A.0 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

GUIDELINES

A.1 This Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal has been carried out with reference to the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* Third edition (GLVIA3), published in 2013 by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA). The *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* published in 2002 by the Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage has also been used in the preparation of this document. The GLVIA3 publication adopts the following definition of Landscape, taken from the European Landscape Convention (ELC):

'Landscape is an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Council of Europe, 2000).

'2.4 The importance of the ELC definition is that it moves beyond the idea that landscape is only a matter of aesthetics and visual amenity. Instead it encourages a focus on landscape as a resource in its own right. It provides an integrated way of conceptualising our surroundings and is increasingly considered to provide a useful spatial framework for thinking about a wide range of environmental, land use and development issues.'

A.2 The Guidelines set out the relationship between Landscape and Visual effects in the following way:

'2.19 The ELC definition of landscape supports the need to deal with landscape as a resource in its own right. In the UK this particularly reflects the emphasis on landscape character that has developed since the 1980s. Landscape results from the interplay of the physical, natural and cultural components of our surroundings. Different combinations of these elements and their spatial distribution create the distinctive character of landscape in different places, allowing different landscapes to be mapped, analysed and described. Character is not just about the physical elements and features that make up a landscape, but also embraces the aesthetic, perceptual and experiential aspects of the landscape that make different places distinctive'.

'2.20 When the interrelationship between people ('human beings' or 'population' in the language of the Directive Regulations) and the landscape is considered, this introduces related but very different considerations, notably the views that people have and their visual amenity – meaning the overall pleasantness of the views they enjoy of their surroundings'.

'2.21 Reflecting this distinction the two components of LVIA are:

1) **assessment of landscape effects:** assessing effects on the landscape as a resource in its own right.
2) **assessment of visual effects:** assessing effects of specific views and on the general visual amenity experienced by people'.

A.3 The role of professional judgement is commented on as follows:

'2.23 Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. While there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction of a new mine, much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development or land

use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character of the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.'

A.4 This appraisal is concerned with identifying important effects, the method of which is recommended by GLVIA3 and places the emphasis on professional judgement. An explanation of how this judgement has been made is set out later in this methodology.

A.5 The publication also identifies the role of appraisals within an iterative design process:

'4.6 The iterative design and assessment process has great strength because it links the analysis of environmental issues with steps to improve the siting, layout and design of a particular scheme.'

A.6 The purpose of mitigation measures are outlined within the Guidelines:

'4.21 …measures proposed to prevent/avoid, reduce and where possible offset or remedy (or compensate for) any significant adverse landscape and visual effects should be described. In practice such mitigation measures are now generally considered to fall into three categories:

a) primary measures, developed through the iterative design process, which have become integrated or embedded into the project design;

b) standard construction and operational management practices for avoiding and reducing environmental effects;

c) secondary measures, designed to address any residual adverse effects remaining after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme'.

THE PROCESS

A.7 The initial step in the appraisal process is the collection of baseline data on the existing landscape and visual conditions. The data collected will then form the basis for the identification and description of the changes to the landscape and visual effects, when reviewed against the proposed development.

A.8 The methodology of the effect analysis stage is outlined below, including the identification of the likely important effects of the proposed development. The determination of receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effects will be related in order to form a conclusion about the importance of those effects.

Establishing the Study Area

A.9 The study area will include the application site itself and the surrounding landscape over which the proposed development **may** have an effect. In order establish this area, a combination of the following main criteria (plus others on occasion) will be considered:

- Topography
- Vegetation
- Built Form
- Landscape Character

A.10 This area will be used as an essential part of the appraisal to give a relative spatial and geographical parameter against which to make comparative judgments on the landscape and visual baseline.

LANDSCAPE

Establishing the Baseline Landscape Conditions

A.11 The landscape baseline study aims to provide an understanding of the landscape in the area that may be affected, so the effects of the proposed development on the landscape as a resource can then be analysed.

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A.13 Where possible, existing character assessments have been used including those on a broad-national scale down to localised assessments. The first step is to critically review any relevant assessments. Whilst national scale character assessments are useful in setting the landscape context local authority character assessments are often more relevant in that they provide more detail on the landscape character of the study area.

A.14 In terms of landscape character, it is important to identify and record the individual elements and features that make up the landscape, including the aesthetic and perceptual aspects which contribute to it and its distinctive character. The landscape elements (i.e. characteristics of the character area) that are present within the application site and immediate surrounds are identified and are then referred to as landscape receptors. These can include the natural physical elements such as geology and landform, cultural/social elements such as land use and settlement pattern, and aesthetic/perceptual aspects such as tranquillity and remoteness. In addition to the key characteristics landscape receptors can also include other specific features within the landscape e.g. scheduled ancient monuments, registered parkland, where a change to their landscape setting may influence the features own character

A.15 The **value** of the landscape and its **condition** should be considered as part of the landscape baseline study. These are described as follows:

Landscape value is the importance of a landscape receptor at community, local, national or international levels. Value may be recognised through landscapes designations both statutory/non-statutory and through those given by local planning authorities. The value of undesignated landscapes should also be considered. Value may also be attributed to a receptor due to its rarity within the character area or through any cultural associations (i.e. landscapes associated with particular peoples such as artists/writers or are linked to an event in history).

Landscape condition is the physical state of the landscape receptor whether that is over the geo-graphical extent it has influence upon or within the application site itself. In regards to landscape character it is also the extent to which the typical character is represented by the landscape receptor. Current pressures causing change in the landscape should also be considered.

A.16 Within the landscape baseline study each landscape receptors value and condition will be considered and judged using the following word scale: low, medium & high and presented in a summary table.

Appraisal of Landscape Effects

A.17 In order to judge the level of importance of the effects of the development on the landscape, an assessment of the sensitivity of the landscape receptors and the magnitude of the effects needs to be established.

Sensitivity – of Landscape Receptors

A.18 In order to establish the sensitivity of landscape components, the interaction between the receptors and the proposals will be assessed. The **susceptibility** to change arising from the proposal will be judged and combined with the **value** of the receptor (determined at the baseline) to form the level of receptor sensitivity. Within this appraisal the meaning of the term landscape sensitivity is similar to that used within the wider subject of landscape planning, however it differs in that it is specific to this particular proposed development and application site, rather than a general level of sensitivity.

Susceptibility to change means the ability of a particular landscape receptor to accommodate the proposed development without detrimental effect on the baseline condition. The aim of assessing landscape susceptibility is to allow the consideration of the specific proposals as opposed to a general type of development.

Value of the landscape receptor will have been established at the baseline stage. Considering it again here allows the landscape receptors susceptibility to be combined with the pre-determined value to ultimately give a level of landscape sensitivity.

Magnitude – of Landscape effects

A.19 The degree of effect on landscape receptors will be assessed based on the following criteria, in order to give a level of magnitude:

- Size or Scale – of change in the landscape that is likely to be experienced as a result of each effect.
- Geographical Extent – of the area over which the landscape effects will be experienced.
- Duration – A time scale suitable to the type of development will be selected and divided in to short, medium and long term.
- Reversibility – whether the proposal is permanent, partially or fully reversible, linked to duration above.

A.20 For this appraisal, the judgement of receptor sensitivity and magnitude of effect will be recorded using the following word scale:

Level	Landscape Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect
High	A designated national or regional landscape Quality landscape of distinct character Landscape susceptible to relatively small change	Several key landscape elements effected or lost. Long term duration (10 to 25 years) Permanent / irreversible
Medium	A landscape of distinct local significance or moderately valued characteristics, or reasonably tolerant of change	Intermediate scale of landscape elements effected. Medium term duration (5 to 10 years) Partially reversible
Low	A non-designated landscape, or relatively ordinary landscape in the local context, or potentially tolerant of substantial change.	Small proportion of minor landscape elements effected. Short term duration (0 to 5 years) Could be removed and land reinstated.

Judging the Importance of Landscape Effects

A.21 The degree of receptor sensitivity and magnitude of effect will be combined to allow a judgement to be made on the level of importance. There is some professional judgement and subjectivity in determining the category of effect and whether these are important or not, as required by the regulations. For the purpose of this assessment, importance of landscape effect will be classified using the following word scale: Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and effects may be Adverse, Neutral or Beneficial.

A.22 The following table gives an approximate guide to the level of importance for each category in the word scale:

Major Adverse	Total loss of or major alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
Moderate Adverse	Potential loss of or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
Minor Adverse	Minor loss of or alteration to the key characteristics or features of the landscape area.
Negligible/Neutral	Very minor loss or change to the landscape characteristics or features of the area, compensated by landscape improvements or enhancements.

Minor Beneficial	Minor improvements to the key characteristics or features that outweigh any adverse effects of the proposal. Removal of minor incongruous features.
Moderate Beneficial	Notable improvements to the key landscape characteristics or features, or improvements resulting from removal of inappropriate land uses or features.
Major Beneficial	Major landscape improvements, through the creation of a new landscape structure, or the removal of large scale inappropriate features.

VISUAL

Establishing the Visual Baseline

A.23 The visual baseline will establish the following factors of existing visual amenity:

- The area in which the development may be visible
- The different groups of people who may experience views of the development
- The viewpoints where they will be effected and the nature of the views at those points

A.24 The area in which the development may be visible will be referred to as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) based on topography, built form and existing vegetation. The different groups of people will be referred to as receptors and viewpoint locations chosen to represent their current visual amenity. At each viewpoint, baseline photographs were taken to record the existing views. The following table sets out the general likely (intrinsic) sensitivity of different groups of people (without consideration of the specific proposals). A visual baseline report will be produced in a table format to combine the findings from the various visual receptors.

	Type of Visual Receptor
Most Sensitive	▪ Residents at home ▪ People engaged in outdoor recreational (including PROW), whose attention or interest is focused on the landscape. ▪ Visitors to heritage assets ▪ Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting
Moderately Sensitive	▪ People travelling through or past the affected landscape in cars, or trains or other transport routes.
Least Sensitive	▪ People engaged in an outdoor sport or recreation other than appreciation of the landscape. ▪ People at their place of work whose attention may be focused on their work or activity and may be less susceptible to changes in the view.

Site Visits and Photography

A.25 A desk top review was carried out to identify potential visual receptors, followed by site and field visits to walk the public footpaths and other publically accessible areas. During the field survey, carried out on the 04th March 2020, the application site itself was visited initially to consider outward looking views to potential receptors, after which inward looking views towards the application site from the receptors in the surrounding landscape were visited to check site visibility.

A.26 The locations were visited on the 19th March 2020 to take the viewpoint photographs for use in the Appendices. The camera lens used was a Sony DT 35mm/ F1.8 SAM with a 44° angle of view. During this visit, landmarks which appear in each of the views were noted, for later use as reference points in the viewpoint photographs.

Appraisal of Visual Effects

A.27 In order to judge the level of importance of the effects of the development on visual amenity, an assessment of the sensitivity of the visual receptors and the magnitude of the effects needs to be established.

Sensitivity – of visual receptors

A.28 In order to establish the sensitivity of visual components, the interaction between the proposals and the receptors, plus the resultant effects will be identified. The susceptibility to change arising from the specific proposal and value of the view will be judged and combined to form the level of receptor sensitivity.

Susceptibility to change means the ability of a particular visual receptor to accommodate the proposed development without detrimental effect on the baseline condition.

Value attached to the view experienced by the people looking at it. This judgement should consider heritage assets, planning designations, dedicated tourist viewpoints, scenic routes, plus local views and vantage points.

Magnitude – of Effect

A.29 The assessment of magnitude of visual effects considers the following factors:

- Size or Scale – of the change in the view, in terms of the removal or addition of features. This can be assessed by considering the degree of intrusion into the view, the proportion of development seen and the distance from the viewpoint.
- Geographical Extent – of a visual effect will change from each view point and so will consider the angle of view, distance and extent of area affected.
- Duration & Reversibility –the length of time the view will be affected i.e. to short, medium and long term and whether the proposal is permanent, partially or fully reversible (linked to duration).

A.30 For this appraisal, the judgement of receptor sensitivity and magnitude of effect will be recorded using the following word scale:

Level	Visual Receptor Sensitivity	Magnitude of Effect
High	People in situations where they are particularly open and susceptible to any change in the view and / or loss of visual attractiveness / amenity. A view recognised for its value through designations and its popularity with visitors.	Large scale change in the composition of the view due to a considerable proportion of the development being in view. A direct, close range view, filling most of the scene. An effect with a long term duration and little prospect of being reversed.
Medium	Activities where people are not specifically focussed on viewing their surroundings, but may do so in a more casual way and so would be relatively susceptible to changes in the view. A reasonably pleasant view within the study area, but of average value.	A reasonably noticeable change in the view, with elements neither contrasting nor integrating with the existing / remaining elements. A partial view of the proposed development. Not in full view, but greater than from an oblique angle. A middle distance view. Of a medium term duration and possible reversibility, but with practical or financial restrictions.
Low	Groups or individuals who are preoccupied with activities which do not involve observing views of the surrounding landscape. A mundane view with no particular value.	Small scale change in the composition of the view, with new elements integrating with existing. Glimpsed or distant views, from an oblique angle. Change affecting only a small part of the view. Short term duration, with the possibility of being removed and reinstated.

Judging the Importance of Visual Effects

A.31 The relationship between Sensitivity and Magnitude allows a definition of Importance of Visual Effects. There is some subjectivity and professional judgement in determining the category of effect based on the judgement of sensitivity and magnitude. For the purpose of this appraisal Importance of Visual Effects is classified as one of the following four levels: Major, Moderate, Minor or Negligible and effects maybe Adverse, Neutral or Beneficial, as set out in the table below:

Major Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a substantial deterioration in the view.
Moderate Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable deterioration in the view.
Minor Adverse	Where the scheme would cause a slight deterioration in the view.
Negligible/Neutral	Where the scheme would not form a noticeable deterioration or improvement in the view.
Minor Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a slight improvement in the view.
Moderate Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a noticeable improvement in view.
Major Beneficial	Where the scheme would cause a significant substantial improvement in the view.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL SUMMARY TABLES

A.32 For the purposes of this appraisal, the following table combines the judgements of sensitivity and magnitude to allow a final judgement of the level of importance:

Importance		**Magnitude**			
		High	***Medium***	***Low***	***Negligible***
Sensitivity	***High***	Major	Moderate/ Major	Moderate	Minor/ Moderate
	Medium	Moderate/ Major	Moderate	Minor/Moderate	Minor
	Low	Moderate	Minor /Moderate	Minor	Negligible/ Minor
	Negligible	Minor/ Moderate	Minor	Negligible/ Minor	Negligible

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

A.33 This landscape and visual appraisal has worked on a number of assumptions in relation to the proposals. The following key assumptions have formed the basis of the methodology:

- The visual appraisal considers winter conditions to depict maximum effect.
- The assessment of effects is based on the mitigation measures being fully implemented and the structure planting achieving typical growth rates.

A.34 No significant limitations in terms of technical information have been identified.