

LVIA METHODOLOGY

1. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR LANDSCAPE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

1.1. Reporting on the landscape baseline

The landscape baseline report should:

- Map, describe and illustrate the character of the landscape by appropriate means;
- Identify landscape based designations and others (conservation, heritage etc.) that may be impacted by the development;
- Identify and describe the individual elements and aesthetic and perceptual aspects of the landscape that contribute to the character;
- Indicate the condition of the landscape;
- Establish the relative value of the landscape as attached to it by society.

1.2. Landscape receptors

The landscape receptors need to be identified; these are components of the landscape such as individual elements or features or landscape character areas that are likely to be affected by the scheme. These character areas are as determined by field work (Local Landscape Character Areas; LLCA) or identified in published Landscape Character Assessments at District level or higher as relevant).

Criteria has been set for the selection of LLCAs within likely envelope of influence. The process of identification starts with a study of baseline mapping, describing all within the possible area. For an area to be taken forwards as a receptor it must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Shared boundary with the site;
- Physical connection/s with the site (PROWs, roads, vegetation belts);
- Views of or across the site (particularly where a view of the site is a key characteristic of the LLCA);
- Perceptual connections with the site (e.g sounds, smells).

Note: If intervisibility is the only criteria this is considered within the visual assessment through assessment of the effect on representative views.

1.3. Effect on landscape receptor

The likely landscape effect is described and for each effect the significance of the landscape effect can be assessed by combining the level of sensitivity of the landscape receptor with the magnitude of the landscape effect.

1.4. Sensitivity of landscape receptor

The sensitivity of the landscape or feature of the landscape as a receptor needs to be established. This is determined by combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed.

1.4.1. Determining value of landscape receptor

Value can be understood through relevant landscape designations, the use of available landscape character assessments (as a starting point) and information on status of features (such as conservation areas and tree preservation orders). The basis for judgements should be linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

A range of other factors can also help in the identification of value:

- Landscape quality (condition) of physical state: includes extent to which typical character is represented, intactness and condition of individual elements

- Scenic quality: level of appeal primarily to the senses (not wholly visual)
- Rarity: presence of individual elements or features, or rare Landscape Character Type
- Representativeness: where a particular character, or element / feature is considered particularly important example
- Conservation interests: where features of interest add value to landscapes such as wildlife, archaeological, or historical / cultural interest. These can have value in their own right.
- Society: the relative value attached to the landscape by society, either formally or informally.
- Perception: recognition of perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty or tranquillity
- Associations: connections to art, literature or events that contribute to perception of value and material available on local or community interests.

Judgements on value should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH ↑ ↓ LOW	High value, with acknowledged or perceived positive character and quality. Moderate value, with acknowledged or perceived positive character and quality that may have been reduced through alteration or degradation of character or features. Low value, without acknowledged or perceived positive character and quality.
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1.4.2. Determining the landscape receptor's susceptibility to type of change

Susceptibility to change is the ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the type of change or type of proposed development without undue consequence for the maintaining of the baseline situation, or the achievement of landscape planning policy or strategies. The basis for judgements should be linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

Judgements on susceptibility to change should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH susceptibility to change ↑ ↓ LOW susceptibility to change	Not able to accommodate proposed type of change or type of development without detrimental consequences to the baseline situation or landscape planning policies and strategies. Moderately susceptible to change; may be able to accommodate proposed type of change or type of development without detrimental consequences to the baseline situation or landscape planning policies and strategies. Low susceptibility to change; able to accommodate proposed type of change or type of development without undue consequences to the baseline situation or landscape planning policies and strategies.
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1.4.3. Level of sensitivity of landscape receptor

By combining judgements on value with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed, the level of sensitivity of a landscape receptor should be defined as **high, medium or low**.

Where judgements on value and susceptibility to change differ (e.g. value may be high, with a medium susceptibility to change) professional judgement will be used to determine the overall sensitivity.

1.5. Magnitude of landscape effect

The magnitude of the landscape effect of the proposals needs to be established and is dependent on:

- **Size or scale:** this should take into consideration the extent of the loss of the existing landscape, the proportion of the total extent this represents and the contribution of the element to the character of the landscape; the degree to which the aesthetic or perceptual aspects of the landscape are altered; and whether the effect changes the key distinctive characteristics of the landscape.
- **Extent:** consideration of the geographical area over which landscape effects are felt
- **Duration:** long, medium or short term.
- **Reversibility:** this is a judgement on the reversibility of a proposal in, say, a generation.

The magnitude of the landscape effect can be **high, medium, low or nil** and can be either **adverse or beneficial**. This is defined more fully below:

Adverse	High	· Major loss of or alteration to an existing landscape element that may be key to landscape character. · Major loss of or alteration to perceived landscape character as a whole. · Major loss or alteration to key characteristics of the landscape that are critical to its distinctive character. · Extensive geographical area affected. · Long-term / irreversible effect.
	Medium	· Moderate loss of or alteration to an existing landscape element that may be key to landscape character. · Moderate loss of or alteration to perceived landscape character as a whole. · Moderate loss or alteration to key characteristics of the landscape that are critical to its distinctive character. · Medium sized geographical area affected. · Medium-term and effect that may be partially reversible.
	Low	· Minor loss of or alteration to an existing landscape element that may be key to landscape character. · Minor loss of or alteration to perceived landscape character as a whole. · Minor loss or alteration to key characteristics of the landscape that are critical to its distinctive character. · Small sized geographical area affected. · Short-term and effect that may be reversible.
Neutral	Nil	· No perceptible loss or alteration to existing landscape elements, landscape character as a whole or key characteristics of the landscape. · Adverse effects balanced by beneficial effects.
Beneficial	Low	· Minor beneficial alteration to existing landscape elements, landscape character as a whole or key characteristics of the landscape.
	Medium	· Moderate beneficial alteration to existing landscape elements, landscape character as a whole or key characteristics of the landscape.
	High	· Major beneficial alteration to existing landscape elements, landscape character as a whole or key characteristics of the landscape.

1.6. Landscape effects and significance

The landscape effect is a combination of the level of sensitivity of the landscape receptor and the magnitude of the landscape effect, which can be adverse, beneficial or neutral.

		Sensitivity of Landscape		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of landscape effect	High adverse	Major adverse	Major / Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
	Medium adverse	Major / Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate / Minor adverse
	Low adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate / Minor adverse	Minor adverse
	Nil	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Low beneficial	Minor beneficial	Minor beneficial	Minor beneficial
	Medium beneficial	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial
	High beneficial	Major beneficial	Major beneficial	Major beneficial

1.7. Definition of significance

Significance may vary with location and context and with the type of proposal, but typically effects are assessed to be significant where they typically are major or major/moderate adverse (indicated by shading illustrated in the table above).

A scale of significance can be reasonably described as follows:

- *Major loss or irreversible adverse landscape effects over an extensive area, and / or on elements and or aesthetic / perceptual aspects key to the character of highly valued landscape receptors* are defined to be effects of key importance for consideration in the decision making process and / or of national importance and therefore significant.
- *Major/Moderate loss or irreversible adverse landscape effects over a large area, and / or on elements and or aesthetic / perceptual aspects typical of the character of highly valued landscape receptors* are defined to be effects of key consideration in the decision making process and / or of regional or district importance therefore significant.
- *Moderate loss or adverse landscape effects over an area, on elements and or aesthetic / perceptual aspects typical of the character of valued landscape receptors* can be defined to be effects likely to be a lesser consideration in the decision making process and / or of local importance but not generally significant. Where seen in combination in cumulative assessments, moderate effects could become significant.
- *Moderate/minor loss or adverse landscape effects over an area, on elements and or aesthetic / perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key to the character of valued landscape receptors* can be defined to be effects unlikely to be a consideration in the decision making process and / or of local importance and therefore not significant.
- *Minor loss or reversible adverse landscape effects over limited area, on elements and or aesthetic / perceptual aspects that contribute to but are not key to the character of landscape receptors* are defined to be effects unlikely to be a consideration in the decision making process and / or of very local importance and therefore not significant.

1.8. Mitigation and residual effects

Where adverse landscape effects are judged to be significant, mitigation proposals are described where possible. Any significant residual landscape effects remaining after mitigation are then summarised.

2. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR VISUAL EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

2.1. Reporting on the visual baseline

The visual baseline report should:

- Identify the area in which the development may be visible;
- Identify the different groups of people who may experience views of the development;
- Identify representative viewpoints where views will be affected and the nature of those views, including where these are within the site area;
- Identify any recognized viewpoints (known viewpoints in the landscape);
- Identify any views characteristic of the landscape character area;
- Identify any illustrative viewpoints (that might identify a particular effect or issue).

2.2. Photographs

Photographs were taken using a Nikon D5300 digital SLR camera with an 18-55mm variable zoom lens, set at a focal length of 35mm, which is accepted as being equivalent to a fixed 50mm lens on a non-digital SLR, which is in turn generally accepted to most closely represent views seen with the naked eye. It has been noted against photographs where a wide-angle focal length setting was used in order to show close up foreground views, or where a zoom setting was used to show more detail in a distant view.

2.3. Visual receptors

The visual receptors need to be identified; these are the people within the area who will be affected by the changes in views and visual amenity.

2.4. Effect on visual receptor

The likely visual effect is described and for each effect the significance of the visual effect can be assessed by combining the level of sensitivity of the visual receptor with the magnitude of the visual effect.

2.5. Sensitivity of the visual receptor

The sensitivity of the visual receptor needs to be established. This is determined by combining judgements on value of a particular view with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed.

2.5.1. Determining value of visual receptor

This is a judgement of value attached to the particular view, through planning designations, recognition of historic, tourism or cultural value, or through community or perceived value. The basis for judgements should be linked back to evidence from the baseline study.

Judgements on value should be determined on a scale of high, medium or low:

HIGH	High value within a high quality landscape, or a recognized viewpoint (at any level from local to national).
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↓	Moderate value within a medium quality landscape.
LOW	Low value within a low quality landscape.

2.5.2. Determining the visual receptor's susceptibility to type of change

Judgements are dependent on the occupation or activity of people experiencing the views and the extent their attention or interest is likely to be focused on the on views and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.

Judgements on susceptibility to change should be determined on a scale of **high, medium or low**:

HIGH  LOW	Visual receptors particularly susceptible to change in general due to a high level of interest in the surrounding landscape. Receptors most susceptible to change are likely to include residents at home, people engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention or interest is likely to be focused on the landscape, visitors to heritage assets where the landscape contributes to the experience and communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents in the area. Visual receptors moderately susceptible to change in general due to a moderate level of interest in the surrounding landscape. Travellers on road, rail and transport routes are likely to fall into a category of moderate susceptibility to change, however where travel involved scenic routes this is likely to increase as awareness of views is heightened. Visual receptors with a low susceptibility to change in general due to a low level of interest in the surrounding landscape. Receptors least susceptible include people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation that does not involve or depend appreciation of views and people at their place of work where attention is not focused on their surroundings
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2.5.3. Level of sensitivity of the visual receptor

By combining judgements on value of view with those on susceptibility to type of change or type of development proposed, the level of sensitivity of a visual receptor should be defined as **high, medium or low**.

Where judgements on value and susceptibility to change differ (e.g. value may be high, with a medium susceptibility to change) professional judgement will be used to determine the overall sensitivity.

2.6. Magnitude of visual effect

The magnitude of the visual effect of the proposals needs to be established. This is dependent on:

- **Size or scale**: this should take into consideration the scale of change in the view with respect to loss or addition of features in the view and changes to its composition (including the proportion of the view occupied by the proposed development and the degree of contrast or integration of the proposed development with the existing landscape elements and characteristics) and the nature of the view in terms of duration and degree of visibility.
- **Extent**: this will vary with different viewpoints and is likely to reflect the angle of view in relation to the main activity of the receptor and the distance of the viewpoint from the proposed development.
- **Duration**: long, medium or short term.
- **Reversibility**: this is a judgement on the reversibility of a proposal in, say, a generation.

The magnitude of the visual effect can be **high, medium, low or nil** and can be either **adverse or beneficial**. This is defined more fully below:

Adverse	High	- Major change in view composition resulting from a loss of or alteration to features. - Direct angle of viewing in relation to main activity of the receptor. - Close-range view. - Prolonged exposure to view. - Long-term and irreversible effect.
	Medium	- Moderate change in view composition resulting from a loss of or alteration to features. - Indirect angle of viewing in relation to main activity of the receptor. - Mid-range view. - Moderate exposure to view. - Medium-term and irreversible effect.
	Low	- Minor change in view composition resulting from a loss of or alteration to features. - Peripheral view in relation to main activity of the receptor. - Distant view. - Brief exposure to view. - Short-term and irreversible effect.
Neutral	Nil	No perceptible change to the composition of the view.
Beneficial	Low	Minor beneficial change to the composition of the view.
	Medium	Moderate beneficial change to the composition of the view.
	High	Major beneficial change to the composition of the view.

2.7. Significance of visual effect

The significance of the visual effect is a combination of the level of sensitivity of the visual receptor and the magnitude of the visual effect, which can be adverse, beneficial or neutral.

		Sensitivity of Receptor		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of visual effect	High adverse	Major adverse	Major / Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse
	Medium adverse	Major / Moderate adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate / Minor adverse
	Low adverse	Moderate adverse	Moderate / Minor adverse	Minor adverse
	Nil	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
	Low beneficial	Minor beneficial	Minor beneficial	Minor beneficial
	Medium beneficial	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial	Moderate beneficial
	High beneficial	Major beneficial	Major beneficial	Major beneficial

2.8. Definition of significance

Significance may vary with location and context and with the type of proposal, but typically effects are assessed to be significant where they typically are major or major/moderate adverse (indicated by shading illustrated in the table above).

A scale of significance can be reasonably described as follows:

- *Major changes on a extensive scale introducing new, non-characteristic, intrusive or discordant effects into the view of highest sensitivity receptors* are defined to be effects of key importance for consideration in the decision making process and / or of national importance and therefore significant.
- *Major/Moderate changes on a large scale introducing new, non-characteristic, intrusive or discordant effects into the view of higher sensitivity receptors* are defined to be effects of key consideration in the decision making process and / or of regional or district importance and therefore significant.
- *Moderate changes introducing effects into the view of moderately sensitivity receptors* can be defined to be effects likely to be a lesser consideration in the decision making process and / or of local importance but not generally significant. Where seen in combination in cumulative assessments, moderate effects could become significant.
- *Moderate/minor changes introducing small effects into the view of moderately sensitivity receptors* can be defined to be effects unlikely to be a consideration in the decision making process and / or of local importance and therefore not significant.
- *Minor changes introducing small effects into the view of low sensitivity receptors* can be defined to be effects unlikely to be a consideration in the decision making process and / or of very local importance and therefore not significant.

2.9. Mitigation and residual effects

Where adverse visual effects are judged to be significant, mitigation proposals are described where possible. Any significant residual visual effects remaining after mitigation are then summarised.

3. APPROPRIATENESS OF ZONE OF THEORETICAL VISIBILITY (ZTV) ANALYSES

It should be noted that the establishment of a ZTV is a potentially misleading exercise, showing an indiscriminate level of visibility using a 'bare earth' scenario, without consideration for vegetation and built form that may often prevent views, and takes no account of the extent of accessible viewpoints.

It is a desktop exercise, a tool to inform the scope of fieldwork that has then to be tested in the field to check the reality of the situation.

A LVIA should be proportional to the nature of the proposals to which it relates and there may be no need to carry out a ZTV exercise. This should be judged on a project by project basis, in consultation with the Local Planning Authority if necessary, when agreeing the scope of the study.