

### Proposed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Methodology

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is to quantify in a reasoned and logical manner the anticipated impacts and resulting effects of the development on the landscape, any changes to views around it and propose methods of mitigation by which any adverse effects might be reduced.

#### 2.0 ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

- 2.1 The approach employed in carrying out the landscape and visual assessment of the development proposals is drawn from the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management, Assessments “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Assessment” Third Edition (2013) (GLVIA3) and An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment – Christine Tudor (2014). The aim of these guidelines is to set high standards for the scope and content of landscape and visual assessments and to establish certain principles that will help to achieve consistency, credibility and effectiveness in landscape and visual impact assessment. Guidance is contained in these publications on some approaches and techniques which have been found to be effective and useful in practice by landscape professionals. However, the guidelines are not intended as a prescriptive set of rules or as an exhaustive manual of techniques.
- 2.2 The selection of viewpoints and the taking of photographs for inclusion in the assessment and for photomontage images will be undertaken in consideration of the Landscape Institute Advice Note 01/11 – Photography and Photomontage in Landscape and Visual Assessment March 2011.
- 2.3 GLVIA3 differentiates between the terms ‘impact and ‘effect’ as follows (Para 1.15)

*“impact, (is) defined as the action being taken, and the ‘effect’, defined as the change resulting from that action.”*

#### 3.0 ASSESSMENT OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

- 3.1 The landscape and visual assessments are separate, though linked, procedures. Landscape assessment is concerned with identifying and assessing the importance to be placed on the landscape characteristics, landscape quality and condition of the landscape. Visual assessment considers the likely effects of a development on views available to people, both the public and local residents (Visual Receptors) and their visual amenity.
- 3.2 Landscape effects derive from changes in the physical landscape, which may give rise to changes in its character and how this is experienced. This may, in turn, affect the perceived value ascribed to the landscape.
- 3.3 Visual effects relate to the changes that arise in the composition of available views as a result of changes to the landscape, to people’s responses to the changes, and to the overall effects on people’s visual amenity.
- 3.4 Effects may be positive (beneficial), neutral (no change), or negative (adverse), direct or indirect (secondary), cumulative, permanent or temporary, or extending over different time frames (short, medium or long term). They can also arise at different scales, (local, regional or national) and have different levels of significance (Substantial through to No Change). These aspects are examined in more detail in later sections of the methodology.

- 3.5 The assessment of effects aims to:
- Identify logically and clearly the likely landscape and visual effects of the development;
  - To identify the value related to the receptor, its susceptibility to change and the resulting nature/sensitivity of the receptor
  - To identify the scale/size, duration and ‘reversibility’ of the effect and the resulting ‘magnitude of effect’
  - Provide an assessment of the nature and significance of these effects in a logical and well-reasoned fashion.
  - Indicate the measures proposed to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for these effects (mitigation measures);

While tables and matrices may be used to support and summarise the assessment, the emphasis in this assessment will be on descriptive text describing the predicted landscape and visual effects with logical, well-reasoned judgements about their significance. Consideration is given to the effects during the short and long term. Duration of effects may be defined as follows:

- Long term – Impacts of the development shall be experienced at 15 years and beyond.
  - Medium term - Impacts of the development shall be experienced for between 3 and 15 years but afterwards would be reversed.
  - Short term - Impacts of the development shall be experienced for between 1 and 2 years after completion.
- 3.6 Year 1 is taken to be when the entire development is completed. Each of the photographic viewpoints chosen for photomontages will have two images produced. The first at Year 1, when the entire development is completed, the second at Year 15.
- 3.7 In order that the assessment can be conducted, professional judgements need to be made on the relative value and quality of either landscape elements or available views. These judgements are made on the basis of factual evidence, reasoned arguments and informed opinion. The thresholds for magnitude of effect, nature of receptor (sensitivity) and significance of effects used in the landscape and visual assessment will be set out in clearly reasoned text.
- 3.8 Desk studies are undertaken to identify relevant landscape planning policies which may affect the proposed development site; these may include formal designation and other planning policies which are intended to protect landscape and visual amenity.

### 4.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL BASELINE STUDIES

- 4.1 The initial step in any landscape or visual impact assessment is to review the existing landscape and the visual resource in the vicinity of the proposed development – that is the baseline landscape and visual conditions. This data forms the basis from which the estimation of any magnitude of effects and consequent significance of landscape and visual effects of the proposed development may be identified and assessed. The purpose of the baseline studies is to record and analyse the existing landscape features, characteristics, the way the landscape is experienced, and the value or importance of the landscape and visual resources in the vicinity of the proposed development.
- 4.2 Prior to any field survey work a desktop study is undertaken, this draws on the following, though not exhaustive, list:
- Current OS Explorer Maps
  - Topographical, Arboricultural and Ecological Surveys
  - Aerial Photographs
  - Planning Policy Guidance and Statements
  - Existing Landscape Character Assessments and Landscape Designations
  - Computer generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) studies outlining the areas from which the site and proposed development would theoretically be visible. This would be based on a 'bare earth' model and would help to inform the field studies.
- 4.3 This work is supported by a field study and comprehensive photographic survey which would identify:
- The site's Visual Envelope and its visibility within the wider landscape accounting for screening elements such as buildings, woodlands, etc
  - Key views and visual receptors
  - Local Landscape Character Areas

### 5.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 5.1 A description of the proposed development is provided for elements of the scheme which may have the potential to have an effect on the landscape character or visual receptors. Descriptions are taken from material submitted by the applicant to the Local Planning Authority including:
- Planning Statement;
  - Site Layout Plans, including Landscape Proposals Plans;
  - Specialist Assessments, such as: Arboricultural Reports, Ecological Report, Noise Reports, Heritage Reports to understand specific mitigation requirements;
  - The Design and Access Statement.
- 5.2 Any design measures intended to have either eliminated, reduced or mitigated against potential landscape and visual effects are also described.

### 6.0 LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

- 6.1 In order to predict the potential impacts of a development on the landscape an understanding of the existing landscape character, quality and value needs to be assessed. Landscape character is defined by Article 1 of the European Landscape Convention as:

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

- 6.2 In order to provide a well-structured method for assessment of landscape effects, the assessment will be undertaken in consideration of landscape character areas as outlined in planning policy documentation and local landscape character areas identified for this assessment. Consideration of impacts can therefore be made within the following categories: Countywide, the wider environment and the site itself. The proportion of the landscape receptor that may be affected will be described within the text. Within this structure, the impacts on both landscape character areas and individual features can be assessed and effects predicted in a transparent way.
- 6.3 The landscape effects will be described clearly and objectively in relation to both the site and its wider landscape setting. Particular regard will be made to the surrounding landscape and the degree to which this landscape area and the individual landscape character areas can accommodate change. An evaluation of the key characteristics that make up the landscape character area will be undertaken and the evaluation will consider the landscape character areas' quality, value and its contribution to the adjoining area.
- 6.4 The nature (sensitivity) of the landscape receptors are derived from a combination of their susceptibility to the specific change brought forward by the proposed development, and their 'quality' and 'value'; a degree of professional judgement must be applied.
- 6.5 The landscape effect is a product of the nature (sensitivity) of the landscape resource (receptor) and the magnitude of the effect. The landscape effects will be quantified using a scale of five categories, using a gradation from 'Substantial' to 'No Change'.
- 6.6 Wider effects on landscape character and quality are less easy to predict objectively and interpretation and professional judgement need to be applied. A clear picture of likely effects will be presented by referring back to the baseline landscape character assessment, and describing how the proposed development may alter existing patterns of landscape elements and features.
- 6.7 The baseline studies will provide a concise description of the existing character of the site and its surrounding landscape, and the classification of the landscape into distinct character areas. The landscape character assessment is concerned with identifying and assessing the importance to be placed on the landscape characteristics, landscape quality and the condition of the landscape.
- 6.8 GLVIA3 para 5.45 states:  
*“The value of landscape receptors will to some degree reflect landscape designations and the level of importance which they signify, although there should not be over-reliance on designations as the sole indicator of value”*

### Landscape Value

6.9 The table below sets out the information that may be considered when assessing the value attached to a landscape receptor.

Table 1 : Landscape Value Criteria		
Value		Explanation
Very High	Elements	Landscape with highly valued physical attributes/elements (eg mature trees and woodlands), possibly rare, in good condition, which makes a strong positive contribution to the landscape character and sense of place and which would not be replaceable.
	Character	Highly valued landscape in good condition which makes a strong positive contribution to the landscape character over a wide area and which would not be replaceable.  Highly valued landscape which makes an very important contribution to/plays a strong role in the approach to and/or setting of a designated and/or recognised historic settlement or heritage asset.
	Designation	Landscapes with characteristics and attributes that have been identified as of national significance. Landscapes which may be recognised through formal designation e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) or containing attributes of these recognised landscapes.  Areas of recognised high cultural and/or historic value.
High	Elements	Landscape with highly valued physical attributes/elements (eg. mature woodlands and/or trees) in fair condition or moderately valued elements (eg trees that contribute less positively to the local landscape) in good condition that make a positive contribution to local character and sense of place and that would take some considerable time to replace.
	Character	Highly valued landscape in fair condition or moderately valued landscape in good condition which makes strong positive contribution to landscape character and could be replaced and/or mitigated within medium to long term. Landscape which makes some positive contribution to landscape character and would take considerable time to replace and/or would be likely to be adversely effected, by the type of change being proposed.  Highly valued landscape which makes an important contribution to/plays a strong role in the approach to and/or setting of a recognised historic settlement or heritage asset.
	Designation	Landscapes with characteristics of national, or regional significance, not in the highest condition.  Areas of recognised cultural and/or historic value.

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Medium	Elements	Commonplace, moderately valued landscape elements and features in fair condition which make some positive contribution to the landscape character and sense of place. Elements are replaceable but maturity would take some time e.g. trees that contribute less positively to the local landscape or hedgerows that contribute to the area but could be replaced over time.
	Character	Moderately valued landscape in fair condition which makes some positive contribution to the local landscape character. Elements are replaceable but their replacement would take some time. Valued landscape which makes a moderately important contribution to/plays a moderate role in the approach to and/or setting of a settlement or heritage asset.
	Designation	Landscapes with characteristics and attributes which have been identified to be of regional or local significance and are in good condition. These landscapes may be recognised through formal local authority designation or contain attributes of similar locally designated landscapes. Areas with some features of cultural and/or historic value.
Low	Elements	Commonplace landscape elements of limited/low value which are in poor condition but still make a moderate contribution to the site but not the wider landscape. Elements that would be easily replaceable eg. a gapped hedgerow or a hedge that would easily be replaceable.
	Character	Landscape elements of moderate local value which make a limited/focused contribution to a relatively small landscape/area or landscape elements of limited/low value in a poor condition but which nevertheless could be treated such that they would make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape eg. broken or gapped hedgerows in larger networks of fields and hedgerows but would be filled and integrity retrieved. Landscape which makes a minor contribution to/plays some role in the approach to and/or setting of a settlement or heritage asset.
	Designation	Landscape/features valued at a community level, perhaps through their contribution to setting or their recreational value, but not necessarily recognised through any formal designation. Areas with few features of cultural and/or historic value

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Very Low	Elements	<p>Landscape elements of low value and in a poor condition that make little contribution to the site and the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Features and elements that are incongruous, derelict or in decline, resulting in indistinct character with little or no sense of place.</p>
	Character	<p>Landscape elements of limited/low value which may be in poor condition and do not contribute notably to the surrounding landscape. Elements would be easily replaceable.</p> <p>Landscape does not make a contribution to/play a part in the approach to and/or setting of a settlement or heritage asset.</p>
	Designation	<p>Landscapes not covered by a local or national designation for landscape with very few locally valued features present</p> <p>Areas with few, if any, features of cultural and/or historic value.</p>

### Susceptibility of Landscape Receptor to Specific Change

6.10 When ascribing a level of sensitivity to a landscape receptor, its susceptibility to accommodate the proposed type of development should be taken into account. Any 'inherent' or 'intrinsic' sensitivities ascribed to a particular landscape through designation or characterisation will not have accounted for a specific type of development. The professional judgement about the susceptibility of the receptor to the specific change will be recorded in the text and combined with judgements about its value to result in its level of sensitivity.

Table 2 : Landscape Susceptibility Criteria	
Susceptibility	Explanation
Very High	<p>The receptor is unable to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer very limited opportunities for accommodating the change without those key characteristics being detrimentally altered.</p> <p>Key landscape elements and/or characteristics that would be adversely affected by the type of development that is proposed and would not be able to be replaced or would take a considerable time to replace (eg. Mature trees/woodland).</p>
High	<p>The receptor would have difficulty in accommodating the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer limited opportunities for accommodating the change without those key characteristics being detrimentally altered.</p> <p>Key landscape elements and/or characteristics that would be adversely affected by the type of development that is proposed and would take a considerable time to replace (eg. Mature/semi mature trees/woodland).</p>
Medium	<p>The receptor is partly able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape offer some opportunities for accommodating the change without those key characteristics being detrimentally altered.</p> <p>Key landscape elements and/or characteristics that would be adversely affected by the type of development that is proposed but could be replaced over time. (eg. young trees/woodland).</p>
Low	<p>The receptor is more able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape are resilient to being changed whilst other elements in the landscape may benefit from change where these are at contrast to the existing general landscape character.</p> <p>Key landscape elements and/or characteristics that would be adversely affected by the type of development that is proposed but would be replaceable in the short to medium term. (eg. Recently planted trees/hedgerows).</p>
Very Low	<p>The receptor is able to accommodate the type of development proposed without undue negative consequences to the baseline situation. Attributes that make up the character of the landscape are resilient to being changed whilst other elements in the landscape may benefit from change where these are at contrast to the existing general landscape character.</p> <p>Key landscape elements and/or characteristics that would be adversely affected by the type of development that is proposed and would be easily replaceable (eg. Features in very poor condition).</p>



### Sensitivity of Landscape Receptor

6.11 Landscape sensitivity is assessed through ‘*combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape*’ (GLVIA 3 para 5.39). The table below sets out typical examples. The application of professional judgement regarding the sensitivity of the landscape receptors will be clearly outlined within the text.

<b>Sensitivity</b>	<b>Typical Examples</b>
Very High	<p>Highly valued landscapes, which by their nature would be unable to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes of national significance, likely to be recognised through formal designation e.g. World Heritage Sites, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) or containing attributes of these recognised landscapes</li> <li>Landscapes with highly valued demonstrable physical attributes/elements and/or characteristics possibly rare, in good condition which make a strong positive contribution to the landscape character and sense of place and could not be replaced or would take some considerable time to replace eg. mature woodlands or trees.</li> <li>Areas of special recognised value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</li> <li>Highly valued landscapes which makes a very important contribution to/plays a strong role in the approach to and/or setting of a designated and/or recognised historic settlement or heritage asset.</li> </ul>
High	<p>Highly valued landscapes, which by their nature would be less able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes of national or regional significance, not in the highest condition, which may be recognised through formal designation e.g. National Parks, AONBs Local Landscape Designation or containing attributes of these recognised landscapes</li> <li>Highly valued landscape with some demonstrable physical attributes/elements and/or characteristics (mature woodlands and/or trees) in fair condition or moderately valued elements (eg trees that contribute less positively to the local landscape) in good condition that make a positive contribution to local character and sense of place and that would take some considerable time to replace.</li> <li>Areas of special recognised value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</li> <li>Highly valued landscapes which makes an important contribution to/plays a strong role in the approach to and/or setting of a recognised historic settlement or heritage asset.</li> </ul>
Medium	<p>Landscapes, which by their nature would be partly able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landscapes which are unlikely to be nationally designated, but may be locally designated.</li> <li>Moderately valued landscape with relatively few demonstrable physical attributes/elements and/or characteristics which lift the landscape above the ordinary. The elements/ characteristics are in in fair condition, which are replaceable but this may take some time.</li> <li>Areas containing some features of value thorough use, perception or historic and cultural associations</li> <li>Valued landscapes which makes a moderately important contribution to/plays a moderate role in the approach to and/or setting of a settlement or heritage asset.</li> </ul>

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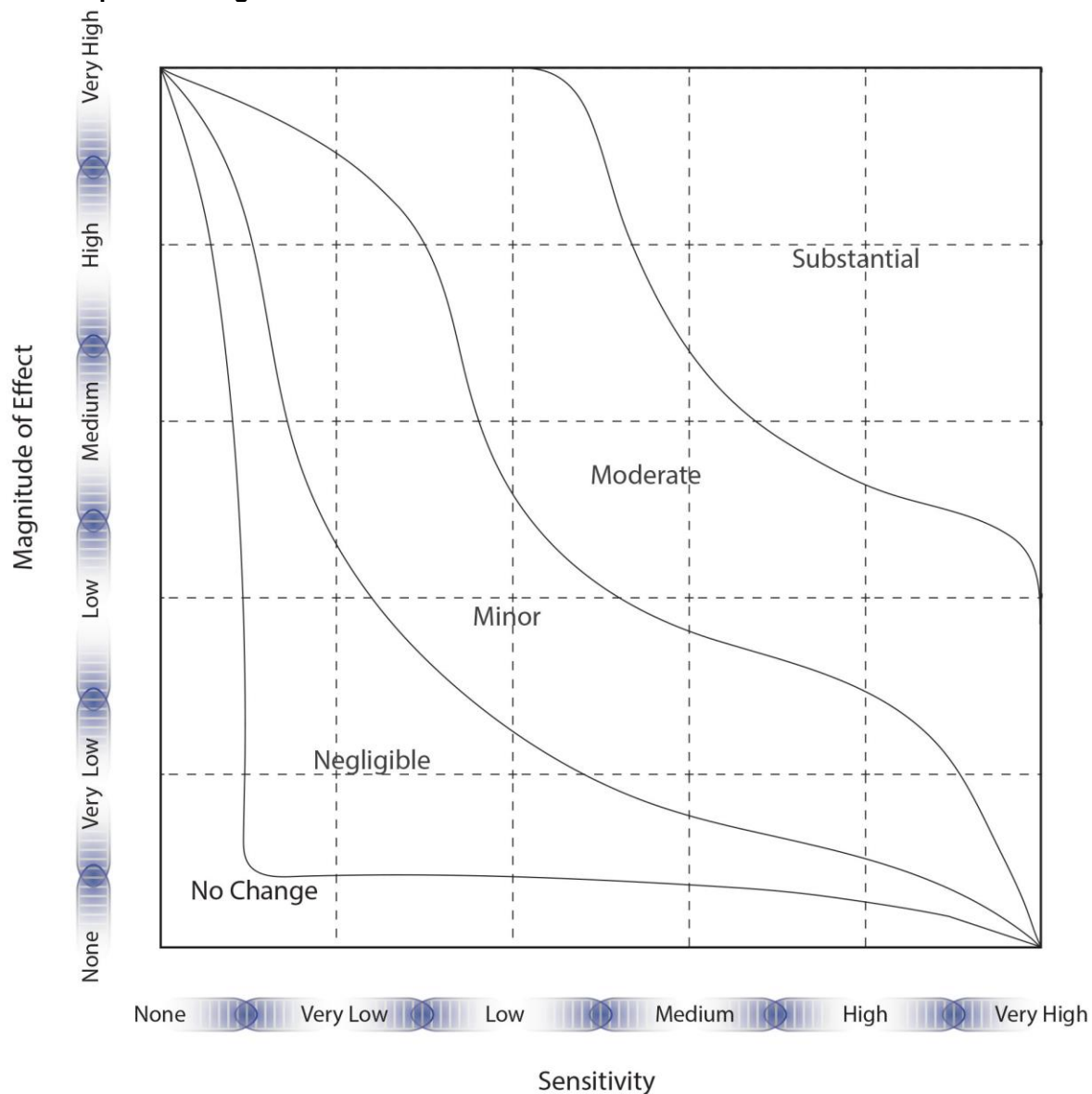
<p>Low</p>	<p>Landscapes, which by their nature would be more able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscapes which are unlikely to be designated</li> <li>• Landscape with commonplace elements/characteristics in poor condition, which may be easily replaceable or repaired.</li> <li>• Areas containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</li> <li>• Landscapes which make a minor contribution to/plays some role in the approach to and/or setting of a settlement or heritage asset.</li> </ul>
<p>Very Low</p>	<p>Landscapes, which by their nature would be able to accommodate the type of change proposed. Typical examples may be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscapes which are not designated.</li> <li>• Landscapes with elements/characteristics in poor condition and may be discordant, derelict or in decline and which may be easily replaced.</li> <li>• Areas containing few, if any, features of value through use, perception or historic and cultural associations.</li> <li>• Landscapes which do not make a contribution to/play a part in the approach to and/or setting of a settlement or heritage asset.</li> </ul>

### Landscape Magnitude of Effect

6.12 The approach taken in defining the magnitude of effect brought about by introducing a development on the landscape character is presented in the table below. Landscape characteristics may include landform, scale, field patterns, vegetation, buildings and other features of the landscape which combine to give an area its overall character

<b>Table 4 : Magnitude of Effect - Landscape</b>	
Very High	<p>The proposed development would lead to an extensive or widespread, irreversible complete alteration of existing landscape character/elements with large scale new features and elements.</p> <p>The addition of new and uncharacteristic conspicuous features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing highly conspicuous and uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
High	<p>The proposed development would lead to a notable but not extensive change to existing landscape character/elements over a wide area or an intensive change over a more limited area.</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic prominent features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing highly uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Medium	<p>The proposed development would lead to a partial change to existing landscape character/elements which may be partially reversible.</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic noticeable features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing moderately uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Low	<p>The proposed development would lead to a small or relatively localised change in the existing landscape character/elements</p> <p>The addition of new but uncharacteristic perceptible features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing perceptibly uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Very Low	<p>A negligible, potentially reversible change in existing landscape character or landscape elements.</p>
None	<p>No Change</p>

**Landscape Effect Significance**



**Figure 1 – Landscape Effects**

- 6.13 By combining the magnitude of effect predicted and the nature (sensitivity) of the landscape receptor an assessment of the significance of the effect can be made. The following diagram (Figure 1) outlines the general principles that inform this judgement.
  
- 6.14 As highlighted earlier these effects can be beneficial, neutral or adverse – the degree to which these apply will be qualified in the supporting text.

Table 5 : Description of Levels of Effect on Landscape Receptors	
Substantial Adverse	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a major deterioration to the quality and character of the existing landscape resource.</li> <li>• Be at considerable variance with the character of the existing landscape;</li> <li>• Degrade or lose the integrity of characteristic features or elements;</li> <li>• Damage or lose the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area;</li> </ul>
Moderate Adverse	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a noticeable deterioration to the quality and character of the existing landscape resource</li> <li>• Conflict with the character of the existing landscape;</li> <li>• Have a negative impact on some characteristic features or elements;</li> <li>• Diminish the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area;</li> </ul>
Minor Adverse	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause some deterioration to the quality and character of the existing landscape resource;</li> <li>• Not wholly fit with the character of the landscape;</li> <li>• Be at slight variance with the existing characteristic features or elements;</li> <li>• Slightly detract from the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area;</li> </ul>
Negligible	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give rise to no discernible change to the quality and character of the identified landscape resource.</li> <li>• Maintain the character of the landscape/ townscape;</li> <li>• Complement/ blend in with the existing characteristic features or elements;</li> <li>• Retain the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area.</li> </ul>
Minor Beneficial	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complement and give rise to a perceptible improvement in the quality and character of the identified landscape resource.</li> <li>• Maintain and/or enhance the existing characteristic features or elements;</li> <li>• Enable some of the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area to be restored.</li> </ul>
Moderate Beneficial	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give rise to a noticeable improvement in the quality and character of the identified landscape resource;</li> <li>• Enable the creation, repair, conservation and/or restoration of characteristic features or elements partially lost or diminished as a result of inappropriate management or prior development;</li> <li>• Enable the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area to be restored.</li> </ul>

Substantial Beneficial	<p>The development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greatly enhance and give rise to a major improvement to the quality and character of the identified landscape resource.;</li> <li>• Enable the creation, repair, conservation and/or restoration of characteristic features or elements lost or harmed as a result of inappropriate management or prior development;</li> <li>• Greatly enhance/reinstate the sense of place or local distinctiveness of the area.</li> </ul>
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### 7.0 VISUAL EFFECTS

7.1 The area of study for the visual impact assessment should extend to the whole of the area from which the development is visible (the visual envelope). The **approximate visibility** of the site as existing may be determined through topographical analysis and, where appropriate, a computer generated ZTV model (which would show the theoretical visibility of the site not accounting for intervening vegetation or built form), and the actual extent of visibility is checked in the field because of the localised screening effect of buildings, walls, fences, trees hedgerows, embankments and hedges. Principal viewpoints within the area surrounding the site should also be identified, and the viewpoints used for photographs selected to demonstrate the relative visibility of the site (and existing development on it) and its relationship with the surrounding landscape and built forms. As noted in the GLVIA3 the selection of viewpoints to assess the baseline and proposals should be *“proportional to the scale and nature of the proposed development”* (Para 6.2). The selection of the key viewpoints will be based on the following criteria:

- The requirement to provide an even spread of representative viewpoints within the visual envelope, and around all sides of the site.
- From locations which represent a range of near, middle and long distance views.
- Whilst private views are relevant, public viewpoints i.e. from roads and public rights of way and other areas of open public access, were selected since they are the most significant in terms of the number of receptors affected.
- Views from sensitive receptors such as designated landscapes or that include sensitive heritage assets.

The study should consider properties, roads and public rights of way that lie within the Visual Envelope or Zone of Theoretical Visibility of the study site.

7.2 Visual Receptor Groups are identified to determine groups of people who may experience common views within the study area, including the proposed development. Whilst it is acknowledged that every person will have an individual relationship with views towards the site, the assessment combines visual receptors into groups that may reasonably be expected to share common experiences with the landscape in order to form a manageable process of assessment. These typical groups may be categorised as follows:

- Recreational users of public rights of way or accessible landscapes. E.g. Walkers, horse riders;
- Residents and visitors of/ to settlements;
- Road users;
- Visitors to specific viewpoints of recognised value;
- Visitors to tourist attractions of heritage assets valued for their visual setting.

Photographs selected to go forward into the assessment fall broadly into the following groups:

- a) **Representative Viewpoints** – selected as representative a larger number of viewpoints which are similar in nature and likely to experience similar effects.
- b) **Specific Viewpoints** – selected as they are key and possibly promoted views within the landscape, such as to or from a heritage asset or recognised beauty spot.
- c) **Illustrative Viewpoints** – selected to demonstrate a particular effect or issue.

- 7.3 Photographs would be taken to represent the best available views of the development site. The final selection of photographs to go forward into the assessment will be agreed with the competent authority in advance.
- 7.4 The assessment of visual effects describes:
- The changes in the character of the available views resulting from the development;
  - The changes in the visual amenity of the visual receptors.
- 7.5 The final stage in the field survey is to identify the types of views affected, an estimate of their numbers and whether there were few or many, the duration of viewing, and potential seasonal screening impacts are noted.
- 7.6 Selected views, preferably agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority, may be used as the basis for photomontages of the proposed development. These photomontages would be generated to show the development at Year 15 as previously described.

### Visual Sensitivity

7.7 The following Tables sets out the criteria which will be used in the assessment to judge sensitivity of visual receptors:

Table 6: Criteria for Value of views	
Value	Explanation
Very High	Views of landscape recognised for its intrinsic qualities and scenic beauty, likely to be internationally or nationally designated, or heritage assets where visual setting is key. Views from popular viewpoints, eg hillforts, look-out points Views may be recognised or referred to in guide books, maps or references to the view/landscape in literature and art. Views with few overt or intrusive or detracting elements in the view.
High	May include views of landscapes which are nationally or regionally designated for their various qualities and scenic beauty but the view may include some manmade detracting elements. View may include heritage assets where visual setting is a consideration. May include views from designated/national trails or named recreational paths Views may be recognised or referred to in local guide books and local literature
Medium	Views valued at regional or local level, which may be recognised in local guide books/tourist maps or referred in local literature. A view with some scenic quality (this may include views across or within a locally designated landscape) There are some overt intrusive manmade elements in the view.
Low	A view with low scenic quality. There may be a number of overt or intrusive human elements already in the view. Unlikely to be recognised through local designation or appear in local guidebooks/ tourist maps & guides.
Very Low	A view with low scenic quality. Likely to be views which are transient or within a degraded landscape and there are existing degraded elements in the landscape. Not situated with or alongside an area designated for its landscape character or visual amenity and with no recognition in local guidebooks/tourist maps & guides.

7.8 The susceptibility of a visual receptor to the change in a view is a result of their occupation or activity combined with the extent to which their attention is focussed on the view. The table below sets out the considerations which may be taken into account when assessing susceptibility. The professional judgement applied will be clearly outlined in the text.



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Table 7: Susceptibility of Visual Receptors	
Susceptibility	Explanation
Very High	<p>Viewers whose occupation or activity is such that the view being experienced is likely to be the focus of their attention or interest.</p> <p>Viewers with prolonged viewing opportunities.</p> <p>Examples may include residents whose outlook forms a key component of their day to day lives, or visitors to attractions known for their particular views or visual setting.</p>
High	<p>Viewers whose occupation or activity is such that the view being experienced is likely form a point of interest.</p> <p>Viewers whose viewing opportunity may be 'broken' or interrupted.</p> <p>Examples may include local residents, visitors to recognised attractions or those using recognised scenic routes.</p>
Medium	<p>Viewers with a moderate awareness of their surroundings and whose occupation is such that while they may appreciate the view, it would not be fundamental to the satisfaction of the viewers' activity.</p> <p>Examples may include those using local footpaths, transport routes, residents with views from rooms not normally occupied during waking hours.</p>
Low	<p>Viewers with a passing awareness of and limited interest in their surroundings, and for whom the view is likely to play a minimal role to the satisfaction of their occupation or activity.</p> <p>Views which are incidental to the activities of the visual receptors.</p> <p>Examples may include people at their place of work, those engaged in outdoor recreation that does not depend on appreciation of the view or those travelling at speed.</p>
Very Low	<p>Viewers with a minimal awareness of or interest in their surroundings, and for whom the view is unlikely to play any meaningful role in their occupation or activity. Such views are likely to only be incidental to those activities taking place.</p> <p>Examples may include people at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity and not on their surroundings.</p>

Table 8: Visual Sensitivity Criteria	
Sensitivity	Explanation
Very High	<p>Viewers who are very sensitive/highly attuned to their surroundings with a prolonged intact viewing opportunity of the landscape. Views are likely to be of internationally or nationally designated landscapes or heritage assets. Views may be recognised in art or literature and noted in guide books: Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors to recognised viewpoints/look-out points such as hillforts</li> <li>• Visitors to heritage assets of which visual setting is a key component.</li> <li>• Walkers/Riders using national trails through nationally designated landscapes</li> <li>• Motorists using recognised 'scenic' routes.</li> <li>• Residents whose properties have been orientated to take advantage of a view, or for whom the view comprises a key component of their daily lives</li> </ul>
High	<p>Viewers who are highly attuned to their surroundings but their interest and viewing opportunity may not be prolonged but broken or interrupted. Views may be of nationally or locally designated landscape or of heritage assets and may be noted in local guide books and recognised in art and literature. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walkers/Riders using national trails or popular footpaths/Bridleways</li> <li>• Visitors to some heritage assets</li> <li>• Motorists travelling through high quality landscapes</li> <li>• Local residents who may be able to see the view from rooms normally occupied during waking hours.</li> </ul>
Medium	<p>Viewers with a moderate awareness of their surroundings and whose occupation is such that while they may appreciate the view, it would not be fundamental to the satisfaction of the viewers' activity. Views may be of a locally designated landscape or a heritage asset, but it is unlikely to figure in guidebooks, art or literature. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less well used public footpaths/Bridleways</li> <li>• Travellers on local roads through a moderate quality landscape</li> <li>• Local residents with views from rooms not normally occupied during waking hours</li> </ul>
Low	<p>Viewers with a passing awareness and limited interest in their surroundings. Views unlikely to be of designated landscape or noted in guidebooks, art or literature. Views may have a number of overt or intrusive elements. Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People engaged in outdoor recreation/sport which does not depend upon the appreciation of the view.</li> <li>• People at their place of work</li> <li>• Travellers on fast moving roads</li> </ul>
Very Low	<p>Viewers with a passing awareness and limited interest/focus in their surroundings. Views not designated or noted in guidebooks, art or literature. Views of a degraded landscape with a number of overt or intrusive elements: Examples may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People at their place of work</li> <li>• Travellers on fast moving roads with only transient views</li> </ul>

### Visual Magnitude of Effect

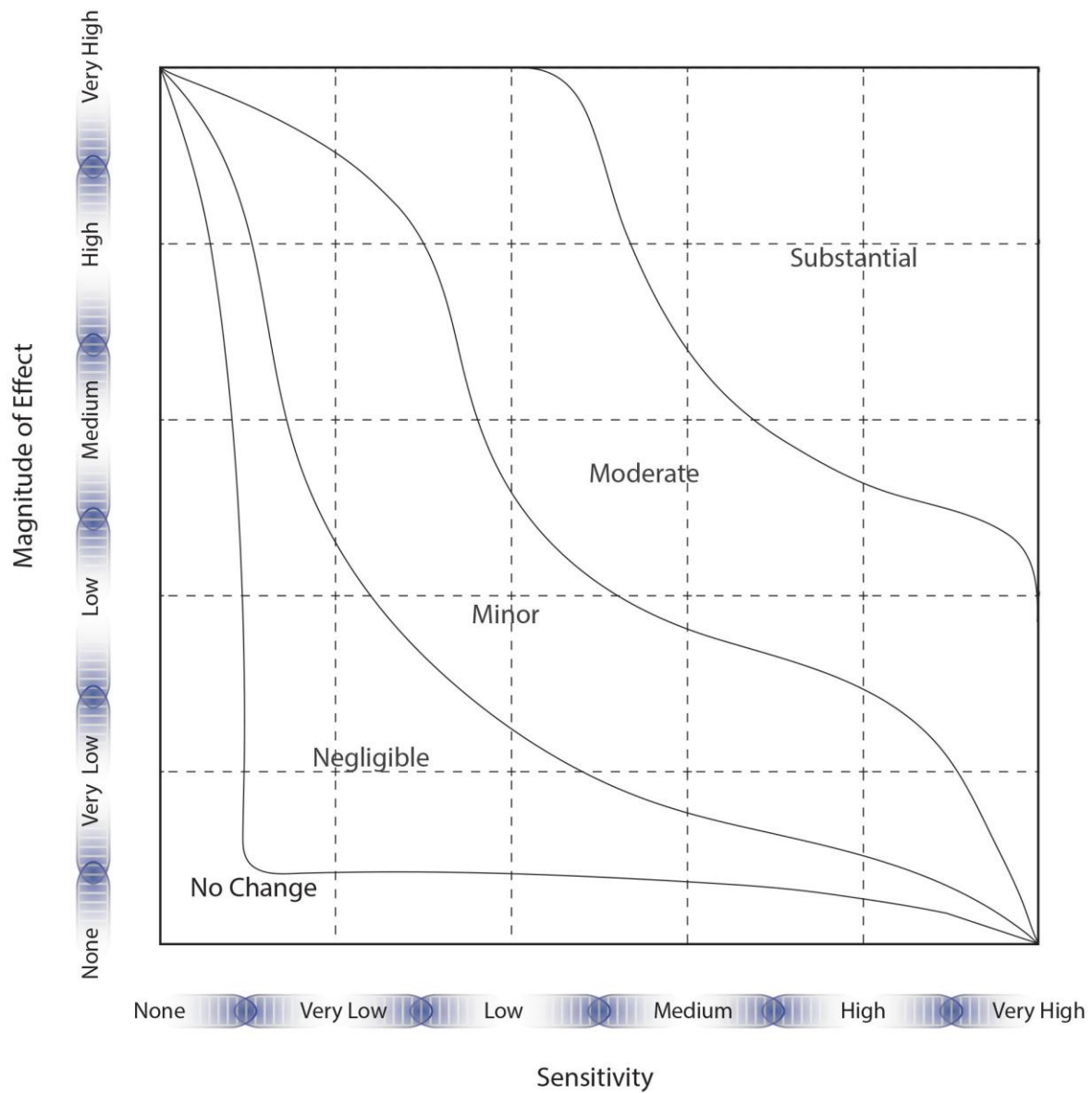
7.9 The magnitude of change likely to be brought about by the development proposals on visual amenity will be assessed using the following magnitude of change criteria:

Table 9 : Magnitude of Effect - Visual	
Very High	<p>The proposed development would result in a complete alteration to the characteristics of the view such that post development the existing view would be completely changed.</p> <p>The addition of new and uncharacteristic conspicuous features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/or replacement of existing highly conspicuous and uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
High	<p>The proposed development would result in a change in the view such that it becomes the key influence and focus in the view</p> <p>The addition of new and obvious uncharacteristic features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/ or replacement of existing uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Medium	<p>The proposed development is clearly visible in the view and forms an important but not defining element of the view. The feature may integrate partially.</p> <p>The addition of new and noticeable uncharacteristic features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/or replacement of existing moderately uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Low	<p>The proposed development is visible, but forms a small element and minor alteration in the view and integrates well with existing landscape/features.</p> <p>Slight change to the existing character or features and elements;</p> <p>The addition of new but perceptible uncharacteristic features and elements (adverse change);</p> <p>The removal, restoration and/or replacement of existing perceptibly uncharacteristic features and elements (beneficial change).</p>
Very Low	<p>The proposed development may go unnoticed as a small element in the view, or is not readily visible.</p>
None	<p>No change</p>

**Visual Significance**

7.10 By combining the magnitude of effects predicted and the nature (sensitivity) of the receptor to a particular change, an assessment of the significance of the effects can be made. The following diagram outlines the general principles that inform this judgement:

**Figure 2 – Visual Effects**



## Appendix 13.1 – Land to the West of Park Farm, Thornbury

7.11 As highlighted earlier these effects can be beneficial, neutral or adverse – the degree to which these apply will be qualified in the supporting text.

Table 10 : Description of Levels of Effect on Visual Receptors	
Substantial Adverse	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a large deterioration in the existing view and visual amenity of the receptor.</li> </ul>
Moderate Adverse	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a noticeable deterioration in the existing view and visual amenity of the receptor.</li> </ul>
Minor Adverse	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a barely perceptible deterioration in the existing view and visual amenity of the receptor.</li> </ul>
Negligible	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause no discernible deterioration or improvement to the existing view or visual amenity of the receptor</li> </ul>
Minor Beneficial	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a barely perceptible improvement in the existing view or visual amenity of the receptor.</li> </ul>
Moderate Beneficial	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a noticeable improvement in the existing view and visual amenity of the receptor.</li> </ul>
Substantial Beneficial	The development would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cause a large improvement in the existing view and visual amenity of the receptor.</li> </ul>

7.12 A final judgement is made about whether or not the overall landscape and visual residual effects of the mitigated development are likely to be significant. The level of effect at which an impact is considered to be significant is to be determined on a case-by-case basis and may need to be consistent with the definitions set out across all of the EIA chapters

7.13 GLVIA3 Statement of Clarification 1/13 states '*it is for the assessor to define what the assessor considered significant*'. With regard to identifying the significance of effects, GLVIA3 requires '*clear and accessible explanations*' and raises '*failure to distinguish between significant effects that are likely to influence the eventual decision and those of lesser concern*' as a '*potential pitfall*' (para 3.35). It goes on to recommend '*narrative text describing the landscape and visual effects and the judgements made about their significance*' (para 3.36)

7.14 Significance is strongly linked to context and scale. For example, whilst a development may be 'significant' to a visual receptor in a nearby single secluded house, the effect may not be 'significant' when considering a larger series of residential receptors further away. Similarly the loss of trees which are a local feature may be considered 'significant' locally, but of little or no significance to larger character areas within which the tree sit. In addition, whilst an

effect may be 'significant', it does not necessarily follow that it would be unacceptable, or regarded as an '*undue consequence*' (GLVIA3 para 5.40). Whether or not an impact is 'significant' will be assessed for each receptor.

### 8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Finally the report will summarise the potential overall landscape and visual effects of the proposal.

August 2017