within the baseline assessment.

Visual Receptors:

- 3.23. Within the baseline assessment of visual character and views, representative viewpoints and visual receptors are identified and listed.
- 3.24. The selection of viewpoints and corresponding visual receptors has been informed by the production of ZTV mapping and site survey work. The baseline analysis also identifies views which have been scoped out of the assessment and provides a justification for their exclusion from the assessment.
- 3.25. Clarification is required over why certain views have not been included where the ZTV suggests potential visibility. These are specifically at locations to the south and west of the application site and their locations identified below:



- 3.26. The selection of the visual receptors has been described and the visual context identified.
- 3.27. These are identified as three visual receptor groups: Users of road network, specifically Ratby Lane, Launde Road (Photoviewpoints 7-10), those walking along PRow R21 (Photoviewpoints 1-3) and occupants of properties which abut and back

onto the application site along Jacqueline Road (no photographs taken from private properties, interpolated from views across the site and photoviewpoints 4 and 6).

- 3.28. Within Section 3 of the LVIA the evaluation of sensitivity of landscape resources and visual receptors is provided in tabulated format. Each receptor/resource is identified and a comprehensive assessment made of their value, susceptibility, and overall sensitivity.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification on why views from PRow routes to the south and west of the site have not been included.

Clarification required on specific landscape resources relevant to the site within the baseline analysis.

Clarification on why the National and Regional published character areas have been combined within the assessment of effects and confirmation of their identities/names is required for completeness.

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

- 3.29. The methodology provides a transparent and clear basis upon which judgements and conclusions are made within the LVIA. Judgements and decision making has been made based on an objective assessment of the site and its context.
- 3.30. The baseline review would benefit from additional visual graphics/photos/aerial mapping to describe the context of the site and provide a clearer description of the site specific elements and characteristics.
- 3.31. Overall, the LVIA provides clear judgements with clarity on conclusions regarding landscape and visual effects with clear reasonings relating to construction and operational effects.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Supporting graphics/aerial mapping would assist in describing the baseline landscape character of the site and its surroundings in greater detail.

Checking the baseline, content, and findings of the assessment

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)?

- 3.32. The LVIA identifies that the study area has been determined and informed by the ZTV mapping and fieldwork. Figure 1.1 within Section 1 of the report provides the geographical extent of the study area on an extracted OS map.
- 3.33. The inset figure is lacking the site boundary and there is no scale bar included on this plan which would be useful for the reader in determining the geographical extent.
- 3.34. The plans included elsewhere within the LVIA are at varying extents – ie the ZTV mapping, viewpoint location plan and topographical mapping are much wider in their geographical extent than the identified study area. The ZTV mapping suggests that the visibility extends beyond the study area, and the viewpoint location plan identifies viewpoints located outside of the study area (viewpoints 11,12 and 13).
- 3.35. It is noted however, further on in the baseline studies that these specific viewpoints and areas of potential visibility have been scoped out of the assessment due to their limited visibility and therefore lie outside of the study area.
- 3.36. Within Section 2 of the LVIA there is further clarification that the proposed study area was visited after the fieldwork and was confirmed that the geographical extent was appropriate for the scale and scope of the development.
- 3.37. The format of the baseline summer and winter photography varies, and the summer photography is inconsistent with the winter views with varying sizes and some views not providing the full 90 degree field of view. Descriptions of each view are provided for the summer baseline photography but are not included on the baseline winter photography.
- 3.38. Although there is some inconsistency between the baseline plans and between the summer and winter photography, generally there is agreement that the defined study area and supporting graphical information is appropriate for the LVIA.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification on why there is a difference between summer and winter baseline photography in format.

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?

Landscape

- 3.39. Section 3 of the LVIA (Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Resources and Receptors) provides an assessment of the value of landscape and visual resources.
- 3.40. The assessment of landscape value assesses the value of the landscape at a National, District and Local scale. It identifies that the site is not valued at a national level by any designations or policies, as defined within the NPPF para 11, footnote 7.
- 3.41. The LVIA makes reference to the previous application on the site and the committee report which determined that the site and its local landscape was not determined as being a Valued Landscape. The assessment of landscape value does not make reference to the Technical Guidance note from the Landscape Institute (TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations). Clarification is sought over why the assessment of value has not referred to this guidance.
- 3.42. Interim conclusions are provided which identifies that the site and its immediate context are on the lower end of the spectrum in their landscape value. This judgement is deemed acceptable and has been appropriately assessed.

Visual

- 3.43. An assessment is provided of the value attached to views for the three identified receptor groups. The assessment identifies that there are no vantage points or recognised viewpoints whose value would be affected by the proposed development.
- 3.44. The assessment of value identifies that there is some local value (mid range of the spectrum) to the local PRoW routes, no value is associated with views from the local road network, and that the value of views from properties which abut the application site is on the mid to higher range of the scale.
- 3.45. The assessment of value attached to views is generally agreed and appropriate.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification is required on why the LVIA does not assess the value of the site at a local level utilising the Technical Guidance note from the Landscape Institute (TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations).

Is there evidence of an iterative assessment-design process?

- 3.46. Evidence is provided within Section 4 of the LVIA which demonstrates that an iterative approach has been taken through the design process. A series of recommendations are provided which have been informed by the baseline landscape and visual studies.
- 3.47. The LVIA states that the author has worked with the master-planners and project team in a collaborative manor to achieve an 'appropriate design outcome'.
- 3.48. This is supported with a sketch landscape and visual recommendations plan which details key principles which should be incorporated into the masterplan.
- 3.49. It is evident that the landscape context of the site, its surrounding character and visual context have been used to inform the development, design and layout of the site and the submitted scheme reflects these recommendations and is illustrated on the landscape masterplan prepared by CSA Environmental.

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?

- 3.50. Within the methodology found within Section 1 of the LVIA, the criteria for the threshold free approach are provided for the assessment of landscape and visual effects. The criteria used to inform decisions on the magnitude of change is clearly set out, and the resulting significance of effects clarified. The process applied within the assessment is mostly consistent and has been applied in a systematic and transparent way to inform the decision making process.
- 3.51. Generally, the process used throughout has been consistent in its process both within the landscape and visual elements of the LVIA, it has considered the scale, geographical extent, duration and reversibility and the resulting nature of change and landscape and visual effects of the proposals.
- 3.52. Overall, the decision making process is sound in its judgements which have been made in a systematic way, backed up by narrative descriptions.

How appropriate are the viewpoints that have been used?

- 3.53. Viewpoints included within the assessment have been selected based on a review of the potential visibility and GIS ZTV mapping exercise and fieldwork.
- 3.54. The ZTV mapping demonstrates where views of the site may be seen and identifies areas of visibility on a scale of high to low. ZTV mapping has been prepared based on LIDAR data which considers the influence of built form and vegetation as well as topography on the potential visibility of the development on the site. This has been

produced based on the site accommodating development at 9 metres tall. This is an accepted method and approach.

- 3.55. In total 13 representative viewpoints are included within the baseline analysis. This includes views locally around the immediate vicinity of the site namely from the local road network, specifically Ratby Lane and: Launde Road (viewpoints 7-10) to the north and west of the site and from the PRow route to the south (viewpoints 1-3) and views from properties abutting the site (viewpoints 4-6).
- 3.56. Views are also included from the elevated land to the north west of the site at Hill Hole Nature Reserve (viewpoints 11 and 12), and a view included from Bradgate Country Park (viewpoint 13).



- 3.57. The ZTV demonstrates potential visibility from the Leicestershire Round located to the south west of the site and from the local footpath network to the west of the site. Views have not been included from these footpath routes, and clarification is required on why these views are not included within the LVIA.
- 3.58. The wider views from Hill Hole Nature Reserve and Bradgate Country Park to the north east and north west of the site have been scoped out of the assessment and the LVIA provides justification for the removal of these wider views, stating that "Any change will be a small change in the view consistent with the content, without it affecting balance of elements or creating a prominent feature"

- 3.59. The selection of viewpoints is considered appropriate and proportionate for the scale and scope of the development and where views have been scoped out, baseline photography of the views is included allowing the reader to observe the decision making process made by the author.
- 3.60. Views are included from a selection of distances and orientations and cover a range of visual receptors (recreational users of footpaths, users of local road networks and occupants of private properties) although clarification is required on the omission of views from the Leicestershire Round and footpath routes to the south and west of the site.
- 3.61. The baseline photography includes both summer and winter views and there is some inconsistency with the format of the viewpoints which requires clarification.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification on why views from the Leicestershire Round to the south west of the site are not included within the assessment when the ZTV suggests views may be possible from this long distance route.

Clarification on why views from the local footpath routes to the south west are not included within the assessment when the ZTV suggests views may be possible.

Clarification on why the format of the summer and winter views varies.

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?

- 3.62. The LVIA identifies that a series of mitigation measures are incorporated into the design process. In addition, it identifies a series of enhancement measures and states that the proposed scheme has 'designed in' the mitigation strategy to minimise the overall effects of the development on landscape character and visual amenity.
- 3.63. It appears that the mitigation strategy has been informed by the context of the site and its surroundings, and the design recommendations set out within Section 4 of the LVIA.
- 3.64. The landscape masterplan found within the Appendices of the report demonstrates that the scheme has taken on board the recommendations and iterative design input from the LVIA and this is reflected in the proposed landscape framework (eg the provision of a landscape buffer to the south and landscape edge to the west etc).

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?

- 3.65. The LVIA has provided narrative and commentary for each judgement reached in the assessment of the value, susceptibility, and overall sensitivity of receptors.
- 3.66. Within Section 3: Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Resources and Receptors, the LVIA sets out within a tabulated format the assessment of landscape sensitivity and visual sensitivity to the development, with value and susceptibility included within this overall assessment.
- 3.67. Each receptor has been assessed and graded based on the spectrum approach outlined within the methodology on a scale from low to high (A being the lowest end of the spectrum and E being the Highest).
- 3.68. The assessment of susceptibility for both landscape and visual receptors makes reference to the level of the change but not whether this is at level A through to E. For consistency it would be useful to include the letter gradings across all judgements and not just the assessment of overall sensitivity.
- 3.69. Where judgements have been made with regards to value, susceptibility, and sensitivity a narrative is provided which is based on observable features/components/an understanding of the visual and landscape context. These judgements provide an objective assessment and appear to reflect the overall grading and spectrum criteria.
- 3.70. The assessment of the magnitude of change is provided in a tabulated format, with a description of change during construction and upon completion provided for each landscape and visual receptor.
- 3.71. The supporting narrative for the magnitude of change experienced by each receptor/resource provides an objective assessment of the likely change and reference is made to the size, scale, and duration of the change. The overall magnitude of effect on landscape resources and visual receptors is provided in bold which provides clarity for the reader.
- 3.72. The overall assessment of the significance of the landscape and visual effects found within Section 6, provides justification for the judgements reached and identifies effects which are deemed to be significant and those which are not. Reference is made to the geographical extent and scale of the change and the assessment, and an objective assessment is provided.

- 3.73. The LVIA identifies significant effects for the following landscape resources: Landscape at the end of Markfield, Hydrology, and Access. Significant effects on visual receptors are identified as occupant of properties abutting the application site.
- 3.74. The assessment ratings set out seem reasonable and the supporting narrative justifies the ratings in relation to the criteria outlined within the methodology. The assessment is supported by clear narratives, and these appear to be based on objective observations.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Consistency is sometimes lacking across assessment tables with judgements sometimes providing the corresponding letter spectrum (eg A being the lowest) and sometimes not.

For consistency across all assessment tables, and to aid the reader, it is recommended that both the text and corresponding letter grading is provided. In addition, providing the overall judgements in bold would also assist for the reader.

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.?

- 3.75. The LVIA considers the effects of the development during the construction phases and upon completion of the project. This is addressed both within the assessment of the magnitude of landscape and visual change in Section 5 and within the Assessment of Significance of Effects in Section 6. A brief overview is provided of the elements which may be introduced into the landscape during the construction phases, but this is limited in detail and although an outline application, it would be useful to have further information on what the construction and operational phases will include.
- 3.76. It is unclear from reading the LVIA what the completed development comprises – and clarification is sought for this. At paragraph 6.4 the LVIA makes reference to “The permanent (post implementation and establishment of the landscape measures – year 5 onwards)” and clarification is required as to whether the assessment of effects is made at 5 years onwards and if so justification for this.

AREAS FOR CLARIFICATION

Clarification is requested on what the completed development phase and construction phase includes (there is brief mention that the completed development is assessed at year 5 at paragraph 6.4 but this should be confirmed within the methodology).

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The LVIA has been reviewed in accordance with the best practice guidance set out in Reviewing Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs) and Landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVAs). Technical Guidance Note 1/20, published by the Landscape Institute.
- 4.2. The review has found that the LVIA provides a transparent and objective analysis of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development at Markfield and that it has been completed based on best practice guidance as set out within GLVIA 3.
- 4.3. There are some parts of the LVIA in which clarification or further information is required, although these elements are not considered to be elements which would result in the LVIA being non compliant in GLVIA 3 terms.
- 4.4. These are identified as follows:
 - Clarification on how the scheme responds to/or has addressed the comments received as part of the previous refused planning application.
 - Clarification on any further pre-application inputs or additional consultations which may have taken place or confirmation on why consultation has not been completed.
 - Clarification required on why the scope of the LVIA/methodology/viewpoint selection/study etc has not been agreed with the LPA.
 - Clarification on which specific landscape resources are relevant to the site and its locale within the baseline analysis.
 - Clarification on why the National and Regional published character areas have been combined within the assessment of effects and confirmation of their identities/names is required for completeness.
 - Supporting graphics/aerial mapping would assist in describing the baseline landscape character of the site and its surroundings.
 - Clarification on why there is a difference between summer and winter baseline photography.
 - Clarification is required on why the LVIA does not assess the value of the site at a local level utilising the Technical Guidance note from the Landscape Institute (TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations).

- Clarification on why views from the Leicestershire Round to the south west of the site are not included within the assessment when the ZTV suggests views may be possible from this long distance route.
 - Clarification on why views from the local footpath routes to the south west are not included within the assessment when the ZTV suggests views may be possible?
 - Consistency is sometimes lacking across assessment tables with judgements sometimes providing the corresponding letter spectrum (eg A being the lowest) and sometimes not.
 - For consistency across all assessment tables, and to aid the reader it is recommended that this is amended so that both the text and corresponding letter grading is provided. In addition, although a minor point providing the overall judgements in bold would also assist in clarifying the information to the reader.
 - Clarification is requested on what the completed development phase and construction phase includes (there is brief mention that the completed development is assessed at year 5 at paragraph 6.4 but this should be confirmed within the methodology)
 - Further information should be provided on the phasing of the development. Ie – What does the construction activity entail? What does the operational phase entail?
- 4.5. It is agreed that the judgements made within the LVIA have been completed in a transparent, objective, and professional manner and have been informed by a comprehensive baseline assessment of landscape and visual matters which are considered separately throughout the report.
- 4.6. This has informed the decision making process and overall, it is considered that, although there are some areas for clarification, it generally complies with the best practice guidance of the Landscape Institute contained within GLVIA3.

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