

1 METHODOLOGY

1.1 GUIDANCE AND TERMINOLOGY

This report is a Landscape and Visual Appraisal and does not constitute a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and therefore does not strictly follow the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* (GLVIA), Landscape Institute, third edition, 2013). However, it does follow the same principles and processes.

The approach to the Appraisal has involved the following steps:

- Recording and analysis of the existing landscape character and visual amenity associated with the Site and surrounding area through desk-based study and field appraisal.
- Appreciation of the nature, form and scale of the proposed development having regard to the landscape and visual baseline context.
- Identification and evaluation of the sensitivity of the existing landscape and visual receptors likely to be affected by the Proposed development.
- An assessment of the potential landscape and visual effects resulting from the proposed development.

Certain assumptions have been made regarding plant growth and maintenance heights for any proposed mitigation planting measures associated with the Proposed Development, and these are set out below:

Native tree / understorey planting to reinforce site boundaries as indicated on the Landscape Layout Plan (Appendix C). Planted as transplants 0.6m -0.8m tall in year 1 with an overall density at 1.5m centres, typical growth height ranges are as follows:

- 3.5 - 5m tall in year 7.
- 5 – 8m tall in year 15.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- 'Km' means kilometre/s; 'm' means metre/s.
- All distances are approximate.
- All references to points of the compass are generalised and are used for descriptive purposes only.
- 'Site' refers to the Application Site within the boundary shown on the Site Location drawing no. 2020-050/102, a copy of which is found within Appendix C.

1.2 APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

By nature, the process of assessing landscape and visual character is to some extent subjective - what appears beautiful to one person may be unattractive to another. This methodology does not, and cannot, remove this subjectivity, but explains the process of assessment, in order to make it easy for the reader to follow. The general process for both landscape and visual impact assessment is the same.

The assessment is divided into two main sections, the **baseline assessment** and the **assessment of likely effects**.

1.2.1 Baseline Assessment

In order to be able to assess the potential effects of the proposed development, an existing baseline condition is established, against which the potential effects of any proposed development can be measured. The baseline is

investigated through a combination of desktop study and field visits. The baseline assessment reflects the present condition of the Site and Study Area.

The Study Area for this assessment was centred on the Site and included all areas within a 2km radius where the proposed development could potentially have an effect on landscape character and visual amenity.

The Study Area is then tested in the field to take into account localised landform features, built form and the presence of significant areas of vegetation. This enables a **Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI)** for the proposed development to be mapped; identifying the areas where the proposed development is likely to be seen.

Whilst the estimated ZVI is mapped to a good degree of accuracy and takes into consideration the screening effects of topography, built form and significant areas of vegetation as noted from site work, it should be understood that there will still be locations within the mapped ZVI where the complexity of landscape (such as intervening vegetation / buildings) or lack of public access makes it impossible reasonably to determine the exact visibility of the Proposed Development. In reality, there will be some areas within the mapped ZVI where the Proposed Development will not be visible, and there may be some un-mapped areas where glimpses of the Proposed Development would be.

1.2.2 Landscape Assessment Methodology

Landscape character

In this section, existing Landscape Character Assessments and other relevant documents are reviewed in order to give an understanding of the landscape within the Study Area.

The character of a landscape is defined by its key **constituent elements** which are considered under three broad headings of:

- Physical Influences eg geology, soils, topography, water bodies.
- Influences of Human Activity eg heritage assets, land use, buildings, settlements and field patterns.
- Aesthetic and Perceptual eg complexity, degree of enclosure / openness, tranquillity, remoteness.

The combination of the above elements will influence how a landscape is perceived eg openness, scale, complexity, tranquility and wilderness. Together, these landscape elements and the perception of them is used to inform the division of the landscape into distinct landscape character types and / or character areas; helping to define their key characteristics.

In order to assess the baseline landscape character of the Site and Study Area, a desktop study is used to identify relevant designations and planning designations as well as existing landscape character assessments. With the help of site visits, these existing character descriptions are then tested and reviewed.

All landscapes have value, whether designated or undesignated. Having considered the key landscape characteristics of the Site and Study Area as a whole, value is then attributed to each key constituent element and an **overall landscape value** established.

Identification of landscape receptors

Landscape receptors are those **constituent elements** of the landscape which are considered likely to be affected by the Proposed development either directly or indirectly. This can include local landscape character

areas, designated landscapes or individual landscape features eg the setting of heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments. The assessment seeks to identify and evaluate the sensitivity of the existing landscape receptors that are likely to be affected by the proposed development. This is based on a combination of desktop analysis and field study.

Determining the sensitivity of landscape receptors

Each landscape receptor selected for assessment is evaluated according to:

- The value attached to them (established in the baseline)
- Their susceptibility to change (ability to accommodate the nature of the Proposed development)

Susceptibility refers to the ability of a receptor to accommodate the nature of the Proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

Landscape effects are particular to both the specific landscape and the specific nature of the proposed development. The assessment of susceptibility is therefore tailored to a particular project. For example, a landscape already dominated by housing development is likely to be less susceptible to additional housing than a landscape in which housing development is not present.

To reach an assessment of the **sensitivity** of each receptor, **susceptibility and value** are then combined to establish whether a receptor is **high, medium or low sensitivity**.

Susceptibility of visual receptors is primarily a function of the expectations and occupation or activity of the receptor.

Susceptibility of landscape receptors is an assessment of the ability of a receptor to accommodate the nature of the Proposed Development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

Landscape effects are particular to both the specific landscape and the specific nature of the Proposed Development. The assessment of susceptibility is therefore tailored to a particular project.

For example, a landscape already dominated by housing development is likely to be less susceptible to additional housing than a landscape in which housing development is not present.

A location may have different levels of sensitivity according to the types of visual receptors at that location and any one receptor type may be accorded different levels of sensitivity at different locations.

A degree of professional judgement is required to make a judgment regarding the susceptibility for both landscape and visual receptors.

Determining the sensitivity of landscape receptors

Tables 1 & 2 provide an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a landscape receptor is judged within this assessment and considers both **value** and **susceptibility** independently.

Table 1 – Value of Landscape or Landscape Element

	Value
High	Important components or landscape / townscape of a particularly distinctive and highly valued character and/or rarity, typically of national or regional scale. <u>Guidance:</u> • Landscapes designated for the preservation of the beauty of the countryside / townscape at a national or international level (National Parks, AONB's and National Scenic Areas (Scotland), World Heritage Sites, Heritage Coasts). • Landscapes highlighted as being of high scenic value in local Landscape Character Assessments or given elevated status by virtue of the beauty of the landscape at the local level (AGLV). • Landscapes with stated preservation aim in planning policy. • Landscapes / components of historic importance or that form part of their setting¹ (e.g. Registered Historic Parks and Gardens / Archaeological sites of importance (Scheduled Ancient Monuments & Battlefields) / Listed Buildings / Conservation Areas). • <u>Designated</u> components of acknowledged value such as Tree Preservation Orders; Geological SSSI's; etc. • Undesignated components which have value at a national or regional scale such as national trails / long distance routes etc. • Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land. • Components or landscapes referred to in nationally famous art or literature. • Landscapes valued highly for aesthetic or perceptual factors such as wildness or tranquillity or sense of place. • Limited potential to recreate or replace the landscape / elements.
Medium	Valued components or landscape/townscape of moderate importance and rarity typically of regional or local scale. <u>Guidance:</u> • Landscapes designated locally or identified as of moderate scenic value in local Landscape Character Assessments. • Landscapes with stated conservation aim in planning policy – possibly identified for enhancement. • Landscapes / components particularly valued at the local level eg / village greens / allotments / certain local green spaces etc. • Undesignated components which nevertheless have value locally (eg significant but unprotected trees; general Public Rights of Way / undesignated heritage assets etc.). • Grade 3 agricultural land. • Components or landscapes referenced in local guidebooks / on tourist maps or in locally well-known literature. • Landscapes valued moderately for aesthetic or perceptual factors such as scale, complexity, degree of openness / enclosure, wildness, tranquillity, or sense of place. • There is moderate potential to recreate or replace the landscape / elements.
Low	Components or landscape/townscape of relatively low importance and rarity or degraded, typically of local scale. May have some redeeming features. <u>Guidance:</u> • Landscapes identified as of limited scenic value in local Landscape Character Assessments. • Landscapes identified for improvement in planning policy. • Undesignated components with limited value locally. • Grade 4 and 5 agricultural land. • Landscapes with limited aesthetic or perceptual value for factors such as wildness, tranquillity, or sense of place. • Components that are easily replaced.

Table 2 – Susceptibility of Landscape or Landscape Element

	Susceptibility
High	Landscape character / component particularly susceptible to <u>change of the nature proposed</u> . The landscape / component has limited ability to accommodate the nature of the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
Medium	Landscape character / component moderately capable of accepting <u>change of the nature proposed</u> . The landscape / component has moderate ability to accommodate the nature of the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.
Low	Landscape character / component tolerant to substantial <u>change of the nature proposed</u> . The landscape / component has potential to accommodate the nature of the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline situation.

Determining the sensitivity of visual receptors

Table 3 provides an indication of the criteria by which the overall sensitivity of a **visual receptor** is judged within this assessment and considers both **value** and **susceptibility** independently.

For **visual receptors**, judgements of susceptibility and value are closely interlinked considerations. Visual receptors include people who could potentially experience changes to a view or visual amenity resulting from the Proposed Development. Visual receptors can therefore be private residential areas as well as the public domain, such as places of work, public rights of way, roads, train lines or noted viewing points. It should be noted that the visual impact from the public domain is afforded greater weighting in terms of sensitivity (due to the potential for greater numbers of individuals to be affected by an impact).

Visual receptors at each Viewpoint selected for assessment are identified and evaluated according to:

- Their **susceptibility** to change in a view and visual amenity.
- The **value** attached to each particular view.

Susceptibility is a function of the occupation / activity of the receptor at that particular location and, as a consequence, the extent to which their attention / interest may therefore be focused on the view and the visual amenity they experience.

Value takes account of value attached to views in relation to heritage assets; planning designations; and value attached to views by visitors (eg those associated with art and literature) and by the provision of facilities for the enjoyment of the views (eg sign boards / interpretative materials / parking areas and benches).

Table 3 – Susceptibility and Value of Visual Receptors

	Susceptibility	Value
High	Viewers whose focus is primarily on the landscape setting: - Viewers using designated Public Rights of Way (Roads / Footpaths / Bridleways / Restricted Byways / Byways open to all traffic (BOAT's)); Access Land; or railways <u>for the enjoyment of the countryside / townscape</u>. - Viewers within gardens and living areas of residential properties (rooms normally occupied during waking / daylight hours).	- Viewers within landscapes designated for the preservation of the beauty of the countryside at a national level (National Parks, AONB's). - Viewers within Conservation Areas. - Viewers from the setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or Listed Building or Registered Parks and Gardens. - Nationally famous Viewpoints referenced in art or literature. - Viewpoints shown on Ordnance Survey maps – or which are locally well-known and may also be referenced in guidebooks / on tourist maps. Facilities may be provided for the enjoyment of the view (such as sign boards / interpretative materials).
Medium	Viewers whose focus is not primarily on the landscape setting, but who may value the setting as part of the activity in which they are involved: - People engaged in outdoor recreational sports. - Viewers using roads <u>for local access</u>. - Viewers accessing residential properties. - Viewers using Public Rights of Way and other areas with public access other than for specific enjoyment of the countryside / townscape (eg for local access). - Recreational area user groups. - Viewers within sleeping areas of residential properties.	- Viewers within landscapes judged to be of moderate or good strength of character (potentially identified in local Landscape Character Assessments). - Viewers within areas with local landscape / townscape designations. - Viewpoints where locally valued features are a major component of the scene. - Viewers within residential areas. - Viewpoints where limited facilities may be provided for the enjoyment of the view (such as / parking areas / benches), but no references on Ordnance Survey maps.
Low	Viewers whose focus is primarily on the activity in which they are involved and not on the landscape setting and / or whose view may be transitory: - Viewers travelling <u>through an area</u> on trains or in vehicles on major roads. - Viewers working in commercial premises. - Viewers working in and around industrial premises - People engaged in formal sports.	- Viewers within landscapes judged to be of limited strength of character / no particular merit (potentially identified in local Landscape Character Assessments). - No national or townscape designations. - No specific references to the location in art / literature / guidebooks / tourist maps. - No facilities provided. - Views dominated by negative elements in the scene or negative experiential aspects of the Viewpoint (for example a Viewpoint dominated by a noisy road).

When there are visual receptors of differing susceptibility to change to consider in one particular location, the estimated frequency of use by each receptor will normally determine the overall **susceptibility** of receptors from that location. For instance, when local roads are frequently used by walkers as part of a popular walk or a National Trail, the high susceptibility receptor (viewers using designated Public Rights of Way for the enjoyment of the countryside) will take precedence. However, when local roads are only used by occasional walkers then the medium sensitivity receptor (viewers using roads for local access) will take precedence. Only in specific situations will both be assessed.

To reach an assessment of the sensitivity of each receptor, '**Susceptibility**' and '**Value**' are then combined using Table 4 below. For example, a receptor playing a football match (low susceptibility) in a National Park (high value) would have a medium level of sensitivity.

Table 4 Sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors

		Value		
		High	Medium	Low
Susceptibility	High	High sensitivity	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity
	Medium	High sensitivity	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity
	Low	Medium sensitivity	Low sensitivity	Low sensitivity

The tables above offer a template for assessing overall sensitivity of any landscape or visual receptor as determined by combining judgements of their susceptibility to the type of change or development proposed and the value attached to the landscape as set out at paragraph 5.38 of GLVIA 3rd Edition (2013).

For example, a **high susceptibility** to change and a **low value** may result in a **medium overall sensitivity**, unless it can be demonstrated that the receptor is unusually susceptible or is in some way considered more valuable. A degree of professional judgement applies in arriving at the overall sensitivity for both landscape and visual receptors.

1.2.3 Visual Assessment Methodology

Identification of visual receptors

Visual receptors include people who could potentially experience changes to a view or visual amenity resulting from the proposed development. Visual receptors can therefore be private residential areas as well as the public domain, such as places of work, public rights of way, roads, train lines or noted viewing points. It should be noted that the visual impact from the public domain is afforded greater weighting in terms of sensitivity (due to the potential for greater numbers of individuals to be affected by an impact).

Visual receptors have been identified through a desktop study and verified by visiting the Study Area. For the purposes of this assessment, visual receptors have been grouped where effects are likely to be similar, in order to keep this report proportionate to the nature of the proposals.

Selection of photographic viewpoints

In order to help assess the potential change in view for different receptors, several representative photographic viewpoints were chosen. Where different receptors are likely to experience a similar change in view, these are represented by the same viewpoint. Viewpoints are principally taken from publicly accessible areas. Professional judgement is used to draw conclusions for private receptors. At each viewpoint, baseline conditions are recorded.

Site visibility within the Study Area

Views of a Site within a Study Area are categorized as follows:

- Close range: Up to 300m
- Middle distance: 300 to 2000m
- Long distance: Over 2000m.

Where the extent of the Study Area is restricted in terms of visibility, views of the Site may be restricted to short and middle-distance views only.

1.2.4 Assessment of likely effects

Once the baseline has been established, the potential effects of the proposed development are identified and compared with those of the baseline conditions in respect of the identified receptors.

Appraisal of likely landscape effects

An appraisal of the likely **magnitude** of effects of the proposed development on each identified landscape receptor are described and takes into consideration the nature of the likely changes in the view, as well as their size and scale, when they would occur, how long they are likely to last and whether they are reversible. The **sensitivity** of the landscape receptor to potential changes is also assessed. This depends on the presence or absence of other developments nearby, man-made features or detractors, the maturity and stability of the landscape, the topography, scale and openness of the landscape and its degree of remoteness and tranquility. Any existing relevant sensitivity and capacity studies are also referred to.

Appraisal of likely visual effects

An appraisal of the likely **magnitude** of effects of the proposed development on identified visual receptors are described and takes into consideration the nature of the likely changes in the view, as well as their size and scale. Consideration is

given to the length of time a view is likely to be experienced as well as other factors such as whether the views are filtered or screened, the distance from the viewpoint to the Site and the angle of view.

The **sensitivity** of the visual receptor to any potential changes is also taken into consideration. Consideration is given to the type of pursuit visual receptors are likely to be engaged in and thus how much their focus lies on the experience of the view. For example, residents, holidaymakers or people participating in recreational outdoor activities are likely to be more susceptible to change of a view than people working or travelling to / from work.

Limitations of Assessment

The assessments undertaken are based on certain assumptions and actions and therefore have certain limitations. Whilst the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) calls for assessments to be appropriate and proportionate to the nature of the development proposed these limitations should be recorded. For this study these have been identified as follows:

- The assessment only assesses effects on visual receptors on publicly accessible land and from private residences (estimated). Whilst this is entirely normal it should be noted that Visual effects from locations on surrounding fields are not covered.
- The visibility of the Site from residential Viewpoints has been estimated both by looking towards the Site from public areas, and by standing on the Site and looking outwards. No attempt has been made to access private property for more detailed assessment.
- For the visual assessments made, it has been assumed that there will be no significant change (growth or loss) in offsite / foreground vegetation.
- Finally, whilst the estimated Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) is mapped to a good degree of accuracy and takes into consideration the screening effects of topography, built form and significant areas of vegetation as noted from site work, it should be understood that there will still be locations within the mapped ZVI where the complexity of landscape (such as intervening vegetation / buildings) or lack of public access makes it impossible reasonably to determine the exact visibility of the Proposed Development.

In reality, there will be some areas within the mapped ZVI where the proposed development will not be visible, and there may be some un-mapped areas where glimpses of the proposed development would be.

Defining Magnitude of Change

The magnitude of any landscape or visual change is determined through a range of considerations particular to each receptor. The three attributes considered in defining the magnitude are:

- Scale of change;
- Geographical extent; and
- Duration and reversibility/proportion.

Receptor locations from which views of the proposed development are not likely to occur will receive no change and therefore no effect. With reference to the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI) and site survey, the magnitude of change is defined for receptor locations from where visibility of the proposed development is predicted to occur.

Determining the magnitude of landscape effect

The **magnitude** of landscape effect predicts the degree to which changes will occur to the physical landscape elements or overall landscape character because of the proposed development. Change may arise from built form, engineered forms and / or from soft landscape elements of the development.

The magnitude of effect is initially considered (in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 5 below) for each key element of the landscape chosen for assessment; and then the magnitude of effect on the overall landscape character is concluded (in accordance with Table 6). In both cases, considering the magnitude of effect involves careful consideration of the complex interrelationships between the landscape elements set out below. An informed professional judgement is made on these relationships and whether effects are positive or negative (or neutral) and their consequences for landscape character / the landscape component in question.

A consideration in terms of duration is a factor in making judgments. In this way, the effectiveness of mitigating measures over time is considered within the assessment process and typically considers Year 1 through to Year 15 and beyond.

Table 5 – Magnitude of effect on individual elements of the landscape

Magnitude of effect	Criteria for assessing magnitude of landscape effects on individual elements of the landscape
High adverse	The proposals are very damaging to the landscape / townscape component in question in that they will cause substantial loss or substantial adverse change to that component.
Medium-high adverse	The proposals are very damaging to the landscape / townscape component in question in that they will cause major loss or major adverse change to that component.
Medium adverse	The proposals are damaging to the landscape / townscape component in that they will cause moderate loss or moderate adverse change to that component.
Medium-low adverse	The proposals are damaging to the landscape / townscape component in that they will cause slight loss or slight adverse change to that component.
Low adverse	The proposals cause minimal damage to the landscape / townscape component in that they will cause very slight loss or very slight adverse change to that component.
No change / Neutral	The proposals will cause no change to the component in question; or The proposals are in keeping with the existing landscape despite changes that occur; or Positive effects balance the negative effects of change.
Low beneficial	The proposals will be of minimal benefit to the landscape / townscape component in that they will cause only very slight enhancement to that component.
Medium-low beneficial	The proposals will be of benefit to the landscape / townscape component in that they will cause slight enhancement to that component.
Medium beneficial	The proposals will be of moderate benefit to the landscape / townscape component as they will cause moderate enhancement to that component.
Medium-high beneficial	The proposals will be of major benefit to the landscape / townscape component as they will cause major enhancement to that component.
High beneficial	The proposals will be of substantial benefit to the landscape / townscape component as they will cause substantial enhancement to that component.

In the case of overall landscape character, the assessment of magnitude takes account both the landscape elements individually assessed at the detailed level; and those for which individual assessment was not deemed necessary. The whole landscape resource is considered at this stage.

For example, in terms of magnitude of effect a development could have a **high adverse** effect on a single element of the landscape but minimal effects on all other components whilst another may have lots of less significant effects.

By considering all aspects of the landscape at this stage a considered assessment of the overall landscape character is made.

Table 6 – Magnitude of effect on overall landscape character

Magnitude of effect	Criteria for assessing magnitude of landscape effects on overall landscape character
High adverse	The proposals are extremely damaging to overall landscape / townscape character in that they will cause total loss of, or substantial alteration to, key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ they create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Is at total variance with the layout, mix, scale and appearance of the landscape / townscape. ○ Will introduce components considered to be totally uncharacteristic of the attributes of the receiving landscape / townscape. ○ Will be severely damaging to a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape / townscape, causing it to change and be substantially diminished in quality. ○ Is likely to destroy the integrity of a range of characteristic features and components and their setting. ○ Destroys existing sense of place. ○ Mitigation has little effect.
Medium-high adverse	The proposals are very damaging to overall landscape / townscape character in that they will cause major loss of, or major alteration to, key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ They would create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Is at considerable variance with the layout, mix, scale and appearance of the landscape / townscape. ○ Will introduce components considered to be substantially uncharacteristic of the attributes of the receiving landscape / townscape. ○ Will be substantially damaging to a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape / townscape, causing it to change and be considerably diminished in quality. ○ Is likely to degrade or diminish the integrity of a range of characteristic features and components and their setting. ○ Substantially damages existing sense of place. ○ Cannot be adequately mitigated.
Medium adverse	The proposals are damaging to overall landscape / townscape character in that they will cause partial loss of, or moderate alteration to, key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ They would create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Is out of scale or at odds with the layout, mix, scale and appearance of the existing landscape / townscape. ○ Will introduce components considered to be considerably uncharacteristic of the attributes of the receiving landscape/townscape. ○ Will have an adverse effect on a landscape / townscape of recognised quality or on vulnerable and important characteristic features or components. ○ Moderately damages existing sense of place. ○ Cannot be largely mitigated – mitigation will not prevent the scheme from impacting the landscape / townscape in the longer term.
Medium-low adverse	The proposals are slightly damaging to overall landscape / townscape character in that they will cause minor loss of, or slight alteration to, key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ The proposals are slightly damaging to the landscape in that they create a landscape whose character: ○ Does not quite fit into the layout, mix, scale and character of the landscape / townscape. ○ May introduce components that may not be characteristic of the attributes of the receiving landscape/townscape. ○ May have a slight adverse effect on a landscape / townscape of recognised quality. ○ Slightly damages existing sense of place. ○ Cannot be completely mitigated due to the nature of the proposal itself or the character of the landscape.

Low adverse	The proposals cause minimal damage to overall landscape / townscape character in that they will cause very minor loss or alteration to key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ The proposals cause minimal damage to the landscape/townscape in that they cause little effect on character, or incorporate measures for mitigation that balance any adverse effects and therefore create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Largely matches the layout, mix scale and appearance of the existing landscape/townscape. ○ Introduces components not considered uncharacteristic of the surrounding landscape/townscape. ○ Largely maintains existing landscape / townscape quality and character. ○ Largely maintains existing sense of place.
No change / Neutral	The proposals will cause no change to key components of the receiving landscape/townscape; or The proposals are in keeping with the existing landscape despite changes that occur; or Positive effects balance the negative effects of change.
Low beneficial	The proposals will be of minimal benefit to overall landscape / townscape character in that they will cause very minor enhancement to key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ The proposals cause minimal benefit to the landscape/townscape in that they cause little beneficial effect on character, and incorporate measures for mitigation that balance any adverse effects and therefore create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Matches or fractionally improves the layout, mix scale and appearance of the existing landscape/townscape. ○ Introduces components that are broadly characteristic or fractionally improve the characteristics of the surrounding landscape/townscape. ○ Maintains or fractionally improves existing landscape / townscape quality and character. ○ Maintains or fractionally improves existing sense of place.
Medium-low beneficial	The proposals will be of slight benefit to overall landscape / townscape character as they will cause minor enhancement to key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ The proposals will slightly enhance the landscape/townscape as they create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Slightly improves the layout, mix, scale and appearance of the surrounding landscape / townscape. ○ Introduces components that slightly improve the characteristics of the receiving landscape/townscape. ○ Slightly enhances existing landscape / townscape quality and character. ○ Will enable some sense of place and quality to be restored or enhanced through beneficial and sensitive design. ○ Incorporate measures for mitigation to ensure they will blend in well with the surroundings.
Medium beneficial	The proposals will be of moderate benefit to overall landscape / townscape character as they will cause moderate enhancement to key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ The proposals will moderately enhance the landscape/townscape as they create a landscape / townscape whose character: ○ Moderately improves the layout, mix, scale and appearance of the landscape / townscape. ○ Introduces components that moderately improve of the attributes of the receiving landscape/townscape. ○ Will have a moderately positive effect on existing landscape / townscape quality and character. ○ Enables the restoration of some characteristic features or components. ○ Will enable moderate sense of place and quality to be restored or enhanced through beneficial and sensitive design.
Medium-high beneficial	The proposals will be of major benefit to overall landscape / townscape character as they will cause major enhancement of key components of the baseline landscape / townscape. <u>Guidance:</u> ▪ The proposals will significantly enhance the landscape/townscape as they create a landscape / townscape whose character:

	○ Considerably improves the layout, mix, scale and appearance of the landscape / townscape. ○ Introduces components that considerably improve the attributes of the receiving landscape/townscape. ○ Will have a considerably positive effect on a high quality or highly vulnerable landscape / townscape, causing it to be considerably enhanced in quality. ○ Enables the restoration of several characteristic features or components. ○ Will enable the sense of place and quality of a landscape of recognised quality to be considerably restored through beneficial and sensitive design.
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Table 7 – Magnitude of visual effects

Magnitude of effect	Guidance for assessing magnitude of visual effects
High adverse	The development proposals have a substantially detrimental effect on the character of the scene, becoming the dominant feature to which all other elements are subordinate.
Medium-high adverse	Where the development proposals will have a considerably detrimental effect on the character of the scene.
Medium adverse	Where the development proposals will have a moderately detrimental effect on the character of the scene.
Medium-low adverse	Where the development proposals will have an appreciably detrimental effect on the character of the scene.
Low adverse	Where the development proposals will have a slightly detrimental effect on the character of the scene.
Neutral	Where the development proposals will, on balance, have little effect on the scene and are neither adverse or beneficial: • The development cannot be seen or • The development will be scarcely appreciated in the overall view, and/or • The view may have changed but the overall effect is no worse or better than the existing.
Low beneficial	Where the development proposals will cause a slight improvement in the overall scene.
Medium-low beneficial	Where the development proposals will cause an appreciable improvement in the overall scene.
Medium beneficial	Where the development proposals will cause a moderate improvement in the overall scene.
Medium-high beneficial	Where the development proposals will cause a considerable improvement in the overall scene.
High beneficial	Where the development proposals will cause a substantial improvement in the overall scene / sense of place restored.

The final factor in determining the predicted magnitude of change is duration and reversibility. Duration and reversibility are separate but linked considerations. Duration is judged according to the defined terms set out below, whereas reversibility is a judgement about the prospects and practicality of any identified effects being reversed. The categories used in this assessment where relevant are set out below.

Duration:

- Long term (20 years+);
- Medium to Long term (10 to 20 years);
- Medium term (5 to 10 years);
- Short term (1 year to 5 years).

Reversibility:

- Permanent with unlikely restoration to original state e.g. major road corridor, power station, urban extension etc.;
- Permanent with possible conversion to original state e.g. agricultural buildings, retail units;
- Partially reversible to a different state e.g. mineral workings;
- Reversible after decommissioning to a similar original state e.g. wind energy development; and
- Quickly reversible e.g. temporary structures such as solar farms.

In order to consider the likely level of any effect, the sensitivity of each receptor is combined with the predicted magnitude of change to determine the level of effect, with reference also made to the geographical extent, duration and reversibility of the effect within the assessment. Having taken such a wide range of factors into account when assessing sensitivity and magnitude at each receptor, the level of effect can be derived by combining the sensitivity and magnitude in accordance with the matrix in Table 8.

Table 8 – Landscape effect significance matrix

		Sensitivity of landscape / visual receptors		
		High	Medium	Low
Magnitude of effect	High adverse	Severe adverse effect	Substantial adverse effect	Major adverse effect
	Medium-high adverse	Substantial adverse effect	Major adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect
	Medium adverse	Major adverse effect	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect
	Medium-low adverse	Moderate adverse effect	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect
	Low adverse	Slight adverse effect	Very slight adverse effect	Negligible adverse effect
	No change / Neutral	Neutral effect	Neutral effect	Neutral effect
	Low beneficial	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect	Negligible beneficial effect
	Medium-low beneficial	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect	Very slight beneficial effect
	Medium beneficial	Major beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect	Slight beneficial effect
	Medium-high beneficial	Substantial beneficial effect	Major beneficial effect	Moderate beneficial effect
	High beneficial	Abundant beneficial effect	Substantial beneficial effect	Major beneficial effect

In concluding the overall impact on landscape character, it is important that the focus does not become purely on a single or limited number of "Significant" effects, when the bigger picture may be one of generally minimal effects (and may also include beneficial as well as adverse effects).