

# **INDEPENDENT LANDSCAPE & VISUAL ISSUES ADVICE**

## **Brook Meadows**

Tiptree, CO5 0QF

**CBC planning application 202604**

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Appendix A      Methodology & criteria for Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA)

*Appendices have colour coded footers.*

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This note sets out a brief professional opinion on the likely nature of landscape and visual issues relating to a development proposal. It is an exploratory exercise considering the implications of the development proposal in relation to the character and appearance of the local area. It is intended to assist with the Local Planning Authority in its appraisal of the planning case and, where appropriate, to advise on the need for any further investigation.
- 1.2 This work has been informed by desk and field study carried out and interpreted by a Chartered Landscape Architect experienced in landscape assessment and landscape design issues relating to planning and development.
- 1.3 Desk study work completed:
- Reading and review of the submitted plans and particulars of the planning application, where of relevance to landscape and visual matters.
  - Reading and review of the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal report and associated documents.
  - Review of local landscape character publications and any attributed value/quality for the local landscape setting;
  - Review of local planning policy context checking for statutory and local planning designations regarding protection of the landscape;
  - Review of nearby heritage assets such as Parks & Gardens, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments; and
  - Supplementary zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) mapping.
- 1.4 Field survey work completed:
- Site visit to confirm form and features of site;
  - Observation of context to review and refine understanding of local landscape character;
  - Checking potential visibility of the proposed development from public vantage points (guided by the above ZTV mapping); and
  - Collection of viewpoint photography records.

# 2. Development proposal

- 2.1 Colchester Borough Council planning application 202604. The description of the development is:
- Outline application for the erection of up to 221 dwellings and associated infrastructure and works.*
- 2.2 This is an outline planning application, with all matters reserved, except for access. However, the submitted DAS and Master Plan (Vista Architecture & Urban Design drawing 20-454-02 May 2020) provide illustrative material and an indication of the form that the development could take.

### 3. The site & setting

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE & SETTING

- 3.1 Paragraphs 2.1 to 2.8 and 2.46 to 2.48 of the submitted landscape and visual appraisal report (Aspect Landscape Planning LVIA ref: 7024.LVIA.005.VF July 2021), for the most part provide an accurate description of the proposed development site and its setting. However, the following further observations are offered.
- 3.2 The application site is not an arable field. It has been left largely unmanaged and unproductive since at least as early as 2005. Aerial photography evidence from Google Earth shows the proposed site left unmanaged and traversed by well trodden paths since 2005. It is now scrub grassland with a variety of cover, including some large areas of Willow scrub and one notable wet area with boggy vegetation.



- 3.3 Much of the adjacent Inworth Grange gravel pits area was restored a few decades ago; the most recent area to be excavated was restored in around 2005, and the other pits were restored significantly earlier. This was the northern group of lakes. All restored areas are now well established functional habitats and landscape components. The woodland cover is a mix of old woodland predating the gravel extraction works and some more recent woodland that is the results of the restoration work. In addition to this woodland cover, field hedges in the area are often managed as tall boundaries, which enhance the feeling of enclosure locally.
- 3.4 Recent development at Grange Road, and the football training ground, have little influence over this area. They are away to the north, partly behind other developed areas of Tiptree, and/or behind intervening layers of vegetated boundaries.



## 4. Landscape character & value

### LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

4.1 The Aspect LVIA outlines the National, County and District landscape character areas context for the proposed development site. The Colchester Landscape Character Assessment 2005 is the most local level study appraised and this defines the landscape context to the west of Tiptree as the Tiptree Wooded Farmland Landscape Character Area F2. This character area also extends around the southern and eastern edges of Tiptree and it does not provide any detailed understanding of the context of the proposed development site. The Aspect LVIA does not refer to The Review of Countryside Conservation Areas in Colchester Borough 2005, nor The Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough 2005. Both of these provide some relevant further background comment on the landscape context.

4.2 The Review of Countryside Conservation Areas in Colchester Borough assesses the area of LCA F2 to the west of Tiptree, as 'Moderate' value landscape. At paragraph 3.7.4 it states:

*Areas of moderate value coincide with fragmented landscapes to the west and south of Tiptree. These landscapes are characterised by mineral extraction, reservoirs, industrial and agricultural land uses. There is an urban fringe character to the landscape and hence a reduction in the visual appeal of the landscape. Conservation interests include several SINC's that consist of ancient woodland and gravel pits. Due to the human influence on the landscape a sense of wildness is largely absent and tranquillity is also compromised by the high levels of activity within these parts of the character area.*

4.3 The Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough provides some more detailed observation with the western edge of Tiptree more specifically defined as Tiptree Landscape Setting Area 4. The analysis provided for Tiptree Landscape Setting Area 4 is:

- *This landscape setting area is situated on top of a broad south-west running ridge;*
- *An area of sand and gravel pits and associated small ponds (designated as a SINC) form a distinctive feature in the centre of the setting area;*
- *A strip of thin, very regular linear fields expand from the north of Tiptree Heath appear to be associated with settlement pattern. These are surrounded to the north by large regular arable fields, with deciduous trees in generally intact hedgerows;*
- *Views can be gained from Windmill Hill southwards towards Tiptree and the harsh settlement edge of the new development west of Vine Road;*
- *There are several patches of harsh urban settlement edge along the western edge of Maldon Road.*

4.4 The Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough gives this area a 'High/Moderate' landscape value and appraises it as having 'Limited' capacity for development.

4.5 It should be noted that The Review of Countryside Conservation Areas in Colchester Borough 2005, and The Landscape Capacity of Settlement Fringes in Colchester Borough 2005, are both over 17 years old and the

landscape in the area of the application site will have changed considerably in that period. The maturing of the gravel pit restoration works will have brought more change than is likely in many other areas.

- 4.6 The Tiptree Neighbourhood Plan does not offer any further work on landscape characterisation or the differential value of local landscape areas. However, in more general terms it does state the importance of the countryside around the settlement. Interestingly, the only direct depiction of this countryside setting, that is provided in the NP, is the photo on page 41. This is a view from within the application site, looking in a south-easterly direction across it.
- 4.7 None of the published studies appropriately define and capture the character of the local landscape area in which the proposed development would be a component, and in which its influence should be considered. This should be a commonly recognisable local landscape area. In this case, the 'local landscape' can be defined as the countryside on the close west edge of Tiptree, incorporating: the land making up the proposed development site, the area of the restored Inworth Grange gravel pits, and the immediately adjacent fields which form the rural setting to these areas. This is a distinct and identifiable local landscape area on this edge of Tiptree.
- 4.8 This is an enclave of countryside, somewhat separate from the outlying arable farmland. It is a highly enclosed landscape with a matrix of wetland, woodland, meadow, hedge and field habitats. The bulk of the area is dominated by non-farming land uses and it has a high level of recreational access and use. The combined characteristics result in it feeling rather like a country park area.

#### LANDSCAPE VALUE

- 4.9 Assessment of the 'value' of the local landscape is normally done by reviewing a range of indicative factors, such as those provided in the Landscape Institute's current guidance on LVIA (GLVIA3) at box 3.1, or the more recent Landscape Institute specific guidance note LI TGN 02/21 titled Assessing landscape value outside national designations. This is an essential step in understanding and predicting the representative level or significance of landscape effects on a given local landscape area, and is particularly important given the wording at Paragraph 174a of the NPPF:

*'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... protecting and enhancing valued landscapes ...'*

- 4.10 In this case, the Aspect LVIA has carried out an assessment for the value of the proposed application site using the criteria defined in GLVIA3 box 3.1. The Aspect LVIA assesses the value of the application site as 'Medium' value (Paragraph 2.56). It goes on to state that this does not represent a 'valued landscape' within the context of the NPPF.
- 4.11 The Aspect LVIA landscape valuation exercise is focussed on the value of the 'application site'. This provides only a very narrow view and does not capture the real value of the local landscape.
- 4.12 With regard to the local landscape, the following table provides observations against each of the landscape value criteria defined in LI TGN 02/21. This provides a profile of indicators of landscape value and suggests that an appraisal of landscape effects should be considered in the context of this location having a higher value than perhaps the Aspect LVIA suggests.

Indicator factor	observation
Natural heritage interests	<p>There is a complex matrix of habitat types within the local landscape. This includes: the restored gravel pit water bodies, wetland areas and smaller pockets of naturally vegetated wet ground, meadow and grassland, frequent woodland pockets, field hedges and old trees, lowland heath regeneration in places (indicated by gorse), and areas of willow scrub regeneration.</p> <p>This is a range of habitats that clearly should be of relevance to ideas of landscape value. The Local Wildlife Site designation Co10 Inworth Grange Pit is clear recognition of the natural heritage interests of the area.</p>
Cultural heritage interests	No obvious interests such as SAMs or nearby Listed Buildings.
Landscape condition	There has been some field boundary loss within the proposed development site area, but in general the area has quite good historic boundary retention and the historic field parcel structure of the landscape remains largely intact. The gravel pits have been attractively restored and are well established vibrant habitats. The proposed development site is undergoing a period of natural transition, brought about by a lack of management in recent years, but that should not detract from any appropriate judgement of local landscape condition.
Associations	Cursory investigations have not revealed any cultural associations with this area.
Distinctiveness	The proposed development site and its countryside context have a strong sense of identity due to the mix of features present, for instance: the strongly wooded framework and the matrix of wetland habitats of the restored gravel pits.
Recreational opportunities	Tiptree Footpaths 19, 20, 21 & 38, and Byway 17, give good walking links through the area and to the edges of the proposed development site. This is a well-used and popular area for countryside access. It is evident, from historical aerial photography, that the proposed development site has been criss-crossed by a well worn path network since at least as early as 2005. This provides a variety of desire lines giving access throughout the proposed development site and into adjacent spaces as well as providing additional linkages to the official public rights of way network within the area. Access points to this informal network of paths are well established from the adjacent streets, such as Pennsylvania Lane, Perry Road, and Brook Meadows, and in some cases include formalising features such as kissing gates and dog bins. There is also a small piece of Registered Common Land near to the end of Perry Road. This seems to provide a public access completion of Footpath 38. In addition to this general countryside access use, the



	restored gravel pit lakes are managed and in use by a local fishing club.
Perceptual appeal (scenic / wildness & tranquillity)	The woodland framing provides an appealing contained countryside scene backdrop. Exploring the matrix of woodland and lakes of the restored gravel pits gives a sense of wildness, although the obvious human activity and worn paths brings a certain country park character. In general it is an area where the landscape quickly becomes dominating and where the settlement edge is a recessive component of the scene.

- 4.13 The above observations do not reveal any individually decisive factors in relation to the determination of landscape value. However, the combination of attributes gives the area a distinctive sense of place and this should be recognised in an assessment of landscape value for the purposes of appraising the level of effect a development would have on the character of the local landscape.
- 4.14 It may be debateable whether the local landscape setting, of the proposed development site, has sufficiently notable qualities for it to be deemed as an NPPF Paragraph 174a 'valued landscape'. However, it is clear that it should be regarded at least as a landscape of higher value than 'ordinary countryside'. A grading of Medium/High value is therefore deemed appropriate for feeding in as a baseline in the appraisal of effect on local landscape character.

## 5. Visibility & prominence

- 5.1 The contained and enclosed nature of the local landscape means that the extent of visual influence of the proposed development would be relatively small. In the main, the visual receptors, that would be affected to a notable level, would be people using the public rights of way network crossing through the area. This is Tiptree Footpaths 19, 20, 21 & 38; and Tiptree Byway 17. People visiting the registered Common land at the end of Perry Road, should also be deemed to be included in this.

## 6. Landscape & visual appraisal

- 6.1 The tables below provide a quick reference summary of Nigel Cowlin Ltd appraisal findings for sensitivity and magnitude judgements leading to overall levels of effect for the most significant landscape and visual receptors.

### LANDSCAPE EFFECTS

#### Local landscape character

- 6.2 The countryside on the close west edge of Tiptree, incorporating the land making up the proposed development site, the area of the restored Inworth Grange gravel pits, and the adjacent fields which form the immediate rural setting to these areas.

factor	judgement	notes
Value	Medium/High	See 4.7 to 4.13 above
Susceptibility	Medium/High	Housing development occupies land to the east and frames this edge of the area, so additional housing would not be entirely out of place. That said, the character of this area is

		otherwise predominantly defined by its mix of non-farming land uses and recreational access held within a framework of woodland. The open land of the application site is an important component of that mix of spaces and relates well to the adjacent residential edge of Tiptree.
Sensitivity	Medium/High	
Size/scale	Medium	The open land of the application site provides a notable contribution to, and is a positive feature of the local landscape. The proposed development would largely remove this component of the local landscape.
Geographic extent	Low/Medium	The contained nature of the location prevents highly extensive effects beyond the immediate local context
Magnitude	Low/Medium	
Level of effect	MODERATE	

## VISUAL EFFECTS

People using the footpath network crossing through the local landscape, as defined above.

factor	judgement	notes
Value	Medium	Views from these popular public rights of way are likely to be a common part of the local understanding of the area and universally appreciated as offering local amenity value.
Susceptibility	High	People engaged in recreation where scenic appreciation of the outdoor environment is an important aspect of the activity.
Sensitivity	High	
Size/scale	Low/Medium	Incidences of low, medium and high size/scale of effects are likely in different locations on these paths, depending on the composition of the foreground. In some instances, the views would be quite filtered and subtle. In others, the development would be more plainly prominent in the scene. Low/Medium is a fair summary judgement.
Geographic extent	Medium	A variety of view width would be affected, but in most cases this would relate to changes that are from a source that is nearby but not necessarily directly adjacent to the visual receptor location, and these changes would be seen in a repeated fashion from a number of different vantage points throughout this path network.
Magnitude	Medium	
Level of effect	MODERATE	

- 6.3 Due to the relatively well contained nature of the area, other outlying visual receptors are unlikely to experience any notably harmful visual effects.

## 7. Mitigation

- 7.1 This work has been undertaken with an open mind to the possibilities and opportunities for providing mitigation improvements or other alterations to the proposals, which may be of benefit in preventing or reducing any harmful landscape and/or visual effects. In this case, no further scope for substantive mitigation improvements have been identified. The proposed landscape strategy, with perimeter parkland corridors, would provide some further softening and accommodation of the development, but this does not alter the basic character and appearance changes to the extent that would be required to notably downgrade the levels of landscape and visual effect predicted.

## 8. Comparison of findings

- 8.1 The LVA effects assessment criteria/methodology employed are different to that employed by Aspect Landscape Planning and the corresponding results are not entirely comparable as a result. For instance the Aspect LVIA effects assessment criteria/methodology is difficult to interrogate in relation to GLVIA3 suggested factors for magnitude of change. GLVIA3 advocates the analysis of size/scale and geographic extent judgements to combine to give an understanding of the magnitude of effect on a landscape or visual receptor. Similarly, the Aspect LVIA does not provide a breakdown of factors contribution to judgements of sensitivity for visual receptors. GLVIA3 advocates the analysis of the value of a view and susceptibility of the visual receptor to combine to give an understanding of the sensitivity of visual receptors.
- 8.2 Nevertheless, the end results do bear some comparison and for the most part the two sets of findings are not too far apart. The main difference perhaps comes with the assessment of effect on the local landscape character. The Aspect LVIA determines this to be Moderate/Minor at year 1<sup>1</sup>, reducing to Minor in the long term<sup>2</sup>. Nigel Cowlin Ltd records a Moderate level of landscape effect in the long and short term. This may be based on the different approaches employed in determining the appropriate 'landscape value' factor. The Aspect LVIA concentrates on the value of the application site, whereas the correct approach is to consider the value of the local landscape setting.
- 8.3 At a few points the Aspect LVIA also proposes comparison with the nearby Maldon Road application and often quotes from the appeal decision for that case. This can be misleading, as although these two sites are near to each other, they occupy very different settings and have very different roles in the composition of the landscape.

## 9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area that should be given some weight by Colchester Borough Council in its appraisal of the planning case. The level of this harm is not sufficient to be an overwhelming individual influence on the planning decision, but it is appropriate to consider this harm as part of the overall planning balance. Perhaps this could be summarised as it

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<sup>1</sup> Aspect LVIA, page 35, para 4.16

<sup>2</sup> Aspect LVIA, page 36, para 4.17

- being appropriate to give 'moderate' weight to the identified landscape and visual harm.
- 9.2 In this case, landscape harm would be expressed within a quite tightly defined local landscape area. There would be limited harm to the wider context, but the harm within the defined local context would be quite pronounced. This is partly due to the recreational value that the area has and that is in turn partly due to the amount of unofficial, albeit well established, access and use. This may be a slightly problematic basis in relation to the planning case, but it seems that local people have enjoyed uninterrupted access over the application site land for at least the last 17 years.
- 9.3 Although not entirely within the remit of this reporting, with the clear recreational use and value the land has, combined with the interesting environmental qualities, such as the wooded framework and featuring the restored gravel pits, it would seem a suitable candidate for designation under the terms of NPPF paragraph 101 'Local Green Space'. All three criteria listed in NPPF para 102 seem to apply.

## APPENDIX A

# Methodology & criteria for Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA)

### PURPOSE

- a1. LVIA can be employed in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment work where it may form a technical chapter in the Environmental Statement. This is considered the formal application of LVIA. Landscape and visual impact assessment is also often provided to assist with the appraisal of otherwise ordinary planning cases. These situations are considered to represent the informal application of LVIA and they are commonly referred to as landscape and Visual Appraisals (LVA).
- a2. This methodology framework has been developed for use in Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) relating to common development proposal scenarios going through ordinary planning processes.

### BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

- a3. The methodology set out here has been developed with reference to industry best practice guidance for landscape and visual impact assessment as set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (Third Edition) published by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment in 2013 (GLVIA3). The principles, approaches and terminology employed in this methodology are consistent with that as set out and used in GLVIA3.

### LVIA/LVA THEORY OVERVIEW

- a4. GLVIA3 provides the following basic definition of LVIA:  
*'Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is a tool used to identify and assess the significance of and the effects of change resulting from development on both the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity'*<sup>3</sup>
- a5. There are two linked but separately assessed components to LVIA/LVA:
  - The assessment of landscape effects, i.e. the effects on the landscape as a resource, whereby the landscape is broken down at different scales into defined and identifiable character areas (grouped and described as landscape receptors); and
  - The assessment of visual effects, i.e. the effects on views and visual amenity as experienced by people (grouped and described as visual receptors).
- a6. Step by step flow diagrams for the process of assessing landscape effects and visual effects are provided as Figures A1 & A2 below. These are based on figures 5.1 & 6.1 within GLVIA3 (but there is some adjustment to tie more closely with magnitude of effect factors as set out in the text of GLVIA3).
- a7. These processes are designed to inform judgements about the nature and seriousness of effects. It is common environmental practice to determine the level of effect by combining judgements regarding the 'sensitivity' of receptors and the 'magnitude' of change, and from those factors make a judgement as to the seriousness (significance or level) of the effect. This methodology follows this approach and further utilises the relevant factors outlined in GLVIA3 for informing the determination of sensitivity and magnitude in relation to landscape effects and visual effects.

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<sup>3</sup> GLVIA3, page 4, paragraph 1.1

- a8. In relation to the assessment of landscape effects the following factors should be taken into account:
- The size or scale of change in the landscape;
  - The geographical extent over which the landscape effect will be felt;
  - The duration and reversibility of the effects;
  - The ability of the landscape receptor to accommodate the changes with regard to maintaining the baseline condition or in relation to the aims of adopted landscape policy or strategies (this is known as landscape receptor susceptibility); and
  - The relative value or status of the landscape receptor as indicated by landscape designations and/or an appraisal of recognised qualitative criteria.
- a9. Similarly, for the assessment of visual effects the following factors are relevant considerations:
- The size or scale of change in the view;
  - The geographical extent of visual effect;
  - The duration and reversibility of the effect;
  - The occupation or activity of people at a particular location and the extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on views and visual amenity (visual receptor susceptibility); and
  - The relative value attached to those views, perhaps indicated by planning designations, literary references or simply the numbers of people benefitting from the view.
- a10. The last two points in each of the above lists generally relate to judgements concerning the sensitivity of receptors and the other three points align more with judgements of magnitude of effect.



Figure A1 - Flow diagram for assessment of landscape effects

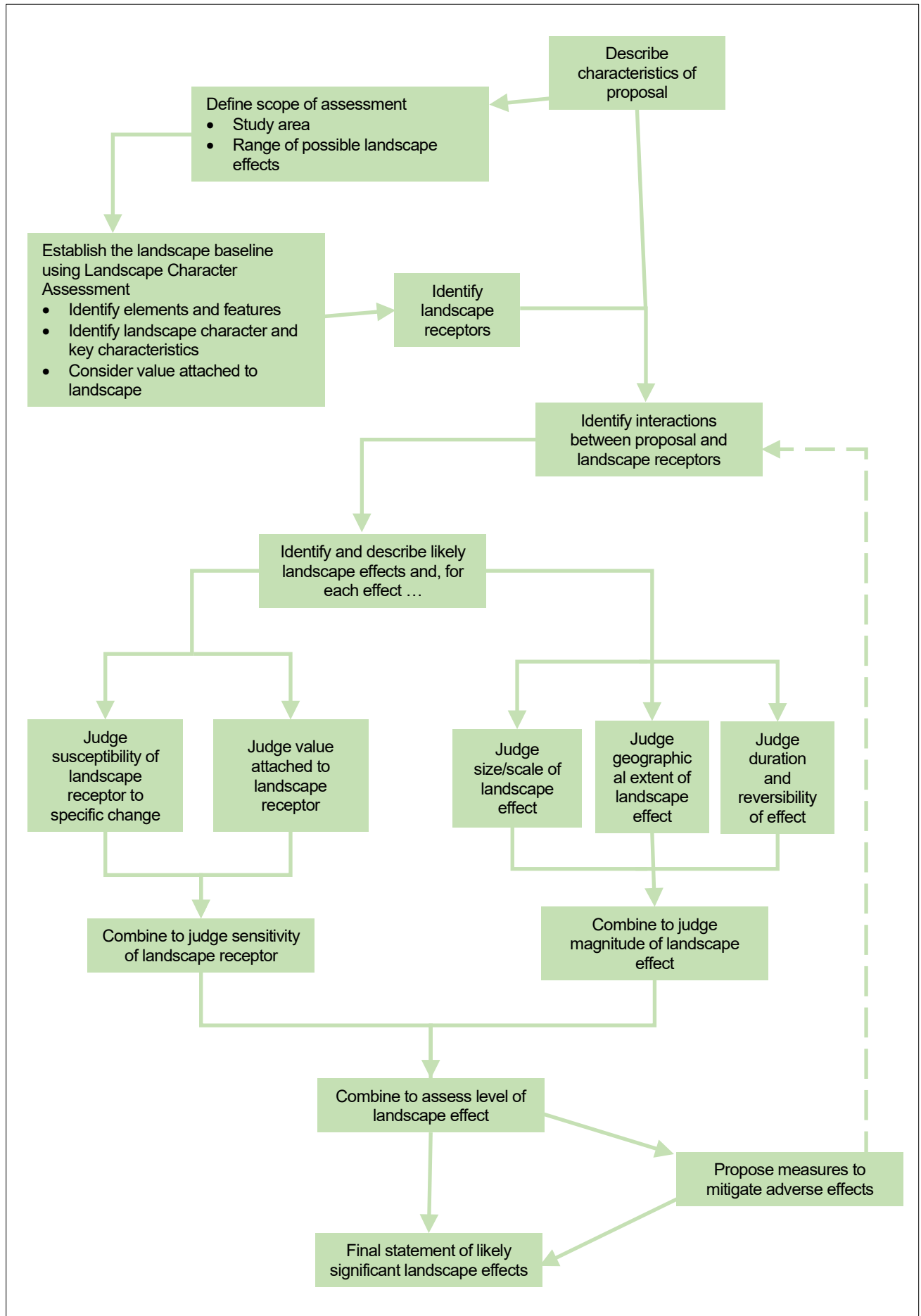
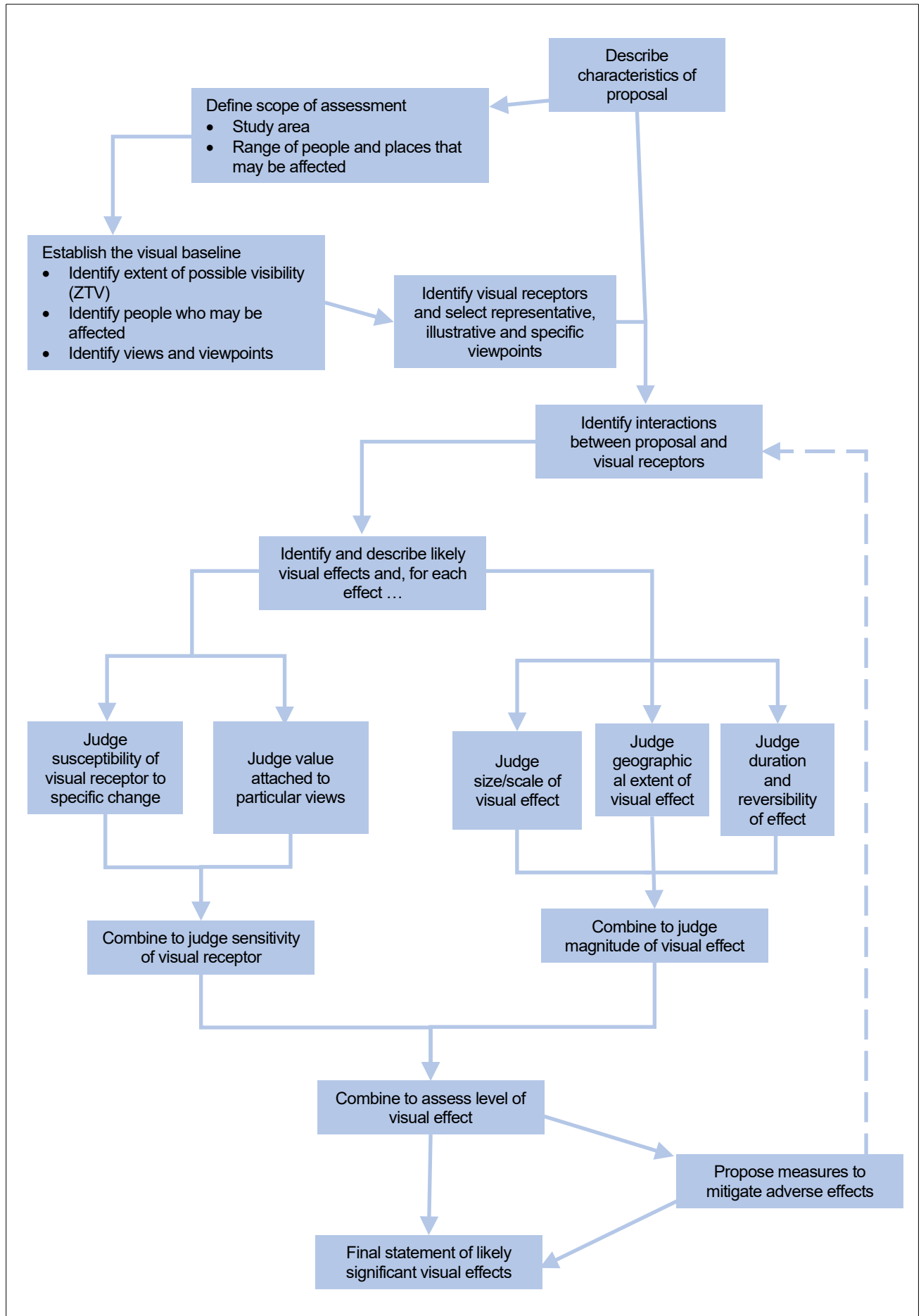


Figure A2 - Flow diagram for assessment of visual effects



### TAILORED METHODOLOGY

- a12. As identified, in the LVIA theory overview above, sensitivity and magnitude judgements are two factors that in combination assist with consideration and determination of overall grading of the level of effects. Similarly, judgements of sensitivity and magnitude are each informed by two or more other factors. The principal focus of this tailored methodology is to provide guidance on what indicators should be considered and how to understand the level or relative grading of these indicators when forming judgements about each of these factors. The methodology also provides guidance on issues to consider when combining different factors to form sensitivity and magnitude judgements, as well as when combining sensitivity and magnitude judgements to inform overall assessment of the seriousness or level of the effect.
- a13. The guidance on indicators to assist with consideration of factors leading to judgements about sensitivity and magnitude is set out in table form in the next section of this methodology framework. These are organised into different sections for landscape effects and visual effects.

#### Note on subjectivity

- a14. LVIA work is not a simple objective scientific discipline. The formulation of methodologies can only go so far in providing a framework attempting to maximise transparency and consistency in the complex processes involved. Professional judgement is therefore a very important part of LVIA work and there will inevitably be a degree of subjectivity in making LVIA judgements.

#### Note on flexibility of approach

- a15. The tables provided with this methodology identify typical indicators for judgement levels relating to the different consideration factors leading to decisions about magnitude and sensitivity. These indicators are not likely to address all scenarios and are intended only as a starting point and guide.

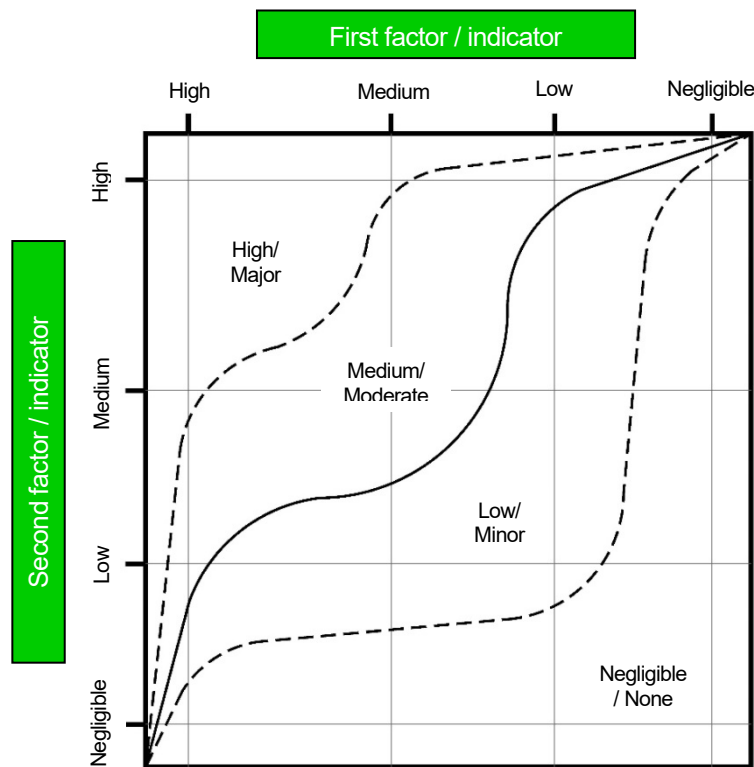
#### Note on duration and reversibility

- a16. Consideration of the duration and reversibility of effects (one of the potential factors relating to magnitude of effects) is not included in this methodology. This is because for common development scenarios, for which this methodology is directed, there is little variance in terms of duration and reversibility. Landscape mitigation measures may reduce or modify the effects over time, but the fundamental changes remain. The benefits and implications of mitigation measures are specifically addressed in LVIA study and lead to moderated determinations of level of effect at timeframes representing stages of growth and maturity of any landscape mitigation measures. As this is separately dealt with in the study, and there are no remaining aspects of duration and reversibility that need further consideration, this methodology provides no further reference to these matters.

### Note on combining factors

- a17. The overall level of effect is derived from a combination of judgements about sensitivity of receptor and magnitude of change/effect. In this methodology framework sensitivity and magnitude are likewise derived from a combination of two factors. At both stages of the process the same principles apply in the combination of two factors for the outcome in another. Most importantly, it is acknowledged that the combination of two factors to determine a resultant judgement should not be assumed a linear relationship with equal weighting or balancing of the two factors. The two factors are indicators of a judgement, but in each case a discerning assessment is required as one factor may outweigh the other and vice versa. Where both factors generally accord, the resultant judgement will most likely be clear and definitive. However, where the two factors are at odds, with one regarded as high and the other low, the overall judgement requires more consideration. In these situations, it may be that a balanced averaging of the two would be appropriate, but in some cases one factor may outweigh another. Professional judgement supported by rational argument must be applied. The matrix below provides an illustration of this more fluid relationship between assessment factors or indicators in the determination of overall LVIA judgements. This is based on a similar diagram that was provided in the 2011 IEMA Special Report - The State of Environmental Impact Assessment Practice in the UK.

Figure A3 - Matrix showing judgement from two factors/indicators



N.B.

Judgement of sensitivity and magnitude are derived from factors/indicators that are represented in this methodology on a four-band verbal scale. The same four band verbal scale is used for the resultant judgements of sensitivity and magnitude (Negligible/Low/Medium/High). Whereas a different four band scale is employed to distinguish overall levels of effect (Negligible/Minor/Moderate/Major).

Note on significance / level of effect

- a18. For the purposes of EIA it is necessary to identify whether effect is likely to be environmentally significant. As this methodology is not intended for use in EIA development scenarios, and to avoid any confusion of interpretation, use of the term 'significant' or 'significance' is largely avoided.

Note on direction of effect – adverse or beneficial

- a19. Landscape and visual effects can be of an adverse or beneficial nature. The methods for assessing level effect outlined in this methodology are not concerned with the bias of the effect. This is a separate concern and it is sometimes an entirely subjective matter. However, the following general rules are suggested:
- a20. Beneficial landscape effects will relate to the introduction of elements/characteristics that would be considered complimentary to (enhance/reinforce/restore) what is attractive and distinctive about the character of the given area, or the removal of elements/characteristics that would be considered at odds with or degrading to the attractive and distinctive qualities of landscape character in the area. Conversely, negative landscape effects will relate to the introduction of elements/characteristics which would be considered at odds with or degrading to the qualities of landscape character in the area, or removal of elements/characteristics which would be considered complimentary to (enhance/reinforce/restore) qualities of landscape character in the area. There may also be scope for effects of a neutral nature if the subject elements/characteristics are not notably contributing to nor detracting from what is attractive about the landscape in the area.
- a21. Beneficial visual effects will relate to the introduction of features which would be considered complimentary to (enhance/reinforce/restore) what is attractive or special about a given scene composition, or the removal of features which would be considered at odds with or degrading to the attractive qualities of the scene composition. Conversely, negative visual effects will relate to the introduction of elements/characteristics that would be considered at odds with or degrading to the attractive qualities of the scene composition, or removal of elements/characteristics that would be considered complimentary to (enhance/reinforce/restore) the attractiveness of the scene composition. There may also be scope for effects of a neutral nature if the subject elements/characteristics are not notably contributing to nor detracting from attractive qualities of the scene composition.
- a22. In the absence of any qualification on effect bias, it can be assumed that the change(s) described represent adverse effects.

## LANDSCAPE RESOURCE / RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY FACTORS

Table A1 – Value of landscape resource

level/grade	indicators
High	A landscape exhibiting particularly notable qualities in relation to recognised indicators of landscape value (see note below) and no notable detracting aspects.  (Likely to be recognised by a national level landscape designation such as National Park or AONB, or in the case of more localised occurrences, a local designation such as Special Landscape Area. Otherwise, likely to be readily recognised as very attractive countryside).
Medium	A landscape exhibiting some qualities in relation to recognised indicators of landscape value (see note below) and with few detracting aspects.  (Likely to be areas of what would be considered ordinarily attractive countryside).
Low	A landscape not exhibiting particular qualities in relation to recognised indicators of landscape value (see note below), and/or with some notable detracting aspects.  (Likely to be areas of what could be considered less attractive or less interesting countryside).
Negligible	A landscape, more influenced by detracting aspects than any notable qualities.  (Likely to be areas of what would be commonly regarded as unattractive or degraded countryside).

**Note:**

In the absence of, or as supplement to landscape designations, recognised factors which may be indicative of landscape value include: natural heritage interests, cultural heritage interests, landscape condition, associations, distinctiveness, recreational opportunities, perceptual appeal (scenic / wildness & tranquillity), functional role (this list is from Table 1 of LI TGN 02/21).

Table A2 – Susceptibility of landscape resource

level/grade	indicators
High	Where the type of changes that would be brought by the proposals being considered would be strongly discordant with the established character of the area and even small-scale intervention of this nature would be a notable intrusion and would erode or compromise the established character.
Medium	Where the type of changes that would be brought by the proposals being considered would be moderately discordant such that small intervention of this nature may be accommodated, but more than this would result in a notable intrusion and would erode or compromise the established character.
Low	Where the type of changes that would be brought by the proposals being considered would be of a marginally discordant nature and only large-scale intervention of this nature would result in notable intrusion such that the established character would be eroded or compromised.
Negligible	Where the type of changes that would be brought by the proposals being considered would be able to be accommodated or would be in keeping as interventions of this nature would not be likely to cause any notable degradation of the established character.

**Note:**

Strongly distinctive landscapes of consistent and harmonious characteristics will tend to have higher susceptibility to change as a wider range of interventions would tend to be discordant and more notably intrusive. Also, a specific role or function of a landscape, perhaps in terms of providing a separation/key gap between settlements, or a setting to an important place or feature, could be a defining aspect of an area and this may therefore influence landscape susceptibility judgements.



## LANDSCAPE EFFECT MAGNITUDE FACTORS

**Table A3 – Size/scale of landscape effect**

level/grade	indicators
High	<p>Loss of highly prominent elements/characteristics of the landscape which are critical to its distinctive character and the scale of change in the landscape is to an extent that the landscape is fundamentally altered in a given area.</p> <p>Or introduction of new elements/characteristics that would be highly prominent within the landscape and the scale of change in the landscape is to a degree that the landscape is fundamentally altered in a given area.</p>
Medium	<p>Loss of moderately prominent elements/characteristics of the landscape which provide moderate contribution to its distinctive character and the scale of change in the landscape is to an extent that the landscape is notably altered in a given area.</p> <p>Or introduction of new elements/characteristics that would be moderately prominent within the landscape and the scale of change in the landscape is to a degree that the landscape is notably altered in a given area.</p>
Low	<p>Loss of less prominent element/characteristics of the landscape but which provide some contribution to character and the scale of change is to an extent that the landscape is slightly altered in a given area.</p> <p>Or introduction of new elements/characteristics that would be of a less prominent nature within the landscape and the scale of change is to a degree that the landscape is slightly altered in a given area.</p>
None/ Negligible	<p>No notable loss or only loss of elements/characteristics of the landscape which are not notably prominent and/or do not notably contribute to character of the landscape, such that the landscape is hardly altered in a given area.</p> <p>Or no notable introduction or only introduction of new elements/characteristics in the landscape that would not be notably prominent, and the landscape is hardly altered in a given area.</p>

Note:

Elements or characteristics lost or introduced can be either of a physical or aesthetic/perceptual nature.

**Table A4 – Geographical extent of landscape effect**

level/grade	indicators
High	Landscape effects are evident or expressed widely at the scale of landscape types or character areas.
Medium	Landscape effects are evident or expressed moderately within the local landscape.
Low	Landscape effects are evident or expressed in more than one landscape parcel or location, but do not extend to more than a few localised areas within the wider local landscape.
Negligible	Landscape effects are contained within one landscape parcel or location and to no more than a very localised nature beyond that.

## VISUAL RECEPTOR SENSITIVITY FACTORS

**Table A5 – Value attached to a view**

level/grade	indicators
High	A key public view to or from a designated heritage asset or valued landscape. A celebrated public view with cultural relevance and recognition.
Medium	A well-known and popular view to or from a notable public place; a view that is likely to be noted by and a part of the public/community consciousness of the area. A lesser but still noteworthy public view to or from a designated heritage asset or valued landscape.
Low	A public view, but one that is largely incidental and has no notable focus or association. A private view to or from a designated heritage asset or valued landscape, or otherwise of cultural relevance and recognition.
Negligible	An ordinary, incidental, private view.

**Table A6 – Susceptibility of visual receptor**

level/grade	indicators
High	People engaged in recreation where scenic appreciation of the outdoor environment is an important aspect of the activity (walking rural footpaths for example). Residents at home are also considered to have high susceptibility as a visual receptor.
Medium	Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where scenic appreciation is a secondary or more incidental aspect of the activity.
Low	People engaged in recreation, where scenic appreciation is of little or no relevance (playing sport for example). People at their place of work are also generally considered to have low susceptibility as a visual receptor.
Negligible	N/A (this category is rarely used for visual receptor susceptibility, as whatever the activity engaged, if there is a scenic outlook it is likely to be appreciated in some sense or degree).

**Note:**

It should be noted that although residents at home are considered to have high susceptibility as visual receptors, this is greatly moderated by the low value given to private views. This reflects that in planning terms there is no policy or statutory protection of views from private property, and accordingly little weight is normally given to the loss or changes in the outlook from private visual receptors. So long as the changes would not compromise normal expectations of privacy for a dwelling, and the visual changes would not be overpowering to the extent that they would compromise the basic function and amenity of that property as a private dwelling, the loss of a view or outlook from private residences should not be a significant material consideration in the overall planning balance and therefore should not be given greater weight in LVIA work.

## VISUAL EFFECT MAGNITUDE FACTORS

**Table A7 – Size/scale of visual effect**

level/grade	indicators
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The addition of features in the view that would be highly prominent/discordant in the existing scene composition.</li> <li>The addition of features in the view that would be of a particularly large scale or exhibited to an extent that a particularly large proportion of the available view would be altered.</li> <li>The loss of highly prominent features.</li> <li>The loss of features of a particularly large scale or across a particularly large proportion of the available view.</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The addition of features in the view that would be moderately prominent/discordant in the existing scene composition.</li> <li>The addition of features that would be of a moderate scale or would affect a moderate proportion of the view.</li> <li>The loss of moderately prominent features</li> <li>The loss of features of a moderate scale or across a moderate proportion of the available view.</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The addition of features that would not be particularly prominent/discordant in the existing scene composition.</li> <li>The addition of features in the view that would be of a small scale or affecting a small proportion of the view.</li> <li>The loss of not particularly prominent features in the existing scene.</li> <li>The loss of features of a small scale or across a small proportion of the available view.</li> </ul>
None/ Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No notable addition or loss of features in the view and the existing scene composition would not be notably altered.</li> </ul>

Note:

The relative time over which the visual receptor would be exposed to the visual change would also moderate considerations of visual effect size/scale; a quick glimpsed view would represent a smaller change than one which the viewer is exposed to for a prolonged period.

**Table A8 - Geographical extent of visual effect**

level/grade	indicators
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual changes extend beyond a single aspect into a panoramic field of view</li> <li>Source of visual change is directly alongside the visual receptor location</li> <li>Visual changes are experienced in largely continuous fashion from throughout the visual receptor activity location</li> </ul>
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual changes affect a large breadth of a single aspect or ordinary focus of a view</li> <li>Source of visual change is nearby but away from visual receptor location</li> <li>Visual changes are experienced for a recognisable portion of or repeated several times across the extent of the visual receptor activity location</li> </ul>
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual changes are of a localised nature within a single aspect or ordinary focus of a view</li> <li>Source of visual change is at some distance from visual receptor location</li> <li>Visual changes are only experienced at one or few points within the visual receptor activity location</li> </ul>
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual changes appear as only a single very small point</li> <li>Source of visual change is at great distance away</li> <li>Visual changes are experienced only by finding a particularly obscure vantage point at the visual receptor activity location</li> </ul>