

Appendix 15.1 LVIA Methodology & Assessment Criteria

Appendix 15.1

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Methodology and Assessment Criteria

Introduction

The methodology for the landscape and visual impact assessment undertaken for the proposed development is detailed in Chapter x of the Environmental Statement (ES). The following information is provided and should be read in conjunction with the overview methodology outlined in Chapter x of the ES:

As advised in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition) (GLVIA3), the judgements made in respect of both landscape and visual effects are a combination of an assessment of the sensitivity of the receptor and the magnitude of the landscape or visual effect. The following details the definitions used in assessing sensitivity and magnitude for landscape and visual receptors.

Where it is determined that the assessment falls between or encompasses two of the defined criteria terms, then the judgement will be described as High/ Medium or Minor/ Moderate etc. This indicates that the receptor is assessed to lie between the respective definitions or to encompass aspects of both.

Landscape

Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape receptors are assessed in terms of their 'Landscape Sensitivity'. This combines judgements on the value to be attached to the landscape and the susceptibility to change of the landscape from the type of change or development proposed. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

There can be complex relationships between the value attached to landscape receptors and their susceptibility to change which can be especially important when considering change within or close to designated landscapes. For example an internationally, nationally or locally valued landscape does not automatically or by definition have a high susceptibility to all types of change. The type of change or development proposed may not compromise the specific basis for the value attached to the landscape.

Landscape Value

Value can apply to a landscape area as a whole, or to the individual elements, features and aesthetic or perceptual dimensions which contribute to the character of the landscape. The following criteria have been used to categorise landscape value. Where there is no clear existing evidence on landscape value, an assessment is made based on the criteria/ factors identified below (based on the guidance in GLVIA3 Box 5.1 Page 84).

- Landscape quality (condition)
- Scenic quality
- Rarity

- Representativeness
- Conservation interest
- Recreation value
- Perceptual aspects
- Associations

Landscape Value	Definition
High	Landscape receptors of high importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Limited potential for substitution.
Medium	Landscape receptors of medium importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Capable of substitution.
Low	Landscape receptors of low importance based upon factors of quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interest, recreational value, perceptual qualities and associations. Potential for landscape improvement and creation.

Landscape Susceptibility to Change

This means the ability of the landscape receptor (overall character type/ area or individual element/ feature) to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline position and/ or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies. The definition and criteria for the assessment of Landscape Susceptibility to Change is as follows:

Landscape Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	A highly distinctive and cohesive landscape receptor, with positive characteristics and features and no or very few detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features intact and in very good condition and/ or rare. Limited capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.
Medium	Distinctive and more commonplace landscape receptor, with some positive characteristics/ features and some detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape

	features in moderate condition. Capacity to accept well planned and designed change/ development of the type proposed.
Low	Landscape receptor of mixed character with a lack of coherence and including detracting or intrusive elements. Landscape features that may be in poor or improving condition and few that could not be replaced. Greater capacity to accept the type of change/ development proposed.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

The magnitude of landscape effects is the degree of change to the landscape receptor in terms of its size or scale of change, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the separate considerations of Scale or Size of the Degree of Change and Reversibility. The geographical extent and duration of change are described where relevant in the assessment.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change

Scale or Size of the Degree of Landscape Change	Definition
High	Total loss of or major alteration to key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements totally uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be fundamentally changed.
Medium	Partial loss of or alteration to one or more key characteristics / features and the introduction of new elements that would be evident but not necessarily uncharacteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be obviously changed.
Low	Limited loss of, or alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements evident and/ or characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be perceptibly changed.
Negligible	Very minor alteration to one or more key characteristics/ features and the introduction of new elements characteristic to the receiving landscape. Overall landscape receptor will be minimally changed.
None	No loss or alteration to the key characteristics/ features, representing 'no change'.

Reversibility

Reversibility	Definition
Irreversible	The development would be permanent and the assessment site could not be returned to its current/ former use.
Reversible	The development could be deconstructed/ demolished and the assessment site could be returned to broadly its current/ historic use (although that may be subject to qualification depending on the nature of the development).

Visual

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

Visual sensitivity assesses each visual receptor in terms of their susceptibility to change in views and visual amenity and also the value attached to particular views. The definition and criteria adopted for these contributory factors is detailed below.

Visual Susceptibility to Change

The susceptibility of different visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of; firstly, the occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and secondly, the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the views and visual amenity they experience.

Visual Susceptibility to Change	Definition
High	Residents at home with primary views from ground floor/garden and upper floors. Public rights of way and footpaths where attention is focussed on the landscape and on particular views. Visitors to heritage assets or other attractions whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and/ or on particular views. Communities where views make an important contribution to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents. Travellers on recognised scenic routes.
Medium	Residents at home with secondary views (primarily from first floor level). Public rights of way and footpaths where attention is not focussed on the landscape and/ or particular views. Travellers on road, rail or other transport with a focus on the landscape.

Low	<p>Users of outdoor recreational facilities where the view is less important to the activities (e.g. sports pitches).</p> <p>Travellers on road, rail or other transport where views are primarily focussed on the transport route.</p> <p>People at their place of work where views of the landscape are not important to the quality of the working life.</p>

Value of Views

The value attached to a view takes account of any recognition attached to a particular view and/ or any indicators of the value attached to views, for example through guidebooks or defined viewpoints or references in literature or art.

Value of Views	Definition
High	A unique or identified view (eg. shown as such on Ordnance Survey map, guidebook or tourist map) or one noted in literature or art.
Medium	A typical and/ or representative view from a particular receptor.
Low	An undistinguished or unremarkable view from a particular receptor.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

Magnitude of Visual Effects evaluates each of the visual effects in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and reversibility. The table below sets out the categories and criteria adopted in respect of the Scale or Size (including the degree of contrast) of Visual Change. The distance and nature of the view and whether the view will be permanent or transient are also detailed in the Visual Effects Table.

Scale or Size of the Degree of Visual Change	Definition
High	The proposal will result in a large and immediately apparent change in the view, being a dominant and new and/ or incongruous feature in the landscape.
Medium	The proposal will result in an obvious and recognisable change in the view and will be readily noticed by the viewer.
Low	The proposal will constitute a minor component of the wider view or a more recognisable component that reflects those apparent in the existing view.

	Awareness of the proposals will not have a marked effect on the overall nature of the view.
Negligible/ None	Only a very small part of the proposal will be discernible and it will have very little or no effect on the nature of the view.

Level of Effect

The final conclusions on effects, whether adverse or beneficial, are drawn from the separate judgements on the sensitivity of the receptors and the magnitude of the effects. This overall judgement involves a reasoned professional overview of the individual judgements against the criteria, to then make the overall judgement.

Whilst GLVIA3 notes at paragraph 5.56 that there are no hard and fast rules about the level of effects, the criteria adopted for this landscape and visual impact assessment are defined as follows:

- Major: An effect that will fundamentally change and be in direct contrast to the existing landscape or views;
- Moderate: An effect that will markedly change the existing landscape or views but may retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
- Minor: An effect that will entail limited or localised change to the existing landscape/ views or will entail more noticeable localised change but including both adverse and beneficial effects and is likely to retain or incorporate some characteristics/ features currently present;
- Negligible: An effect that will be discernible yet of very limited change to the existing landscape or views.

Finally a judgement is reached based on the assessment, whether an effect is significant or not. There is not a direct correlation however between the level of effect described in the assessment, and whether the effect is significant or not. As an example the change to a private view as a result of the development may be “major”, but as a change in view to a private residence this effect may not be deemed to be “significant” to the environmental impact assessment.